

A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE STUDY OF NAMING AND LANGUAGE USE ON THE SIGNBOARDS OF GROCERY AND PHOTOCOPY SHOPS IN MENDALO JAMBI

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the linguistic landscape of business signboards covering photocopy and grocery shop in the Mendalo region, Jambi Province. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach through observation, documentation, and interview methods, this study analyzes business naming data across four main perspectives: language type, linguistic form, informational function, and symbolic function. The analysis of 14 data points reveals that Indonesian dominates the distinctive name elements, whether in the form of single words, phrases, or acronyms, frequently combined with loanwords or foreign terms (*Photo Copy, Digital & Print Center*). Informatively, the naming backgrounds are closely tied to prayers, hopes for blessings, and the personal identities of the owners (such as children's or spouses' names, or location references). Symbolically, public space naming functions not only as an ownership marker but also reflects family bonds, religious values, foreign language prestige, and ethnic identity representation through surnames (*Hombing, Lingga*) and regional vocabulary (*Holong, Bejo*). These findings confirm that business signboards in the Mendalo area serve as a sociolinguistic medium of expression that bridges personal identity, local cultural preservation, and adaptation to commercial modernity.

Keywords: *Informational function; linguistic landscape; Mendalo; public space; symbolic function*

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Landscape, abbreviated as LL, is an academic field that focuses on the use of language in public spaces, whether monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual (Gorter, 2006). This is because linguistic landscape research examines how linguistic diversity emerges in public spaces, or how linguistic symbols used in public spaces convey messages that appeal to the public, such as directions, topographical information, and news distribution. Languages that serve as signs in public places are frequently used in marketing or advertising contexts, functioning to draw attention to a business or product (Ben-Rafael, 2006).

The naming of public spaces serves as a symbol associated with designated objects, reflecting the existing language situation in a particular region (Landry, 1997). This condition consequently makes it possible to illustrate general patterns of language use, language selection guidelines, attitudes toward language use, power relations among

different language groups, and language contact with other languages (Helly, 2023). This is also known as the concept of public space naming. When naming public spaces, several parties play an important role in their creation: text producers and text consumers (Shohamy, 2009). These two parties mutually influence the resulting meaning of the text. Text creators not only consider the production of the text but also take into account who will enjoy the text and whether it will be considered appropriate by consumers. Linguistic landscape research is important given that language use matters, and in order to maintain and preserve acceptable and appropriate language use, attention must also be paid to how language is used. This research was conducted in Jambi Province, focusing on the naming concepts of grocery stores and photocopying shops (*fotocopy*) in Jambi Province, particularly in the Mendalo region. In this area, the use of language in public spaces will reveal specific concepts and functions.

A grocery store is a strategic place to observe language use in public spaces because it serves as a gathering spot for various people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This allows for diverse and intensive language interaction. The atmosphere in grocery stores tends to be informal and relaxed, allowing people more freedom in their language use. This enables observers to gain a more authentic picture of everyday language use. Language use in grocery stores can reflect the local community's social and cultural values. For instance, the use of slang, regional languages, or formal language can indicate educational levels, social status, and group identity. Grocery stores are easily accessible to most of the public, making it easier for observers to conduct observations and data collection. Thus, grocery stores become an interesting object of research because they can provide a comprehensive picture of language use in public spaces, including its variations, functions, and social meanings.

Photocopying shops involve specific technical language related to the services offered, such as "black and white," "color," "duplex," "laminating," and so on. The analysis focuses on how this technical language provides insight into how language adapts to technological developments and community needs. Photocopying shops represent public spaces centered on transactions and services. Language analysis here can reveal how language is used to request services, provide information, negotiate prices, and even manage conflicts. Photocopying shops offer an opportunity to observe how language adapts to technological advancements. How does the language used in traditional photocopy shops differ from that used in more modern ones? Does the use of digital language, such as instant messaging applications, affect the interactions between customers and shop owners? Photocopying shops offer a specific and focused context for analyzing technical language, transactional and service interactions, and language adaptation to technological developments.

According to Landry (1997), LL has two functions: the informational function and the symbolic function. The informational function refers to texts produced by either government institutions, private entities, or individuals. This function highlights the information provided to readers rather than the information conveyed by both parties; texts created by private entities or individuals tend to be more varied compared to those produced by the government. This is due to the lack of regulations governing the patterns of such texts. The informational function refers to information conveyed to readers regarding place names, general information, and the names of goods and services (Backhaus, 2007). In addition to the informational function, the Linguistic Landscape (LL) also possesses a symbolic function.

Furthermore, the Linguistic Landscape (LL) also possesses a symbolic function. This function highlights symbols generated from the emergence of text behaviors. The

symbolic function refers to language policies, language imperialization, language marginalization, language discrimination, and the social factors causing them (Spolsky, 2004). The social factors in question include cultural relations, group identity (such as ethnicity, gender, and social status), power dynamics (in economic, political, or demographic contexts), and language status (official or unofficial). The symbolic function is also closely related to the representation of specific ethnic group identities.

Research on naming in public spaces has been widely conducted by previous researchers, including the concept of naming in public spaces in West Papua Province, specifically in Manokwari City, using a linguistic landscape approach conducted by Paradida (2024). This research focused on the informational function found in the naming of streets, offices, cafes, and eateries based on historical factors, expectations, and consensus. Meanwhile, based on the symbolic function on street name signs, elements of power relations, cultural relations, and language policies were found. On office name signs, elements of language policies and language status were present. On cafe and eatery name signs, aspects of language imperialization were reflected. Another study was conducted by Wijayanti (2022), who examined hotel naming in the City and Regency of Magelang, Central Java. This was based on the theory of language use in public spaces, followed by research on the naming of business places on Jalan Perjuangan, Cirebon City, West Java, and its relation to efforts to prioritize the Indonesian language in public spaces.

The connection to previous research underlies the objective of this study to explore the informational and symbolic functions across different types of businesses (grocery stores, photocopy shops, and cafes) in the Mendalo region, Jambi, in order to see whether their naming patterns share similarities or possess unique characteristics compared to findings in other regions.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach. According to Moleong, (2007), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. This approach was chosen because the study aims to describe the naming and use of language on the signboards of grocery stores and photocopy shops in the Mendalo area as they naturally occur in public spaces. Data collection was carried out using three techniques: observation, documentation, and interviews. First, observation: according to Morissan (2017), observation is a daily human activity that uses the senses as the primary aid, allowing researchers to directly observe signboards at the research location to determine the data to be collected. Second, documentation: every signboard was photographed, and its business type, location, and written form were recorded, with photographs serving as the primary data for the linguistic landscape study. Third, interviews: according to Moleong (2007), "an interview is a conversation with a specific purpose, conducted by two parties the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who provides answers," enabling researchers to interview business owners to explore the background and reasons behind the naming choices.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles (2014) through the following stages: data reduction, where signboards and interview results were sorted, coded, and focused on name elements, the languages used, and naming motives; data presentation, where data were presented in the form of signboard photographs, narrative descriptions, and classification tables according to language type, linguistic form,

informational function, and symbolic function; and conclusion drawing and verification, where emerging patterns were concluded and reconfirmed through statements from business owners and field observations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This analysis presents a recap and in-depth analysis of 14 business signboards in the Mendalo region, Jambi Province, covering photocopy shop and grocery stores. This linguistic landscape research examines the phenomenon of language use in public spaces by breaking it down through four main perspectives: first, language type, which identifies the choice of language variety in the distinctive name element whether using Indonesian, regional languages, foreign/English languages, or mixed forms (*blending*); second, linguistic form, which reviews the grammatical or morphological structure of the business name, such as single words, phrases, acronyms, combinations of name clippings, or phonological adaptations; third, informational function, which explores the origin, background, and motives behind the naming based on direct explanations from business owners (such as hopes, prayers, or location references); and fourth, symbolic function, which analyzes the social meaning, cultural identity, linguistic prestige, and family relations attached to the choice of name and language in the public space. Through the detailed data below, it becomes evident how business owners blend elements of personal identity (such as children's names, surnames, or spouses' names), religious values, and commercial modernity in building the visual identity of their business establishments.

The Analysis of Photocopy Shop *Portune Photocopy*



Figure 1. Portune Photocopy

The name "Portune" is a phonological adaptation of the English word *fortune* ("wealth, good luck"), with a sound change from /f/ to /p/. Its linguistic form is a single word, and the language type is English (adapted). Informatively, the owner hopes the business will gain blessings and prosperity. Symbolically, the choice of a foreign word indicates that English is perceived as prestigious and closely linked to the idea of prosperity

(referred to in the preliminary data as linguistic imperialism; the term foreign language prestige is more appropriate for the context of business naming).

Asri Photo Copy



Figure 2. Asri Photo Copy

The description for this signboard in the preliminary data was swapped with that of Indocopy; therefore, its naming motivation cannot yet be ascertained and needs to be reconfirmed with the owner. In terms of form, "Asri" is an Indonesian word meaning beautiful and clean, while "Photo Copy" is an English element, making this signboard a mix of Indonesian and English. The name is in the form of a phrase. The meaning of *asri* can be interpreted as projecting an image of a neat and comfortable business, but this can only be stated as a symbolic function once confirmed by the owner.

DO'I (Do'a Ibu) Digital Copier



Figure 3. Asri Photo Copy

The name is an acronym for *Do'a Ibu* (Mother's Prayer), entirely in Indonesian. Informatively, the owner believes that a mother's prayer brings blessings to the business. Symbolically, the choice of the Indonesian language reflects the status of the official language, and this name also embodies religious values and respect for mothers. It should be noted that the acronym form "DOT" has the potential to be read as the slang word *doi* (meaning sweetheart/partner), which can be asked of the owner as a possible additional meaning.

Indocopy



Figure 4. Indocopy

The name is a blend of the clipped form of *Indonesia* ("indo") and the loanword *copy*, making it a mixed-language type. Informatively, the owner stated that there was no specific reason for the name, but the element "indo" can be interpreted as a marker of where the business is established, namely in Indonesia. Symbolically, the use of a dominant English element indicates a tendency to choose foreign forms, although the "indo" element simultaneously marks national identity (referred to in the preliminary data as linguistic imperialism).

DinNi Photocopy



Figure 4. DinNi Photocopy

The name "DinNi" is a combination of clipped portions of two owners' names: the ending of Ikhsanuddin (*din*) and Ermawani (*ni*). The distinctive name element is classified as Indonesian (a proper name), while the element *Foto Copy* is a loanword. Informatively, the name records the identity of the couple who own the business. The capitalization of the letter "N" in the middle marks the boundary between the two name elements. Symbolically, this name demonstrates naming as a marker of ownership and togetherness among the owners, rather than merely a choice of a foreign language.

DANTE DENTA Photocopy



Figure 5. DANTE DENTA Photocopy

The name is derived from the owner's child's name, which means patient and persistent. Its linguistic form is a proper name phrase with a two-word rhyming pattern. The name has a foreign nuance, but it is not English vocabulary; therefore, the bilingual Indonesian-English classification in the preliminary data is inaccurate and should be reviewed. Informatively, the owner believes that the child's name brings blessings. Symbolically, the choice of a name with a foreign nuance can be interpreted as an effort to project a modern impression, as well as a marker of family bonds.

Daffa Photo Copy Digital & Print Center



Figure 6. Daffa Photo Copy Digital & Print Center

The distinctive name element is *Daffa*, which is the owner's child's name, while *Photo Copy Digital & Print Center* is a sequence of English elements, making this signboard a mixed type with an extended English component. Informatively, the owner believes that the child's name will bring success to the business. Symbolically, the sequence of English elements highlights modern and comprehensive services (digital printing), thereby building a professional image, while the child's name remains a personal identity marker for the business.

Bayu Photocopy



Figure 7. Bayu Photocopy

The name "Bayu" is a single Sanskrit loanword meaning "wind," which is also commonly used as a proper name, making its language type Indonesian. Informatively, the name is taken from the owner's child's name with the belief that it will bring blessings. Symbolically, the pattern of "business type + child's name" reflects naming as a marker of family identity. The bilingual classification in the preliminary data was solely based on the word *fotokopi*, which has already become an assimilated loanword, and therefore needs to be reviewed.

The Analysis of Grocery Stores.

ISBUN



Figure 8. ISBUN

The name is a single Indonesian word taken from the owner's name, Mr. Isbun. Informatively, the name informs that the business belongs to that individual. Symbolically, the use of one's own name serves as a marker of ownership and personal identity for the owner (referred to in the preliminary data as power relations).

Toko Sembako Dila



Figure 9. Toko Sembako Dila

The name "Dila" is a single Indonesian word, while "Toko Sembako" explicitly states the type of business. The name is inspired by the owner's name and the names of both parents, Khadijah and Lasmir; the form "Dila" appears to be taken from a combination of clippings from both names and needs to be confirmed. Informatively, this signboard mentions the type of business alongside the owner's identity. Symbolically, the name records respect for parents and serves as a marker of ownership.

Toko Hombing Jaya



Figure 10. Toko Hombing Jaya

The name consists of the surname *Hombing* and the word *jaya* (a Sanskrit loanword), thus forming an Indonesian phrase containing a surname element. Informatively, the surname reflects the owner's family, and *jaya* expresses the hope that the business will always succeed and bring blessings. Symbolically, the use of the surname serves as a

marker of ethnic group identity (cultural relations), with the note that the surname is a name element rather than a regional language lexical item.

RAHMAD



Figure 11. Rahmad

The name is a single Arabic loanword (*rahmat*), which is also common as a proper name and is derived from the owner's firstborn child's name. Informatively, the name records the identity of the eldest child in the family. Symbolically, the child's name serves as the business name, acting as a marker of family identity and embodying the hope that the business will grow alongside the child.

Lingga



Figure 12. Lingga

The name is a single word taken from the owner's family surname. Informatively, the owner hopes that the stall will always prosper and bring blessings. Symbolically, the use of the surname marks group identity (cultural relations). The owner's ethnicity should be verified through interviews before drawing a conclusion, as the preliminary data only mentions the family surname.

HOLONG



Figure 13. Holong

The name *Holong* comes from the Batak language, meaning "love" or "affection," and is therefore classified as a regional language. Its form is a single word. Informatively, the name is drawn from the owner's ethnic vocabulary, carrying a positive meaning expected to be embedded in the business. Symbolically, this name marks ethnic identity (cultural relations) while elevating the regional language into the public space. Alongside *Bejo*, this data piece features the clearest regional language lexical elements.

The linguistic landscape in this area is dominated by the use of Indonesian whether in the form of single words, phrases, or acronyms frequently combined with loanwords or foreign terms such as *Photo Copy*, *Digital & Print Center*, and *Cell*. The use of foreign elements and their adaptations such as in the names *Portune* reflects a tendency among business owners to build a modern image and adapt to technological developments and commercial market demands. It resonates the study acknowledged by Taufuqurrahman et al (2025) that a successful global marketing requires blending unified brand messaging with localized adaptations. Therefore, national and local identity elements are still presented side by side, demonstrating how public spaces are utilized as a compromise space between local and global identities.

In terms of its informational function, the background behind business naming in Mendalo is closely related to the personal, familial, and religious aspects of the owners. Most business owners utilize their children's names, spouses' names, personal names, family surnames, or unique acronyms such as *DO'I (Do'a Ibu)* and *RAJA (Rahmat Jaya)* as the primary identity of their businesses. The selection of these names is generally underpinned by prayers and hopes that the businesses will continually gain blessings, prosperity, and smooth revenue. Align with this, Ilicic & Brennan (2026) said in their research that incorporating religious elements into brand names primes consumer perceptions and fosters stronger personal connections to the brand. This religious priming effect holds true across multiple religious contexts (Ilicic & Brennan, 2026). Additionally, some names serve as direct references to the business location, such as the use of the word *Kampus* on signboards for businesses located near higher education areas.

From the perspective of the symbolic function, naming in public spaces does not merely act as a marker of private ownership, but also reflects social values, family bonds, and forms of respect for parents. The use of family or children's names not only

strengthens emotional ties among family members but also transforms commercial spaces into realms laden with personal meaning. It is in line with Andriyásková et al (2024) who found in their study that sometimes developing brand loyalty relies heavily on customer trust and positive product experiences; and one of which can be done by leveraging family-related elements offers an effective strategy for establishing this brand trust. Furthermore, the presence of surname elements such as *Hombing* and *Lingga*, alongside regional vocabulary such as *Holong* (Batak language) and *Bejo* (Javanese language), highlights the representation of ethnic identity and the dynamics of cultural relations coexisting in the public space of Mendalo.

An interesting finding is also revealed in specific naming cases, such as *Toko Bejo*, where a name rooted in Javanese ethnicity was retained by a new owner of Padang descent. This phenomenon proves that an ethnic name can transform beyond the boundaries of tribal origins and shift into a commercial brand closely tied to the meaning of hope for good fortune. Furthermore, this demonstrates that the symbolic function of cultural relations in public spaces is dynamic, where the economic value and philosophical meaning of a name are often prioritized over merely reflecting the current owner's ethnic identity. Junaidi (2022) in his study revealed that ethnic representation in the brand's name could bring economic benefits; as it creates a memorable brand and its uniqueness could attract customers as well.

Overall, the portrait of public space naming in the Mendalo region affirms that the linguistic landscape is a reflection of the complex sociolinguistic dynamics of society. It resonates the research conducted by Moehkardi et al (2025) that assumed these practices reflect Indonesians' pragmatic response to globalization, balancing commercial needs with cultural identity although there were some English adoption in the name of their brand, it just represent creative agency rather than cultural loss.. Business owners, consciously or unconsciously, blend various elements ranging from personal identity, religious values, the preservation of regional cultural elements, to foreign language prestige to construct a visual identity that appeals to consumers. Through the analysis of four perspectives covering language type, linguistic form, informational function, and symbolic function, it is revealed that business signboards are not merely commercial direction boards, but also mediums of cultural expression in public spaces.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of various business signboards (photocopy services, grocery stores, and cellular counters) in the Mendalo region, Jambi Province, several important conclusions can be drawn. First, Indonesian and mixed forms dominate the naming elements, whether through single words, phrases, or acronyms, which are frequently combined with loanwords or foreign elements (such as *Photo Copy*, *Digital & Print Center*). The use of foreign elements or their adaptations (such as *Portune*, *Prody*, and various technical service terms) indicates a tendency among business owners to build a modern, professional image while keeping pace with technological developments and market demands. Second, regarding the informational function, the background behind business naming is highly diverse yet generally rooted in personal and religious aspects. Most owners use children's names, spouse's names, personal names, family surnames, or acronyms (such as *DOI* for *Do'a Ibu* and *RAJA* for *Rahmat Jaya*). The choice of these names is often grounded in prayers and hopes that the business will bring blessings, prosperity, and smooth revenue, as well as serving as direct references to the

business location. Third, symbolically, naming in public spaces functions not only as a visual identity or personal ownership marker but also reflects family bonds, respect for parents, and religious values.

The presence of surname elements (such as *Hombing* and *Lingga*) and regional vocabulary (such as *Holong* from Batak and *Bejo* from Javanese) demonstrates the representation of ethnic identity and cultural relations in public spaces. Interestingly, cases were also found where a name of a specific ethnicity was retained by an owner from a different ethnic background (such as *Warung Bejo*), proving that the name has transformed into a commercial brand carrying hopes for good fortune. Overall, the linguistic landscape in the Mendalo area reflects sociolinguistic dynamics where public spaces serve as a meeting point between the personal identity of business owners, religious values, the preservation of cultural/ethnic elements, and adaptation to global commercial modernity.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used AI Tools] e.g. Claude in order to [help the writers to translate the manuscript]. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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