



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Linguistic Landscapes in Multilingual Urban Settings: Insights from Translation Perspectives

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Abstract

A multilingual urban area is a translation space that allows the exchange of ideas across languages and cultures. Yet, little research has examined how translation plays a role in shaping linguistic landscapes that depict coexisting languages in public spaces. This paper aims to examine the linguistic landscape of public signage from the viewpoint of translation. A total of 123 bilingual signage was collected from the linguistic landscape of Gorontalo City, an emerging tourism industry with an interesting multilingual setting in Eastern Indonesia. The data were analyzed using the translation category of multilingual writing developed by Reh (2004) and Edelman (2010) to provide an understanding of the translational practice evident in the signage. The analysis also looked at the direction of the translated signage, including official and non-official translation based on the linguistic landscape orientation (top-down and bottom-up), as well as translation to demonstrate collective identity. Translation practices, categorized into word-for-word (67 items), free (8 items), partial (11 items), and non-translation (37 items), demonstrate a growing trend toward linguistic diversity. The top-down approach is evident in official translations (50 items) by government entities, while non-official translations (73 items) dominate commercial spaces. Arabic, displayed alongside Indonesian and English, symbolizes religious identity in public signage. Overall, Gorontalo's linguistic landscape reflects a shift to bilingualism, particularly with widespread English translations. Its linguistic landscape showcases a dynamic interplay of language, translation, and cultural identity in an evolving urban environment.

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Citation in APA style: Napu, N. (2024). Linguistic landscapes in multilingual urban settings: Insights from translation perspectives. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(1), 530-548.

Received December 16, 2022; Revised April 25, 2023; Accepted December 9, 2023; Published Online January 31, 2024

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v11i1.29559>

Keywords: Multilingual writing, public signage, translational practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Landry and Bourhis (1997) introduced Linguistic Landscapes (LL) as a study that examines the language used in public signage, advertising billboards, names of streets and places, and commercial shop signage on government and public buildings to form a given linguistic landscape territory. Ever since the term linguistic landscape (LL) has become the basis of scholars in defining and understanding the notion of the linguistic landscape.

Recently, linguistic landscape research has produced many vivid descriptions of the multilingual nature of ‘contemporary cityscapes’ (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). The concept of linguistic landscape has usually been shown in pictures/photography, naming, symbolism, or signage as used, for example, on-street signage, restaurants, shops, banks, post offices, graffiti, and anything else ‘printed’ as part of a city’s signage (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

Furthermore, a significant number of studies have been conducted in many parts of the world since the LL notion was introduced in 1997. Some studies have looked at many different points of view, including multilingualism (Dégi, 2012; Muth & Wolf, 2009), language diversity (Dixon, 2015), language policy (Takhtarova, 2015; Wang, 2015), ethnography (Blommaert & Maly, 2016), and ethnolinguistic (Botterman, 2011). Most of these studies have, however, primarily focused on the features of the linguistic landscape regarding visibility and readership (top-down and bottom-up). The linguistic landscape is, in fact, a multilingual phenomenon that can also be studied from another viewpoint, such as translation. This is because the linguistic landscape offers a multilingual dimension where different languages are displayed, and that translation can be utilized to understand the nature of language coexistence in the public space.

Cronin (2006) argued that the multilingual and multi-ethnic space that we currently see in urban settings is, first and foremost, a translation space. This is because these spaces allow for the exchange of ideas between people of different languages and cultures. However, limited studies have examined how translation plays a role in the linguistic landscape, which displays the coexistence of languages side by side, for example, seen in public signage.

1.1 Research Question

Although relevant studies have examined the linguistic landscape from the translation perspective (Algryani, 2021; Aristova, 2016; Edelman, 2010; Reh, 2004; Snell-Hornby, 2004; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995), most primarily focused on looking at the nature of problems and strategies of translation in multilingual signage. However, there are still many deficiencies in related research, such as repetition of research content, limited scope of investigation, and lack of clear distinction between the features and the translation principle of the public signs (Amenador & Wang, 2022). Hence, the present study sought to shed light on the existing body of scholarly work on the linguistic landscape by understanding it from the translation viewpoint, especially the extent to which translation plays a role in shaping multilingual public

signage by taking a case from the Indonesian context. This provides insights into the translational process employed for translating public signage and how these translations in multilingual public signage could be approached from the linguistic landscape orientation. The location of this research to study the landscapes of public signage is in the urban setting of Gorontalo City, one of the fast-growing cities on the island of Sulawesi in Eastern Indonesia. The study focused on examining multilingual or translated signage. The research question is formulated as:

- To what extent the translational process is utilized in the linguistic landscape of the urban public spaces?

Unlike many other linguistic landscape studies that usually looked into the number of languages visible in public space, this study aimed to analyze translational practices. To do this, the data were examined based on translation categorization by [Edelman \(2010\)](#) and its direction based on the linguistic landscape orientation. This study was expected to provide a new horizon for other researchers interested in examining the coexistence of different languages in linguistic landscape study from the perspective of the translational process.

1.2 Context of the Study

As a relatively new province in Eastern Indonesia, Gorontalo is actively participating in the development of its very own tourism sector. The capital of the province is Gorontalo City. It is situated between the Celebes Sea in the north and Tomini Gulf in the south, which offers beautiful beaches and snorkeling spots popular among domestic and foreign visitors. There are more than one million inhabitants in this province, and apart from speaking its local language, the Gorontalo language, the locals also speak Indonesian as the national language as well as English. As an international language, English has become the primary foreign language spoken in this area which has resulted from the exposure of the language being taught at schools and universities as well as in mass media.

Since the province's inception in 2001, some efforts have been made to investigate and develop its tourism sources by enhancing and constructing tourist attractions that include natural, historical, cultural, and religious landmarks. This is aimed at attracting and persuading tourists to visit the region. More facilities and infrastructure have been created in recent years to assist this newly emerging business. Many signages for tourists have been set up and are visible in public areas. The public signage is written in many languages in which English is dominantly visible. As mentioned earlier, English holds a unique and important place. This is also the case with the use of English in the public signage in Gorontalo. It serves as a display and is used more functionally as a lingua franca for individuals who may not be able to converse in the native language.

Gorontalo was selected because as one of the major provinces on the island of Sulawesi, it has seen a significant development in the tourism industry, leading to the emergence of multilingual public signage displays. The city has also become a transit hub for tourists traveling to the neighboring provinces, such as Central and North Sulawesi. Those tourists usually stay for several days in Gorontalo to explore tourist attractions before continuing their trip to other locations. Many public spaces and facilities are available in Gorontalo City, such as parks, museums, malls, shops, mosques, police stations, etc. Therefore, it is common that the presentation of signage

in public spaces is seen in almost every corner of the city, including inside the private and government buildings. This phenomenon provokes an interesting question on the extent to which translation might play a role in shaping multilingual public signage in such an urban setting.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Linguistic Landscape

The term linguistic landscape (LL) refers to the visibility and prominence of languages on public and commercial signage in a certain territory or region. This definition is intended to be broad and inclusive (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Other researchers have also studied the concept of LL, which can be defined as a collection of visual manifestations of languages utilized in bilingual or multilingual cultures (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008).

Different categories have been used to classify signage in the linguistic landscape: 'private' and 'public' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), 'unofficial' and 'official' (Backhaus, 2006), 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' (Ben-Rafael, 2009), and 'public' and 'private' (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). These terms refer to a similar definition, which is signage created by government entities and by any private or group of communities, such as shop owners or private businesses, respectively.

From the definition above, it can be elucidated that the linguistic landscape is a system of written signage utilized in the public sphere of an urban setting. The linguistic landscape not only provides a prompt response to the where and what languages you should be able to communicate in, but it also includes information that goes beyond this. It offers a new point of view on the coexistence and rivalry of many languages, as well as how they interact and interfere with one another in a particular location (Backhaus, 2006).

In addition, LL performs two primary functions: symbolic and informative functions. Kasanga (2012) affirmed that the languages utilized in public signage either give evidence of what languages are becoming locally relevant or indicate what languages are already relevant in the local area. This means that one indicator of a language's significance, power, and relevance in society is the density or degree of presence demonstrated by that language within a linguistic landscape. Similarly, Shohamy and Gorter (2008) articulated that LL paints a clear and accurate picture of multilingualism in the minds of the local people. As a symbolic instrument, it also has the potential to act as an indication of current trends that are taking place within particular social groups, communities, geographical regions, or even countries in general.

2.2 Linguistic Landscape and Translation

The study of linguistic landscapes has yielded a plethora of vivid depictions of the multilingual aspect of the contemporary cityscape (Shohamy & Gorter, 2008). Research on linguistic landscapes often concentrates on looking for indications of multilingualism that can be related to translation. This section explores the notion of linguistic landscape and its relationship with translation.

The arrangement of languages in a linguistic landscape provides evidence of their significance at the regional level and the status of particular languages within a given nation or region. To put it another way, the occurrence frequency of a particular language in an LL setting reflects the language's status, prestige, power, and significance in society (Kasanga, 2012). An example of this is evident from the significant visibility of English used side by side with other languages used in the urban setting.

Cronin (2006) asserted that the multilingual and multi-ethnic space that can be found in urban settings is primarily a space for translation. This is due to a growing number of people speaking more than one language. The translation is desirable and required in migratory communities since, as many have argued, the city is a site where different languages come into contact with one another. As a result, the city itself is a location for translation to take place, and the example can be seen from public signage in the urban area. According to Backhaus (2006), the most visible indication that the city is a linguistic crossroads is the public signage that can be found around the city.

In addition, LL includes information that goes well beyond where and what languages one is supposed to be able to communicate in. It throws a new insight into how different languages exist in a particular area. This is where translation in the public area becomes multilingual sites. These locations are characterized by their multiple voices, languages, and frequently contentious status as physical places (Simon, 2019). The limited studies of LL from a translation viewpoint may be due to the lack of theoretical approaches to perceiving the linguistic landscape as a translational process. A multilingual writing theoretical approach such as duplicating, fragmenting, overlapping, and complementing outlined by Reh (2004) has been applied mainly by scholars interested in translation-related processes. Reh (2004) proposed a categorization that can be applied to studying public signage for a multilingual understanding of writing in public signage. Duplicating occurs when the same information is given in both languages; fragmentary occurs when only parts of the information are translated into another language; and overlapping occurs when the two languages' versions offer some of the same information but also convey additional content. The last of Reh's (2004) categories is not a translation; instead, it refers to code-switching or mixed languages where full comprehension requires fluency in both (or all) languages used, but no translations have been provided.

Although Reh's (2004) classifications are generally helpful, they only apply to translated content. Looking into the history of the translations is essential for comprehending the significance of the translated signage. Edelman (2010) made an effort by adding a subcategorization focusing on translation to Reh's (2004) original categories. Her concept further categorized duplication into 'word-for-word translation' and 'free translation', renames fragmentary writing as 'partial translation', and calls attention to the absence of a translation component in complementary multilingual writing with the category 'no translation'.

2.3 Studies on Translation of Linguistic Landscapes

Although the study of the linguistic landscape (LL) has been quite numerous, most of the focus is examined from a significant number of different perspectives. A few studies have looked at LL from the point of view of translation that examines the strategies and quality of the signage translations. Inghilleri (2016) asserted that public

signage has a dual function as social and communicative cues, representing more than just the groups they directly address. Some people find it refreshing that public spaces have languages in translation, and they read this signage differently depending on their perspectives and the context. This section presents relevant studies examining public signage from the translation perspective.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) investigated the French-English parallel text of road signage in Canada and the readers' reactions to inadequate translations. They expressed dissatisfaction with the translation discrepancies in the English versions of the French road signage. In a quite similar study, Snell-Hornby (2004) looked at the translations of public signage that were originally written in German and gathered from areas where English and German are both spoken as native languages. Her investigation concluded that context is an essential component to take into account when translating public signage. This is because of the significant contrasts between various cultures which leads one to believe that translating public signage is an activity that crosses cultural boundaries.

Moreover, Reh (2004) and Edelman (2010) investigated translation-related phenomena in a multilingual linguistic landscape and have presented a taxonomy of multilingual writing of public signage. According to Koskinen (2012), even though Reh's (2004) strategy classifications are helpful, it is also important to take into account the functions, features, and problems of a public signage text. These functions, features, and problems can be understood by looking at the indicated parts in translation. In this case, Edelman (2010) added to Reh's (2004) classification by splitting the duplication translation strategy into 'free translation' and 'word-for-word translation', calling fragmentary writing 'partial translation', and adding the category 'no translation' and putting it under 'complementary' and 'fragmentary' multilingual writing category.

Furthermore, Aristova (2016) researched the state of English translations in the linguistic landscape of the Russian city of Kazan. The findings unveiled that the translational content of public signage included mistranslations, blended terms that combine Russian, English, and Tatar, and transliterations of Russian words. For example, the word order of some translated road signage was backward, and some translations of road signage had incorrect morphological case markings on names. In addition, the city's linguistic landscape featured a number of misspelled English words and phrases.

Another most recent study of translation in the linguistic landscape was conducted by Algryani (2021). He focused on the translation techniques utilized in translating texts from Arabic into English in Oman for non-official public signage and evaluated the quality of the produced translations. The analysis examined a set of corpora consisting of one hundred photographs of public signage representing bilingual (translational) content based on two criteria. Specifically, the translation procedures used when public signage was translated, as well as whether or not the translations of public signage were acceptable for the people reading them. The research concluded that the informative content of public signage was communicated via various translation strategies, such as transference, word-for-word translation, generalization, and omission.

In conclusion, the examination of LL from a translation perspective adds a valuable dimension to our understanding of public signage. These studies contribute

significantly to the broader understanding of how translation shapes and influences linguistic landscapes in diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.

3. METHODS

This study aimed to investigate the linguistic landscape of multilingual public signage in Gorontalo, Indonesia. The signage being studied included street signs, planks, and printed and handwritten information outside and inside buildings. The investigation was to examine the translational repercussions of the growing multilingualism in this particular urban area. To put it another way, the purpose of this study was to investigate the translational practice evident in multilingual public signage in Gorontalo, Indonesia. The investigation of the linguistic landscape from the translation point of view has garnered less interest (Koskinen, 2012). Therefore, it is expected that this study would provide a pathway for researchers interested in examining the coexistence of more than one language in various LLs from the translation viewpoint with some useful insights from the present study's findings.

The data were collected in Gorontalo City and its surrounding area between July and August 2022. Fieldwork was conducted in four subsequent visits: twice in July and another two in August. These visits aimed to enlist the public signage and observe the potentially differing language practices. The data collection location was projected to the area where public signage is easily accessible and visible, including shopping centers, parks, museums, beach resorts airports, and academic institutions. During the data collection process, the researcher adopted the role of a visitor, strolling around with a camera and a notebook, documenting the coexistence of languages on public signage. The signage displaying more than one language was collected in this manner, either inside the same signage frame or in two or more adjacent signages in different languages. Multilingual signage and photos were captured using a smartphone camera. The ease of a smartphone camera especially at present days, helps with taking unlimited pictures without spending much money (Gorter, 2006). There were 123 multilingual signage collected, including street signage, building names, notices, commercial advertisements, billboards, and graffiti. Several selected signages were used for the analysis.

The analysis focused on translation-related practices by applying the translation categorization proposed by Edelman (2010) combined with Reh's (2004) multilingual writing classification. The data were also classified by examining the translation based on the linguistic landscape directionality (top down and bottom up) to look at the ownership and readership of the multilingual signage. In addition, the analysis sought to identify how public signage is constructed to demonstrate a collective identity through the representation of translation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of public signage in Gorontalo were surprisingly significant, which indicates that Gorontalo is becoming a multilingual urban place where the language displayed in the public area is not only limited to the national language, the Indonesian language. Also, it is worth noting that the number of monolingual signage is enormous

and mainly available in Indonesian and Gorontalo languages. However, since this study focused on multilingual signage, monolingual signage was excluded. This section presents the discussion of the data by presenting selected multilingual signage as examples.

In translation research, it is essential to identify the source text (ST) and target text (TT) in examining translation practice as a strategy. However, in this data, it was challenging to determine the ST and TT because most of the signage was displayed in an irregular order. For example, one signage had an Indonesian text at the top and English at the bottom. Another signage was displayed with English on top and Indonesian at the bottom even though the signage was created by the residents. For this study, the ST and TT were assumed from the text written in the top, left, or written in bigger letters. To understand the bigger picture of the translation category, the data were first coded according to the translation categories and the signage directions (ownership and readership), as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Translation categories and directions of the public signage.

Translation	Top-down	Bottom-up	Items
Word-For-Word Translation	35	32	67
Free Translation	2	6	8
Partial Translation	6	5	11
Non-Translation	7	30	37

The data were categorized and analyzed based on the translation category outlined by [Edelman \(2010\)](#), which includes word-for-word translation, free translation, partial translation, and non-translation. [Reh's \(2004\)](#) category mainly focuses on the writing category and has been included in Edelman's translation classification. Word-for-word and free translation were classified in the translation category, whilst, partial translation and non-translation were grouped under the non-translation category of the public signage. Table 1 presents a significant difference between the translated public signage (75 items; with word-for-word translation at 67 items, and free translation at 8 items) and the non-translation ones (48 items; with partial translation at 11 items, and non-translation at 37 items). This indicates that the translation practice of public signage in Indonesia is becoming more common. This is in line with the case of the findings by [Koskinen \(2012\)](#) in the Finland context. On the other hand, compared to those by [Reh \(2004\)](#) in Uganda and [Edelman \(2010\)](#) in the Netherlands, the number of non-translation or mixing languages in their linguistic landscape studies was more dominant than the translated signage.

4.1 Translation of Signage in the Linguistic Landscape of Gorontalo

Although some translations were available in other languages, the vast majority of public signage was translated into English. This is also a fact that can be construed in two different ways. On the one hand, the English language is given special consideration in Indonesia due to its status as the most widely spoken language in the world ([Lauder, 2008, 2020](#)). Starting from elementary school to university, all Indonesian students are required to study the language. A functional level of fluency in the language is typically required for employment in the country. As a consequence of this privileged status, English is the only foreign language that the vast majority of Indonesians are fluent in or at least understand at a basic level. In addition, since

English is the lingua franca of the globe, it is used by the Indonesian people to communicate with individuals from other countries and presume that those people will have at least a fundamental understanding of the language.

In regards to the use of English on signage, it could be interpreted as informational, with primary audiences being travelers from other countries. However, its rising presence has a symbolic significance for local people who do not speak English. The use of English can stimulate a variety of ideals, including an orientation toward the world at large, the future, success, sophistication, or fun (Gorter & Cenoz, 2008).

Applying Edelman's (2010) translation category, most multilingual signage in the study fell within the translated public signage category, mainly word-for-word or literal translation and free translation (with a total of 75 items). Word-for-word and free translation, which Reh (2004) referred to as duplicating, is carried out when the information in the accompanying language is a repetition of the information in the source text. In multilingual signage, individual passages of text written in a variety of languages can be assembled in several different ways. This is in line with Backhaus (2006), who coined the phrase 'mutual translations' to refer to instances in which two separate pieces of text comprise a translation of one another. In the case of literal translation, it is most evident in one word or phrase translation, for example, *keluar* (exit) or *dilarang merokok* (no smoking), and other translations at the sentence level. These signages were found in private and government buildings, such as airports, shopping malls, and museums (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Duplicating signage.

Translation enables individuals to access written communication in languages that they are not fluent in as well as languages that are written in a language that they completely comprehend. The use of this kind of translated signage is aimed at helping those who do not share the linguistic and cultural knowledge of Indonesia. This is a common practice, especially in interlingual translation, which functions as a 'bridge' to help mediate meaning to those who do not speak the language of a particular place they are visiting.

Furthermore, it is unpredicted that non-translation is relatively high in number (37 items). Non-translation, or what Reh (2004) categorized as complimentary multilingual writing, is the kind of text in which certain elements of the overall material are rendered in one or several languages. Understanding the entire communication

requires knowledge of all of the languages involved in such signage. An example of this type of multilingual writing is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Non-translation signage.

The signage in Figure 2 is written in Indonesian and English and was not a translation of each other. The word 'Welcome' was written in big font size, followed by *Kedai Ihsan* 'Ihsan's Stall', the place's name. At first, it might be difficult to understand what this signage referred to or what kind of service it offered to the public. The 'Happy Eat' below the Indonesian text implies that the place was a restaurant or food stall that served food and drink. To understand this kind of public signage, one needs bilingual competence. In other words, this type of public signage necessitates a bilingual readership.



Figure 3. Non-translation (beach resort - proper name).

In addition, the non-translation category was predominantly found in building names or commercial signage that usually showcases the name of the name of a place, store, building, or site (proper names) followed by some other information below the proper names (see Figure 3). The phrase 'CENTURY BEACH RESORT' technically consisted of English words given as the site's name. The sentence above the proper greeting, *SELAMAT DATANG. ANDA MEMASUKI KAWASAN WISATA PANTAI* 'Welcome. You are in the beach tourist area' delivered different meanings in Indonesian. This was followed with a list of additional information listing what

services were offered by mixing it with the English words ‘birthday’, ‘wedding’, and ‘meeting’ (see Figure 3). The English words were employed because the local people were assumed to be familiar with the terms. Reh (2004) and Edelman (2010) claimed this kind of signage as mixing language in their findings. It is normal practice to see the name of a product as the component that is most usually printed in a foreign language when multilingual advertising is utilized, which is called ‘impersonal multilingualism’ (Haarmann, 1986). Therefore, to associate certain products or services with the appropriate social groupings, advertisers employ certain languages in advertisements or store signage.

Furthermore, a partial translation was the least data found (11 items). Reh (2004) named partial translation as ‘fragmentary multilingual writing’. The term is used when the whole information is supplied in one language, but selected parts of the text have been translated into another language or other languages. An example of this type is represented in Figure 4. The heading of the signage, *HANI* in capital letters, stands for *Hari Anti Narkoba Internasional* ‘International Anti-Drug Use Day’, a day that is used as an anti-drug campaign every year. The following information was also written in Indonesian but supplied with an English translation, *Berperang Melawan Narkoba* ‘War on Drugs’. The English translation was used only in this message as it seemed that the sentence was the focus of the information. The additional text below the English translation was displayed in Indonesian, containing a solicitation to stay away from drugs during COVID-19. It appears that only an important message was translated, which was considered essential for the locals and other relevant target audiences. Therefore, it is safe to argue that partial translation seems to be necessarily used to emphasize the significance of the message.



Figure 4. Partial translation signage.

4.2 Translation Direction

Studies in the linguistic landscape often look at the direction of the signage as a way to identify the ownership and orientation of the signage (top-down and bottom-up). Unlike Koskinen's (2012) findings, the orientation of the translated signage gathered from this study is identifiable, as shown in Table 1. This section not only underscores the importance of understanding ownership but also digs into the dimensions of orientation in translated signage. It discerns between government-initiated translations (official translation) and those carried out by private entities

(translation by commercial service providers). This enriches our comprehension of how linguistic transformations unfold within different spheres of influence.

4.2.1 Official translation

The official translation referred to here is the bilingual public signage created and owned by the government. As mentioned earlier, most of the texts found in the linguistic landscape of Gorontalo originated from official sources. These texts may be found on public signage created by state-operated organizations or services. This type of signage falls under the category of top-down signage (Gorter, 2006), namely signage created by official entities for the benefit of the general public (top-down).

There were 50 data identified as top-down translated signage that fell into the categories of word-for-word translation (50 items), free translation (2 items), partial translation (6 items), and non-translation (7 items). This type of translation in public signage generally appears in most of the bilingual signage displayed in public spaces and buildings managed by the government, such as museums, airports, and other government buildings. One indication that the signage has been created by the official entities is from the logo. It has become a common practice in Indonesia that every document and signage published by the government has the office logo or even a picture of the region's leaders. This aims to demonstrate ownership, a sense of authority, or even to show achievement of the government's programs (Napu, 2019; Napu & Ngiu, 2020). In other words, the use of a logo or official emblems is to affirm who is in charge in a particular area.

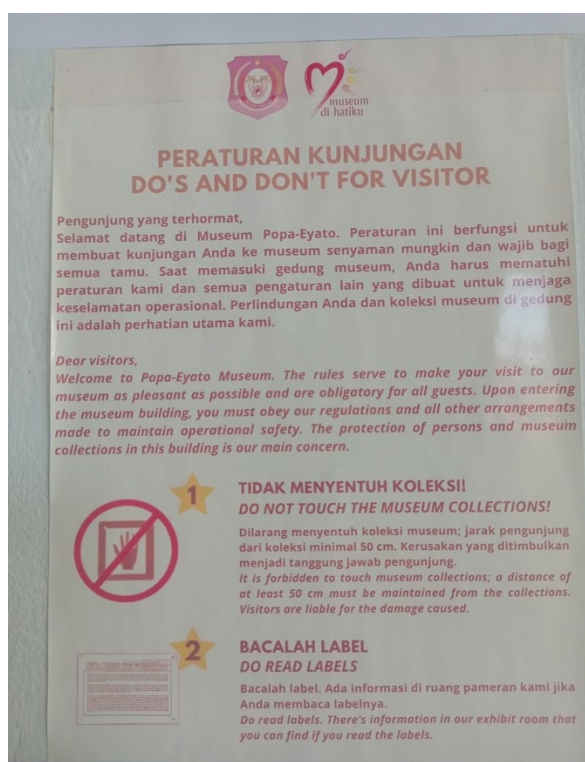


Figure 5. Official translation (top-down).

An example of an official translation, as shown in Figure 5, displays two different logos; one is Gorontalo's logo, and the other one is the museum's logo. These

logos indicate that the museum is operated and owned by the state, which is responsible for the banner production along with its translation. The banner contained information in Indonesian that was translated into English with a duplicating (literal translation) strategy. The title *PERATURAN KUNJUNGAN* in the Indonesian phrase literally translates to ‘visiting rules’. However, the English translation had been ‘freely’ translated into ‘DO’S AND DON’TS FOR VISITOR’. The signage was aimed at both local and foreign visitors, delivering a message about the regulations to follow when visiting the museum. The translation was written in Indonesian at the top, and the English translation was at the bottom with the same font size, indicating that this information was important to Indonesian and foreign visitors. The English version had been made explicit to the foreign visitors using the free translation technique by emphasizing what is allowed and not allowed at the museum as a visitor by translating it with free translation.

4.2.2 Non-official translation

In this study, a non-official translation refers to any bilingual public signage owned by or from the general public. This signage is categorized as bottom-up, which includes any other forms of information communicated by private, commercial, or subcultural entities (Backhaus, 2006). This may be commercial translated signage or ad-hoc translation. The texts are visible in public settings, and it is in this category one may witness the most significant amount of innovation in translation. The translations of these texts are usually done by people who are not professional translators (Lees, 2021), such as the owners of the many taverns, restaurants, and cafeterias in the neighborhood. The signage that falls into this category serves the purpose of ‘recruitment’, which refers to the function of attracting new clients by advertising the company and piquing their interest (Blommaert, 2013).

There were 73 items of the non-official translation of public signage found in the current study, which was more significant in number compared to the official translation. The bottom-up public signage was bilingual, written in Indonesian and English. However, the appearance of a language other than English, such as Arabic, was evident in the findings, mostly used to refer to identity (this is discussed later in the next section). The considerable number of non-official translations in the linguistic landscape of Gorontalo indicates that the community in Gorontalo is a bilingual embracing community, especially the use of English. The commercial service providers displayed many bilingual signage, such as in shopping malls and other commercial stores.

The Indonesian text *SEBELUM MEMBELI CEK TANGGAL KADALUARSA* was literally translated into English as ‘before buying check expaire [sic] date’. An example of this translation type is shown in Figure 6, which displays bilingual Indonesian and English information created by a commercial service provider. The signage was written as an instruction to buyers to check the expiry date before purchasing goods. Apart from the misspelling ‘expaire’ that should have been spelled ‘expiry’, the translation structure copied the original sentence structure, which affects the fluency of the English translation in terms of the ‘naturalness’ of the language. This indicates that the translation was done by a non-professional translator. This is common, especially for non-official or ad-hoc translations, as mentioned above.



Figure 6. Non-official translation (bottom-up).

4.2.3 Translation and collective identity

Within a community, the impression of having a shared status or relation and an ethical and emotional connection constitutes a collective identity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). This identity may be expressed through a shared culture, language, dialects, rituals, and dress. Ben-Rafael (2009) asserted that linguistic landscape can be utilized to strengthen a collective identity, which can signify the identity of a certain group among the general public. The data in this study found a few signages related to the translation to indicate collective identity mainly referring to religious identity. Several bilingual signages written in Indonesian, English, and Arabic can be used as examples of translation referring to collective identity.

Like any other region in Indonesia, Gorontalo has a Muslim majority and the practice of Islam makes Arabic one of the languages displayed on public signage alongside English. An example was the signage of a certificate of Halal displayed on a bakery shop window (see Figure 7). 'Halal' dictates what can and cannot be consumed by a Muslim. The displayed halal certificate was issued by the Regional Indonesian Ulema Council of Gorontalo province, a board responsible for certifying and authorizing product labels. The Arabic characters are transliterated as *SHAHADA HALAL* followed by Indonesian *SERTIFIKAT HALAL* and English 'HALAL CERTIFICATE' that indicate a duplicating, a process of translation that repeats the same information in multiple languages.

As the majority of people in Gorontalo are Muslims, halal food is expected to be accessible and available everywhere, even without halal signage displayed to declare its halal status. However, some shops and private entities still put this halal notice on their business premises, which is intended to give a sense of peace of mind and convince the buyers about 'halal food safety'. They are aware that for Muslims, halal food is a big concern and signifies a religious identity. This is to say that this signage is not only intended for the locals but also for foreign visitors who share the same religious identity.

Similar to the case of Ben-Rafael's (2009) and Koskinen's (2012) findings in their studies, this particular signage is to inform potential consumers that this place provides halal food. Also, this signage can function as a symbolic marker of the community's identity. In this case, the signage display convinces the visitors that they do not need to be concerned because they are in the right place to obtain halal food.

Even though this has nothing to do with language, it provides insights into cultural and religious identity through translation. This is to say that the shop owner uses the signage to welcome one particular community group to give a sense of belonging.



Figure 7. Translation and collective identity.

Finally, this discussion of the linguistic landscape (LL) from the translation perspective has received little attention in the literature. It showed the relevance of translation in multilingual signage and offered some interesting perspectives on the role of translation in the construction of public space. Cronin (2006) posited two global translation procedures as the translation consequences of globalization: translational assimilation and translation accommodation. Translation assimilation occurs when people adapt to their new linguistic situation by translating into the dominant language, which is evident in the case of Gorontalo as a multilingual city. Translational accommodation, on the other hand, takes place when people translate to maintain the language or cultural identity as seen in the religious identity.

Furthermore, it is evident that English is unique and essential in the linguistic landscape. Translations from or into English appearing in the existing linguistic system of a given community entering the global market present a fascinating object of research. These translations mark the initial stage of linguistic globalization and the introduction of English as lingua franca in a new geographical location. The language serves as a display and symbolic language associated with the high status of its users. Also, it is utilized for different reasons when translated signage and notices are being used. It is used more functionally, as a lingua franca, for those who cannot communicate in the native language.

All in all, the linguistic landscape that displays multilingual signages is indeed a translational practice. There are a significant number of instances of translation

strategies utilized, including literal and free translation. The multilingual signage has been partially translated and even written as a non-translation. Therefore, it is safe to say that multilingual signage is a product of the translational process. This sheds light on how translation plays a role in shaping the linguistic landscape. The discussion has revealed that a multilingual urban landscape is essentially a translation space presented through the multiple languages displayed in the public setting.

6. CONCLUSION

The study explores the multilingual urban space of Gorontalo City, Eastern Indonesia, on the role of translation in shaping its linguistic landscape through public signage. Analyzing 123 bilingual signages, the research categorized translation practices into word-for-word (67 items), free (8 items), partial (11 items), and non-translation (37 items), revealing a growing trend toward linguistic diversity. The top-down approach, exemplified by official translations (50 items), contrasts with the dominance of non-official translations (73 items) in commercial spaces. Arabic, coexisting with Indonesian and English, symbolizes religious identity. Gorontalo's linguistic landscape signifies a shift to bilingualism, notably characterized by widespread English translations, reflecting a lively interaction of language, translation, and cultural identity in the evolving urban setting. This research sheds light on the complex relationship between translation practices and the coexistence of languages in public spaces, contributing valuable insights to the understanding of linguistic landscapes in diverse urban contexts.

The limitations of this study include a specific focus on Gorontalo City, which may not fully represent the linguistic diversity of all Indonesian urban areas. Additionally, the research predominantly examines written translation in public signage, overlooking other forms of language representation. Future research could expand the scope by incorporating oral and visual elements of linguistic landscapes, providing a comprehensive understanding. The study's focus on translation orientation (top-down and bottom-up) could be extended to explore the sociolinguistic aspects influencing translation choices, incorporating perspectives of local communities and policymakers. Future research is recommended to encompass a broader methodological approach, consider diverse urban contexts, and investigate into the vibrant use of languages and cultures in contemporary, multilingual spaces.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research received support from the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, under the Scheme for Academic Mobility and Exchange Program (SAME) at the Translation Center of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA. The researcher would also like to express gratitude to Universitas Negeri Gorontalo for their assistance.

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