

English in Shop Signs: Exploring the Bilingual Creativities Found in the Tourism Landscape in Malang and Batu

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ABSTRACT

As popular tourist sites, Malang and Batu in East Java are multicultural and multilingual in nature with at least local languages and national language being used on a daily basis. With globalization and growing markets for business, contacts among their citizens create captivating language/ linguistic landscapes. Many previous research have focused on the vitality and salience of language representations in signboards and discussed the impacts they have on the sociolinguistic reality of the people. This current study, however, explores the bilingual/ multilingual play of the languages used in shop signs in these cities and the possible effects they create. Of 88 signboards under investigation, lexical hybridization- Englishized spelling and hybrid compounding- and bilingual creativity at the syntactic level were the most used strategies. Other textual processes which were commonly found in the signboards are bilingual punning, bilingual rhyming, and mock Englishization. The semantic feature was commonly used as the complementary relationship between language and the content. Effects of these creative processes are projecting modernism, sophistication, association with the international market, ludic effect as an attention-getter, and facilitating memorization.

Keywords: bilingual creativity, effects, English, linguistic landscape

INTRODUCTION

With its status as the global lingua franca, the ubiquity of English seems to prevail across the globe. Zein (2019) names English as a language with a ‘truly global dimension’ outreach; permeating in significant affairs of and between nations e.g., in economy and politics to name a few. This ubiquity is manifested in many forms and patterns in the linguistic landscapes of the countries. Landry and Bourhis (1997) define the term of linguistic landscape as the formation of the landscape of a territory, region, or urban agglomeration through the languages visible on the public road signs advertising billboards, street names, commercial shop signs, and government signs. In societies with multilingual and multicultural realities, linguistic landscape is often observed to disclose the contestation between the languages. Bourhis (in Landry & Bourhis, 1997) argues that the absence or the presence of language(s) in a community indicates the extent of status and value the speakers of the language(s) feel. This is to say that the more visible and salient a language is in a given LL, the more institutional ‘favors’ the speakers have. The dominance of English in the LL of many territories across the nations in the expanding circle, however, has brought a new dimension in understanding the structure of multilingual societies in its context. In the context of countries where highly proficient English speakers comprise little shares of multilingual

society's demography, the social and positive values that English has are not motivated by the exertion of the dominant power of the group in the multilingual community. Instead, the positive value is attributed and retained by the community due to its status as the global lingua franca. Vettorel (2013) confirms that English is often used to create positive and uplifting social stereotypes such as indexing 'modernity' and 'sophistication'.

In expanding circle countries, many reports have disclosed the blends, position, and effects of English in different settings of LLs. English is found to highly prevail in the commerce and tourism sectors. In Medellín, Columbia (Weyers, 2016), for example, the presence of English on shop signs are chosen by the business owners to index the status of the potential clientele they target. The report shows that the higher the socio-economic strata served by the shops, the greater percentage of English present in the signs. The study concludes that English is used not only to push bilingualism for the international competitive workforce and readership; it is also a language they choose to channel prestige among Medellín's middle to upper-class customers, thus enticing them into buying. Other reports provide evidence where English blends with local, national, and other foreign languages in the LL of business and tourism settings. The varied patterns of mixing English with the vernaculars and national languages help to mould given public spaces. In observation of the LL in commercial and residential areas in Seoul, Busan, and Jeju Island in South Korea, Kim (2020) explained the ways English and Korean interaction are creatively manipulated and patterned in the shop signs; through nonce transliteration of Korean into English, code-switching, coinage of bilingual compound, phoneme-based transliteration of English into Korean, and spelling manipulation. She further argues that these creative manipulations have created more dynamic and whimsical aspirations for the premises. Similar results were also reported by Selvi (2016) when observing the LL in a local business district in Ankara, Turkey. He found the dominant use of English in naming the business and explained that in business owners' points of view English gives an uplifting aura to their business recognition.

Several reports have been made to encapsulate the profiles of LL in commerce and tourism settings in Indonesia. English was found as the dominant language among Indonesian and other foreign languages in the naming of the hotel (Purnanto & Ardhian, 2020). They argued that this was purposely done to strive for a symbol of modernity. In the tourism sector, da Silva et al. (2021) observed the language presented in the LL of Malioboro, the commercial area in Yogyakarta. Although English is not the predominantly visible and salient language in this area, English was the second most represented language, having more visibility than its local language, Javanese. In terms of preferences, more respondents opted for the Indonesian English combination for a more international readership. Khazanah & Kusumaningputri (2021) reported the predominant, almost omnipotent, representation of English in shop signs in some tourism peripheral areas in Bali. The predominance was driven by the expected beneficial associations for the shops and the perceived international readership for the areas. These studies confirm Lauder's (2008) proposition that in the Indonesian context, English is the most important foreign language. To this date, the place of English in multilingual Indonesia was explained using the quantitative measurement of the ethnovitality of the language. However, the forms and patterns of the coexistence of English with national and local languages in Indonesia are still under-researched.

The forms and patterns of the coexistence of English with operating languages in Indonesia are explained through bilingual creativity. Bilingual creativity, as Kachru (1985) defines, is 'creative linguistic processes which are the result of competence in two or more languages'. He further adds that these creative processes are created not only by

bilingual/multilingual individuals, but it is also a process that takes place in a bilingual/multilingual community. Bilingual creativity has become the central topic in world Englishes because of a changing perspective it offers to what is seemingly assumed as salient practices of ‘deviations’ of English in non-English speaking countries. Kachru (1985) further explains that in light of bilingualism, ‘what is at one stage of language use an error may, at another stage, be a conscious innovation’; and the motivations might include style, effect, and identity. Barrs (2015) shows, for example, that in the context of LL in Japan, some erroneous English is more than just mistakes, but it is in light of ‘integrating English loanwords into Japanese language’.

On the surface, bilingual creativity in LL simply looks like the presentation of mixed languages on the signs. The actual creative processes, however, are more elaborate as they incorporate the manipulations of textual and semantic properties. Rivlina (2020, p.411-420) summarizes the techniques of bilingual language play, a subtype of bilingual creativity including: 1) bilingual punning which involves ‘the juxtaposition of words, morphemes, or syllables which are homophonous in two languages, which invokes additional meanings; 2) bilingual language play on scripts and orthographies which involves the use of two different writing systems presented together to create ludic juxtaposition (e.g. nonce transliteration); 3) bilingual lexical hybridization which involves patterns of word-building by using the combination of elements in the two languages both by using the lexical derivations (root + suffix) or by using compounding; 4) the bilingual rhyming which involves the creative forms of phonetic units as in rhyming, reiteration, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc; 5) mock Englishization of local languages or localization of English which is ‘a form of verbal imitation and parody based on juxtaposition of languages or language varieties’; and 6) bilingual multimodal play that is creating language play using the different modes other than text (layouting, multilayering, font sizes, graphic designs) to visually enhance one language and disambiguate the other language. Huebner (2006) adds another category of bilingual creativity which is not at the level of lexicons, but rather at the level of syntax. The combination of the two codes is observed through the patterns of the word orderings of the phrases.

The semantic features of bilingual creativity focus on the relationship between the language and the content (Luk, 2013). Sebba (2013) proposes three semantic features in a multilingual written discourse: 1) parallel if bilingual texts have the same or similar meanings, 2) complementary if the meaning in one language has to be read together with the meaning of the other language to get the complete message, and 3) disjoint if the two meanings in the two codes are completely different.

Bilingual creativity, as reflected by Rivlina (2020), accounts for the use and attitudes to English in different countries across the globe. This has been proven in numerous research. Betz and Graddol (2014), for example, disclosed the impacts of Chinese on the English signs found in Hongkong and Shenzhen which includes the Chinese ways of representing the number, prepositions, the use of articles, conjunction in English signs. They also found the use of transliterations, the merger of American and British varieties, the presentation of local varieties of English which indicates the diversity and the undergoing change of English in these two LLs. Bilingual language play has also proven to create certain effects such as creating a cosmopolitan space (Curtin, 2014); promoting creative attitude (Scherling, 2016); manifesting local varieties of English (Selvi, 2016); and creating diverse, dynamic, and playful look for the space (Kim, 2020).

The review of the related literature shows that in the context of Indonesian LL studies, there is still a wide gap left regarding the interpretation of the interplays of languages in public signs through bilingual creativity; it is still under-investigated. It is, therefore, our attempt to contribute a picture of the forms of bilingual creativity and its effects through the observation of LL in Malang tourism areas particularly as reflected in their shop signs. Thus, the current study aims at describing the textual and semantic features found in bilingual/multilingual shop signs and expounding the effects evoked by such creativities.

METHOD

The purposes of this study are to reveal bilingual play (English, bahasa Indonesia, or other languages such as Korean or local languages in Indonesia i.e. Javanese) considering textual and semantic features of the shop signs in Malang and Batu tourism arenas, and to argue on the effects of the bilingual play found in the shop signs. The contacts of these languages represented in the linguistic touristscape of Malang and Batu provide insights into the use of and attitudes toward the sociolinguistic repertoire of the community (Sherzer, 2002: 9).

The site of this study is Malang and Batu. They belong to the most multicultural cities in East Java, Indonesia. With almost one million citizens (www.dukcapil.kemendagri.go.id) living across 110,06 km², Malang is famous for Kota pendidikan (city of education) as there are four well-known public universities and several private universities making this place multilingual and multicultural in nature. The citizens speak bahasa Indonesia, and other local languages such as Javanese, Madurese, and this city is recognized as a city with bahasa walikan (reverse language). Meanwhile Batu is a city near Malang. With around 213 thousand citizens (www.batukota.bps.go.id) this city is famous for tourist resorts. There were 285 shop signs with bilingual/multilingual creativity collected from several major tourist destinations (Jatim Park 1, 2, 3, Secret Zoo, Museum Angkut, Dino Park, Sengkaling and Tlogomas) from which 88 shop signs with bilingual/multilingual creativity were found. Two collectors who are originally from and residing in Malang were asked to collect these sign shops. These destinations were selected because they were among top-rated and most visited places by local and international tourists. The number of tourists visiting the places has increased the number of businesses and the varieties of products offered by the locals. The data collectors took pictures of the shop signs along the main roads where the central tourist areas were sited. Using camera-ready of high-quality smartphones, the pictures were taken to capture the linguistic touristscape for further bilingual play analysis. The pictures were collected for three weeks in the month of May 2020 and in the month of March 2022 for updates and additions. The types of shop signs included bakery, eatery, barbershop, fashion and accessories, florist, hotel, household items, repair shop, restaurant, public service, souvenir, tourism and travel, and data cell-phone quota shops.

The framework of analysis is based on Huebner (2006), Rivlina (2020), and Sebba (2013) covering textual properties, semantic features, and socio-pragmatic use to arrive at the impacts of the bilingual play. *Textual properties* refer to features of lexis, grammar, and discourse for instance patterns of words and sound. In this study, bilingual multimodal play is not used as this paper focused more on the linguistic (and script-based) and phonological properties than on the visuals to make meaning over the socio-pragmatic effects the bilingual play carries. *Semantic features* refer to the relationship between language and content of the texts; whether the texts deliver similar, different or partially overlapping content using terms proposed by Sebba (2013); *parallel*, *complementary*, and *disjoint*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The textual process analysis of the data shows that the bilingual creativity in Malang LL is constructed using five main tactics: bilingual punning (4%), lexical hybridization (46%), bilingual rhyming (1%), mock Englishization (4%), and bilingual creativity at syntactic level (45%). No bilingual play on scripts/transliteration was used in the LL of Malang. Lexical hybridization and creativity at the syntactic level are found to be the most productive processes in the shop signs and the internal processes of this hybridization show the creators' attempt to bring forth the localization of English and the Englishization of the local. In terms of semantic features, complementary was the most productive feature presenting Indonesian and English relationships in the signboards.

THE TEXTUAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES IN BILINGUAL/MULTILINGUAL SHOP SIGNS

LEXICAL HYBRIDIZATION

The hybrid words in shop signs are creatively constructed by combining the elements of the two languages. The combinations making up the hybrid words are following some patterns: the spelling manipulations and hybrid compounds. In the corpus of data analyzed, the manipulation of the spellings of Indonesian words to follow the English spelling manners are often used to create hybrid forms. In Figure 1, the brand name of a shop selling Indonesian traditional *kue* (snacks) is written in accordance with English spelling rules instead of Indonesian. In bahasa Indonesia, the use of double consonants is never accepted and the sound /i:/ should be written using the alphabet 'I' because the alphabet 'y' only represents the consonant /j/ sound in bahasa Indonesia. Bahasa Indonesia is a syllabic language where the combination of consonant-consonant sounds is not possible in the formation of a word syllable, especially at the end word syllable. Another example found in Malang LL is the article 'the' which is frequently written as 'De' or 'D' as in 'De Lys patisserie' and "D'Rick Coffee".



Figure 1. A sign with an Indonesian name using English spelling manner.

The manipulation of the spelling is also done reversely when the writing manner of an English word is done by following the Indonesian spelling manner. The word 'Filadelfia' obviously refers to the word 'Philadelphia' which is a city in Pennsylvania state in the U.S., In the shop sign, the consonant sound /f/ is written using orthographic 'f' as the orthography 'ph' to sound as /f/ is not recognized in Indonesian spelling. The Englishization of local names through spelling manipulation, however, is more actively found than the glocalization of the English word.



Figure 2. A sign with an English word using bahasa Indonesia spelling manner

Another lexical hybridization form is created through hybrid compounding. Compounding is a process whereby two free morphemes are put together to create a word with a single meaning; thus, a hybrid compounding involves the combination of free morphemes of two different languages. This creative process was used in creating the bilingual shop signs. Figure 3 shows an example of a shop sign named “Kopiright”.



Figure 3. Hybrid compounding in a shop sign

The word ‘Kopiright’ is a hybrid blend between the Indonesian noun ‘kopi’ (meaning: coffee) and English noun ‘right’. This hybrid compound creates a meaning for the shop. The use of Indonesian morpheme ‘kopi’ immediately tells the audience that the shop sells coffee. This hybrid blending creates a meaning associated with an English word ‘copyright’ which is the exclusive legal right given to an originator. This hybrid compound is, thus, intended to create meaning of ‘authenticity’ and ‘good quality’ of the product to attract potential customers.

BILINGUAL PUNNING

Bilingual punning is a creative process in language play which involves juxtaposition of words which are homophonous in two languages. A case where homophonous juxtaposition is used in sign shops can be seen in a shop sign of a jacket store.



Figure 4. Bilingual punning found in a shop sign.

The juxtaposition of phrases ‘Is Cool’ and ‘Istana Kulit’ are homophonous. The ‘Is’ is juxtaposed with the first syllable in “Istana” and ‘Cool’ is juxtaposed with part of the word ‘Kulit’. The use of this homophonous juxtaposition does not only serve the ludic form but also the exploitation of the textual meaning. The phrase ‘is cool’ is used to create positive meaning and association for the product. This store sells leather jacket’ and by creatively using ‘is cool’ as the juxtaposed phrase to the name of the store ‘istana kulit’, the creator aims to make the audience to have the impression of ‘luxury’, ‘good quality’, ‘coolness’ toward the product that they offer at the store.

BILINGUAL RHYMING

In Malang tourism scape, bilingual creativity is also constructed through rhyming or phonemic matching between English and bahasa Indonesia. One example can be seen in a sign shop shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Bilingual Rhyming found in a shop sign.

The brand in the sign shop is ‘Menantea’. The sound of the morpheme ‘tea’ rhymes with ‘ti’. The word ‘Menantea’ rhymes with the Indonesian word ‘menanti’ which means ‘to wait’. By the use of the English morpheme ‘tea’ that rhymes with the end syllable of the word ‘menanti’, the readers can tell that it is a tea shop and the rhyming strategy might make it easier for the customers to remember the brand.

MOCK ENGLISHIZATION

The concept of mock language, according to Rivlina (2020), refers to the exaggeration of the element in the vernacular language to create a jocular effect. In Malang tourism landscape, such a case is constructed through the parodic pronunciation of the name of the shop sign.



Figure 6. The sample of a shop sign with Mock Englishization bilingual creativity strategy.

In Figure 6, the use of an English name in the barbershop sign would make no sense when it is pronounced in English because it is essentially a Javanese word masked in English spelling. The word ‘lackone’ might seem like an English word, yet it is insensible when used in an English environment. It does not make any sense to call a shop ‘lack one’ which only accentuates the inferiority or weakness of the barbershop service. The word ‘lackone’ is derived from Javanese word ‘lakone’ which means the main character or the hero of a story.

The use of the alphabet ‘c’ before the alphabet ‘k’ is the strategy that is used to mask the Javanese word to look like an English one.

BILINGUAL CREATIVITY AT THE SYNTACTIC LEVEL

The hybridity does not only take form in hybrid lexicons, the hybrid process also takes place at the syntactic level. In Malang Tourism LL, this hybrid process is the most productive one to appear. In English, one of the ways to create noun phrases is by combining nominal morpheme+nominal morpheme with the first as the premodifier and the latter as the head. The premodifier functions to inform specific aspects of the head, and the head is the one that carries the main meaning of the phrase. One example is as presented in figure 4 where the type of business is written in English ‘Rooms, Villa, Resto and Cafe’ and the specific brand is written in bahasa Indonesia ‘Kemboja’. In bahasa Indonesia, the word order for noun phrase



Figure 7. Bilingual creativity at syntactic level in a shop sign

The combination of local names as the adjective and the English names for the business types as the nouns is a case of syntactic hybridization. In Figure 7, for example, the name of the business uses bahasa Indonesia ‘Kemboja’ which refers to a type of flower. The type of the business uses English words ‘rooms’, ‘villa’, ‘resto’ and ‘cafe’. This syntactic arrangement follows English word order in which in an English noun phrase an adjective precedes the noun. In bahasa Indonesia noun phrase structure, on the other hand, the noun precedes the adjective. In the LL, the use of English syntax in Indonesian English combination seems to be the more prevalent norm in the LL because this word order combination far outnumbers the Indonesian noun phrase word order.

SEMANTIC FEATURES

In this part we describe how the playful meanings are delivered through linguistic or textual forms. In the collection of data, using Sebba (2012) three semantic features were found in the data with complementary, disjoint, and parallel relationships from the most frequently to the least frequently used. With complementary relationships, the playful connection lies in the collaboration of the two or more used languages to work on a certain meaning for a certain brand or shop name in the shop sign. Examples shown in the findings for instance *Obby*, *Rumah Aneka Kue*, *Bakso Arief Daging sapi 100% halal Good taste From good meat* were structured by two languages, bahasa Indonesia, and English. The first word and the second word(s) were used to be read together to complete each other. The second relationship found in the data of bilingual play is a disjoint; separated relationship between language and its content. The example that appears is *Menantea*. The word tea is an English word delivering a content message of a type of beverage resulting from pouring hot water into cured or fresh

leaves of *Camellia Sinensis*. The word *menanti* is an Indonesian word that means to wait. The playful effect in the word *Menantea* is from the bilingual rhyming as if the brand is trying to project that the tea offered in the *Menantea* shop is worth to wait. The last language-content relationship and the least used bilingual play within the data is parallel. It is the use of multilingual text which consists of matched units, and identical content in each language. The example from the data is *Rumah susu, D' Milk House*. Linguistically, both languages have similar meanings. In this case, such characters of this bilingual play project the sociolinguistic profile of the intended consumers especially with the consumer's literacy of language. However, the use of *D'* instead of *The* is another play that is lexical Hybridization aiming at drawing on consumers' feeling of modern use of such words but staying local and familiar. We argue that, although the use of both languages semantically delivers similar meanings, the parallel language-content relationship is targeting the familiar use of the form *D'* instead of *The* of Indonesians.

THE EFFECTS

The use of bilingual creativity in LL is intended to achieve some functions. Falattah (2017) confirms that globalization has given way for English to functionally diffuse omnipotently in linguistic and cultural practices. The vivid practice of creatively combining English with other languages in Malang tourism landscape has evoked some potential effects in the minds of the readers. First, we argue that the most appearing bilingual creativity forms- lexical hybridity is Englishized shop or brand names through the Englishized spelling to evoke positive, more valued associations for the shop signs. The sign 'Obby' with English spelling, for example, has shown that the English spelling has been opted as the source of creative naming instead of following the Indonesian name spelling system. This strategy is used to channel the 'modern' association of the shop. This practice confirms what Rivlina (2020) concludes that by using the English writing system, the users shape the idea of 'modernity' and 'sophistication' due to its status as the global language. We think that such is the case with the use of English spelling for Indonesian names in the shop sign. This result also resonates with previous research results having observed the effects of bilingual creativity and lexical hybridity on different media, such as Martin (2006), who identified the value of 'elitism, quality engineering, and modernism' in regard to the use of English in the advertisement; Lee (2006) who found the construction of modernism through the mixing of English and Korean in television commercials; and Hasanova (2010) who observed that English was used in shop signs in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan to indicate 'elitism, quality, and modernism.

The use of English syntax for noun phrases is mainly seen in the shop names where the combination of bahasa Indonesia as the modifier noun precedes English as the head noun. The English words are used in the type of business for example, the words 'resto', 'bed and breakfast', 'cafe', 'patisserie', 'bakery', etc. The use of English in this combination is in alignment with what Takashi (1990) proposes that English is used for some technical terms in similar circumstances. Still, they are deemed more technical and special than the equivalence in the national or local languages. This function is also confirmed by Nikolaou (2017), who found that the use of English in the shop types is to channel certain attributes of the shops, such as 'chic cosmopolitanism' and 'classy urbanism.' The special use of English for business type naming, we argue, is the manifestation of what Rivlina (2020) claims as 'appropriation' vs 'resistance' ideology. In this context, the prevalent practice of bilingual creativity involving English does not show people's resistance toward English values and

roles, instead, they use English to appropriate their business and interest for certain purposes. We contend that the use of English words to name the type of business is a way to appropriate their business for an ‘international market’ association. This means that in the context of multilingual and multicultural tourism landscape in Malang and Batu, rather than being seen as the competitor language threatening the other operating languages in the area, English is used to facilitate the economic value they aim.

Finally, bilingual creativity, which involves processes of bilingual punning, bilingual rhyming, and mock Englishization, creates ludic ways of transferring the message. For example, the playful hybrid names of ‘Kopiright,’ ‘Menantea,’ ‘Is Cool Istana Kulit,’ tell the readers about the type of the products and the positive values the owners want to tell the audience regarding their products. We observe that this playful manner of bilingual creativity functions as the ‘attention getter.’ The funny and playful name also potentially makes the reader memorize the product better. These effects echo what Bhatia and Ritchie (2012) claim as the ‘low level cosmetic effects’ where the use of a foreign language, in this case, English, is targeted at attracting potential customers. The targeted functions of English in bilingual language play in tourism landscape in Malang and Batu, we observe, are also similar to the functions of bilingual play used in shop signs in the context of Hongkong (Luk, 2013). In this study, the use of English in bilingual/multilingual shop signs is functionally used to facilitate better memorability. For example, the ludic effect of the word ‘Menantea’ potentially makes the audience remember certain tea brand better because it rhymes with a word in their language ‘menanti.’

CONCLUSION

With most research in LL having a greater focus on the quantitative aspect of language salience and visibility, this research renders the exploration of the interplay of English with other languages in the context of the tourism landscape in Malang and Batu, Indonesia. This research focuses on elaborating on the forms of bilingual creativity appearing in the main shop signs in some tourism areas in Malang and Batu, Indonesia. The exploration of the processes involving the creative use of English and other languages operating in the area shows the vivid interplay of English with other languages creating hybrid forms at lexical and syntactic levels. At the lexical level, the manipulation of the spelling of Indonesian words to resemble English spelling is frequently used compared to the compound words constructed of the two lexicons from each code. The bilingual punning, bilingual rhyming, and mock Englishization, although not many in number, create playful ambience for the space. Bilingual creativity in these areas is also frequently constructed through the manipulation of the syntax in which the word combination for the noun phrase used in the shop signs follows English noun phrase order. The observation of the language-content relations between the languages on the shop signs reveals that the complementary relation is the most vivid relation in which both languages complement each other to present intact information. In this case, English is frequently used to convey information about the business types.

Such bilingual creative processes potentially evoke effects on the readers. The Englishized words, through the manipulation of spelling, send the image of ‘modernity’ and ‘sophistication.’ Using English to name the type of businesses might evoke the feeling of the association with ‘the international market.’ The ludic or playful effect is also detected in the funny, playful, and creative hybrid lexicons, which can potentially attract the readers’ attention and facilitate better memorization.

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