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COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE IN BEACHWALK KUTA: A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE APPROACH TO TOURIST ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the linguistic meanings embedded in outdoor commercial signage displayed on banners at various outlets in Beachwalk Shopping Center, Kuta. Employing a qualitative research approach, this study adopts the framework of linguistic landscape analysis to explore how language is used in public commercial spaces. Data was collected through photographic documentation using a smartphone, capturing a variety of banners present in the shopping center. The collected data were then analyzed using Multimodal Discourse Theory proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and Leech's (1983) Theory of Meaning to identify the underlying linguistic and semiotic elements. The findings reveal that the linguistic expressions found in the commercial banners convey conceptual, connotative, and affective meanings. Furthermore, these banners reflect emotions, aspirations, persuasive strategies, and behavioral representations of business owners or advertisers. The study highlights the role of linguistic landscape in shaping consumer perceptions and its potential implications for tourism and commercial branding in public spaces.

Keywords: Linguistics Landscape, Commercial Signage, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Tourism Branding

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Landscape (LL) refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). It serves as a reflection of linguistic diversity, cultural identity, and socio-economic dynamics within a particular area. In tourism destinations, LL plays an essential role in shaping the visitor experience by providing information, facilitating communication, and reinforcing branding strategies (Lindgren, 2024). As global tourism continues to grow, the presence of multiple languages in commercial and public signage has become an important aspect of destination marketing and consumer engagement.

Tourist destinations with strong international appeal, such as Bali, often display a highly multilingual LL. This is due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of visitors, business owners, and local communities. According to Granstedt et al. (2024), multilingual signage in tourism areas serves not only as a means of communication but

also as a symbolic representation of global connectivity and inclusivity. The strategic selection of languages in signage can influence tourists' perceptions of a destination, affecting their overall experience and engagement with local businesses.

Bali is one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, attracting millions of international visitors annually. As a result, the LL of Bali's urban and commercial spaces is characterized by a blend of local, national, and international languages. Previous studies have explored the linguistic landscape of Bali, particularly in key tourism areas such as Kuta, Seminyak, and Ubud. Mulyawan (2019) conducted a comprehensive study of the LL in Kuta Village, a major tourist hub in Bali. The findings revealed the presence of 2,549 outdoor signs along six main streets, with English dominating more than 50% of the signage. The study concluded that the strong presence of English reinforces Kuta's status as an international tourism destination and reflects the economic reliance on foreign visitors. Additionally, the research found that commercial signage was the most prevalent form of LL in Kuta, with businesses using English and other foreign languages to attract international customers. Another study by Widani (2021) examined the linguistic landscape of Bali's culinary industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research focused on commercial advertising in restaurants and cafés in Canggu, another prominent tourism area. The findings indicated that English was the dominant language used in signage, as most visitors were international tourists. The study also highlighted the use of declarative and imperative sentence structures in public health posters to persuade and remind customers to follow health protocols. Additionally, café and restaurant managers incorporated visual elements such as symbols and color schemes to enhance the effectiveness of signage.

Beachwalk Shopping Center in Kuta is one of Bali's most prominent retail and lifestyle destinations. Located along Kuta Beach, the shopping mall attracts both domestic and international visitors, offering a wide range of retail, dining, and entertainment options. As a key commercial hub, the linguistic landscape of Beachwalk Shopping Center is shaped by the presence of various advertising banners, storefront signs, and promotional materials that utilize different languages to engage consumers. Unlike other public spaces in Kuta, Beachwalk Shopping Center serves as a controlled commercial environment where businesses strategically use language to influence consumer behavior. Many retail outlets prominently display English-language slogans and promotional messages to appeal to foreign tourists. This aligns with the findings of Bruyèl-Olmedo (2025), who examined how linguistic choices in online hospitality advertising influence tourists' perceptions of accommodations. The study found that businesses prioritize English in their marketing materials to enhance their global appeal and attract international customers.

While previous studies have examined the linguistic landscape of Bali's tourism sector, no research has specifically focused on the linguistic landscape of commercial advertising in Beachwalk Shopping Center. This presents a significant gap in the literature, as understanding the strategic use of language in advertising within a controlled commercial space can provide valuable insights into branding, consumer engagement, and multilingual communication in tourism settings. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the linguistic meanings embedded in commercial banners and slogans displayed by retail outlets in Beachwalk Shopping Center.

The research will explore how businesses use language as a marketing tool to attract consumers and enhance their brand visibility. By applying Multimodal Discourse Theory (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) and Leech's (1983) Theory of Meaning, this study

will identify the conceptual, connotative, and affective meanings present in commercial signage. Furthermore, the findings of this research will contribute to the broader discussion on linguistic landscape studies in tourism by highlighting the role of language in shaping consumer perceptions and engagement in commercial spaces. The results will be relevant for businesses, policymakers, and tourism stakeholders seeking to optimize language use in branding and advertising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept was introduced by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and has since evolved into a critical framework for analyzing multilingualism, language policies, and identity representation in urban and tourist environments. Over the past two decades, LL has gained increasing attention as a method for analyzing multilingualism, language policy, and sociocultural identity in urban environments (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). The rapid globalization of tourism and commerce has contributed to the expansion of LL research, particularly in urban areas where language is a key component of economic and social interaction (Lindgren, 2024).

The integration of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) into LL research has provided new methodological and theoretical perspectives. Traditionally, linguistic landscape studies focused on textual analysis; however, the multimodal approach considers the interplay between text, images, symbols, colors, and spatial arrangements (Jewitt, 2009). This approach is particularly relevant in advertising and commercial signage, where meaning is conveyed through a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic elements. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) developed the three meta functions of visual grammar, which are widely applied in multimodal LL research:

- a. Ideational/Representational Meta function – This refers to how linguistic and visual elements represent real-world experiences. In commercial advertising, it includes the depiction of people, objects, and symbols that convey a brand's message (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).
- b. Interpersonal/Interactional Meta function – This function examines how signs establish relationships between advertisers and consumers. For example, the gaze direction of models in advertisements or the use of imperative phrases in signage can create persuasive effects (Jewitt, 2009).
- c. Textual/Compositional Meta function – This focuses on the organization of linguistic and visual elements, including layout, color schemes, and typography, which contribute to meaning-making in signage (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Recent research has applied MDA to analyze commercial linguistic landscapes. For instance, Elyamany (2024) examined the use of multimodal elements in digital advertisements and found that the combination of textual and visual elements significantly influences consumer engagement and brand recognition. Similarly, Lu et al. (2024) explored the role of multimodal discourse in inclusive tourism branding, highlighting how images, symbols, and text contribute to shaping accessibility narratives in commercial spaces.

Leech's (1983) theory of meaning provides a useful framework for analyzing the semantic functions of language in LL. He identifies six key types of meaning, three of which are particularly relevant to commercial signage:

- a. Conceptual Meaning – Refers to the logical, denotative meaning of words and phrases. In commercial LL, this includes straightforward brand names, product descriptions, and pricing information.

- b. Associative Meaning – Encompasses connotative, stylistic, affective, and cultural meanings. For instance, an advertisement using the phrase “luxury lifestyle in paradise” evokes emotions and cultural associations beyond its literal meaning.
- c. Affective Meaning – Conveys the emotions, attitudes, and intentions of advertisers. Words like “exclusive”, “premium”, or “authentic” are used in branding to create emotional appeal and consumer desire.

Applying Leech’s framework, Hernando Velasco and Matsumoto (2024) conducted a critical discourse analysis of advertising language in urban spaces, revealing that affective and associative meanings play a central role in brand differentiation and consumer engagement. Their study showed that emotional appeals in signage often outweigh informational content, demonstrating how advertising language is crafted to evoke specific consumer responses.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method to analyze the linguistic and multimodal aspects of commercial advertisements in Beachwalk Shopping Center, Kuta, Bali. The research focuses on slogans found in commercial banners displayed at various retail outlets within the shopping mall. The qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the meanings embedded in the signage, emphasizing both linguistic and visual elements.

The primary data for this study consist of commercial advertisements in the form of banners displayed at retail outlets in Beachwalk Shopping Center. The data collection method employed was documentation, which involved capturing images of the banners using a smartphone camera. The use of digital photography enables researchers to collect an unlimited number of images, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the linguistic landscape. Data collection was conducted from February until March 2025 and involved banners from various retail stores within the shopping center. A total of 20 commercial banners were selected for analysis. These banners were chosen randomly to provide a representative sample of commercial outdoor signage within the mall.

The collected images were filtered and categorized based on their linguistic and multimodal elements. The study applied Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), drawing on the theoretical framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), which examines representation, interaction, and composition in visual texts. Additionally, Leech’s (1983) Theory of Meaning was employed to analyze the semantic aspects of the language used in the advertisements. The analysis followed these steps:

- a. Categorization of Data – The captured images were grouped based on the linguistic elements present in the advertisements, distinguishing between different types of meanings such as conceptual, connotative, and affective meanings.
- b. Application of Multimodal Analysis – The banners were analyzed using Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) three meta functions of visual communication: a) Representational Meaning which examining how the banners depict objects, people, or events. b) Interactional Meaning which analyzing the relationship between the advertisement and its audience, including gaze, perspective, and engagement strategies. c) Compositional Meaning which studying how elements such as layout, typography, and colour contribute to the overall message.
- c. Interpretation and Synthesis – The findings from linguistic and multimodal analyses were synthesized to identify patterns in how commercial banners at Beachwalk Shopping Center utilize language and visual strategies to attract consumers.

This study adopts a case study approach, focusing on a specific instance of linguistic landscape analysis within a controlled commercial environment. By employing Multimodal Linguistic Landscape Analysis, the research aims to describe and interpret the meanings conveyed through commercial signage. The methodological framework aligns with prior linguistic landscape studies that integrate multimodal and semantic perspectives to explore how language, images, and symbols interact in public spaces. Through this structured methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and visual elements that shape commercial advertisements in Beachwalk Shopping Center, contributing to broader discussions on linguistic landscapes in tourism and retail environments.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Beachwalk Shopping Center, as one of the most prominent shopping destinations in Kuta, Bali, possesses a unique linguistic landscape (LL) due to its dual function as both a shopping hub for domestic tourists and an internationally recognized tourism attraction. The analysis of the linguistic landscape at Beachwalk Shopping Center reveals that the primary languages used in commercial signage are English and Indonesian, with English being the dominant language. This linguistic choice aligns with the findings of Mulyawan (2019), who identified English as the most frequently used language in Bali's tourism-related signage, reflecting the region's globalized commercial environment. The data collected indicate that the commercial advertisements at Beachwalk Shopping Center are primarily in the form of commercial banners. These banners employ both monolingual (English only) and bilingual (English and Indonesian) language formats. The dominance of English suggests that businesses at Beachwalk Shopping Center prioritize an international market-oriented branding strategy, catering to foreign tourists who constitute a significant portion of the mall's visitors. This aligns with studies by Bruyèl-Olmedo (2025) and Granstedt et al. (2024), which emphasize how linguistic choices in tourism spaces influence consumer engagement and destination branding.

4.1 Multimodal Analysis of Meaning in Commercial Signage

The linguistic landscape (LL) of Beachwalk Shopping Center is not solely dependent on textual messages but also integrates multimodal elements, including images, colours, typography, and spatial composition, to enhance the overall meaning of commercial signage. This study applies Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse analysis framework, which categorizes meaning into representational, interactional, and compositional meta functions.

a. Representational Meaning

- The banners from Under Armour and Map Club prominently feature athletic figures engaged in sports activities, reinforcing the brand's association with active lifestyles and physical fitness.
- The Genki Sushi banner utilizes a mascot as a visual representation of its brand, immediately connecting consumers with Japanese culinary culture.
- The Skechers banner conveys comfort and reliability, while the Cosmetics banner showcases a celebrity model, emphasizing beauty and personal expression.

b. Interactional Meaning

- The banners establish a direct relationship with consumers through imperative slogans such as "Experience Power Everyday" (Map Club) and "Beauty Beyond Rules" (Cosmetics), encouraging an emotional response.

- Genki Sushi's social media presence on the banner facilitates engagement beyond the physical store, providing additional interaction opportunities.
 - The mobile app integration in the Map Club banner enhances consumer convenience, suggesting an interactive and digitalized shopping experience.
- c. Compositional Meaning
- All banners place the main message and key visuals at the center, making them the focal point for consumers.
 - The Under Armour and Map Club banners use red tones, which symbolize energy and intensity, while Genki Sushi's yellow background evokes happiness and excitement.
 - The Cosmetics banner uses black and red, colours associated with elegance and sensuality, complementing the beauty industry's aesthetic appeal.

Through this multimodal approach, the commercial signage at Beachwalk Shopping Center functions beyond linguistic messaging, employing visual and spatial elements to reinforce branding strategies and consumer engagement.

4.2 Types of Meaning in Commercial Signage

Applying Leech's (1983) typology of meaning, this study identifies that the commercial banners primarily convey connotative and affective meanings, with some instances of conceptual meaning.

- a. Connotative Meaning
- Under Armour's slogan ("It's made me a better runner this year") implies that purchasing their products can lead to personal athletic improvement.
 - Map Club's slogan ("Experience Power Everyday") suggests that the brand's products provide strength and vitality, appealing to consumers' aspirations.
 - Cosmetics slogan ("Beauty Beyond Rules") conveys empowerment and self-expression, encouraging customers to redefine beauty standards.
- b. Affective Meaning
- Genki Sushi's slogan ("Serius Sushinya, Seru Rasanya") evokes curiosity and excitement, persuading consumers to try the food.
 - Skechers' slogan ("The Ultimate Comfort Solution") appeals to consumer emotions by reinforcing the idea that comfort and performance go hand in hand.
- c. Conceptual Meaning
- The Skechers slogan explicitly states a product benefit, making it a clear example of conceptual meaning in commercial advertising.
 - While most slogans rely on connotation, some elements of direct product description (e.g., digital engagement in Map Club's banner) also reflect conceptual meaning.

4.3 Discussion

Overall, the study reveals that commercial signage in Beachwalk Shopping Center primarily relies on emotional and persuasive meanings, strategically designed to influence consumer perception and enhance brand positioning. The linguistic meanings on signage at Beachwalk Shopping Center will be outlined as follows:



Figure 1. Outdoor Signage at the “Under Armour” Outlet
Source: Researchers (2024)

Figure 1 presents the slogan displayed in front of the Under Armour outlet, a store specializing in sportswear, footwear, and athletic accessories. The slogan “It’s made me a better runner this year” conveys both connotative and affective meanings. The connotative meaning suggests that the products sold in this outlet will help athletes enhance their performance and increase their chances of winning competitions. The affective meaning influences the emotions of consumers, encouraging them to purchase the advertised products by instilling a sense of motivation and improvement. The linguistic landscape (LL) of this signage is written in English, aiming to attract international tourists. In terms of representational meaning, the banner features two men and one-woman jogging, symbolizing that sporty individuals prefer Under Armour’s sportswear and accessories. The background color predominantly features red, which conveys a sense of energy and activeness. The interactional meaning of this signage indicates the relationship between the seller and the consumer, where the advertisement provides persuasive information about the product to influence purchasing decisions. From a compositional perspective, all elements in the banner are centered prominently, with both the text and visual model positioned in the middle and lower sections to highlight the information effectively.



Figure 2. Outdoor Signage at the “Genki Sushi” Outlet
Source: Researchers (2024)

Figure 2 presents the slogan displayed in front of the Genki Sushi restaurant, which serves a variety of Japanese cuisine. The slogan “Serius Sushinya, Seru Rasanya” (Serious Sushi, Exciting Taste) conveys both connotative and affective meanings. The connotative meaning suggests that the restaurant offers authentic and high-quality sushi, while the affective meaning evokes curiosity and excitement, encouraging potential customers to try the food. Unlike the Under Armour banner, this signage is written in Indonesian, making it more accessible to domestic tourists and local visitors. In terms of representational meaning, the banner features the brand mascot of Genki Sushi, allowing consumers to easily recognize the restaurant. The background color is yellow, which symbolizes joy and enthusiasm, aligning with the cheerful atmosphere of the restaurant. The interactional meaning of this banner is reinforced through the inclusion of social media handles (Facebook, Instagram, and Line), making it easier for consumers to seek more information about the restaurant. From a compositional perspective, all elements in the banner are centered, with both the text and mascot placed in the middle to maximize visibility and brand recall.



Figure 3. Outdoor Signage at Map Club’s Outlet
Source: Researchers (2024)

Figure 3 presents the slogan displayed in front of the Map Club outlet, which sells sportswear and fitness gear for men and women. The slogan “Experience Power Everyday” conveys both connotative and affective meanings. The connotative meaning suggests that using the products from this store will provide an extraordinary workout experience and enhance strength and stamina. The affective meaning, on the other hand, motivates consumers to purchase the products by associating them with power and energy. This signage is written in English, emphasizing its target market of international tourists and fitness enthusiasts. In terms of representational meaning, the banner features one man and one woman engaging in sports activities while wearing Map Club products. The red background color is associated with energy, strength, and activeness, reinforcing the brand’s dynamic image. The interactional meaning of this banner is further enhanced by the inclusion of mobile application icons for Play Store and AppStore, allowing consumers to download the Map Club app for online shopping and loyalty point collection. From a compositional perspective, all elements are centered prominently, with the brand’s verbal slogan and model imagery occupying the middle section to create an eye-catching and cohesive advertisement.



Figure 4. Outdoor Signage at the "Skechers" Outlet
Source: Researchers (2024)

Figure 4 presents the slogan displayed in front of the Skechers outlet, which offers a complete collection of sports shoes, t-shirts, bags, shorts, and leggings. The slogan “The Ultimate Comfort Solution” conveys both conceptual and affective meanings. The conceptual meaning implies that the products offered by this store are the best solutions for customers seeking comfort. The affective meaning evokes a sense of reassurance, influencing consumers to believe that Skechers provides the highest level of comfort in its products. This signage is written in English, reinforcing its appeal to an international audience. In terms of representational meaning, the phrase “The Ultimate Comfort Solution” symbolizes a complete collection of sportswear designed to enhance comfort. The interactional meaning of this signage lies in its persuasive nature, attracting potential buyers to visit the store and make a purchase. The compositional meaning suggests that the cohesive design of the advertisement integrates textual and visual elements effectively, reinforcing the message through its overall aesthetic and layout. The combined meta function analysis of language in this banner reveals that the linguistic landscape of Beachwalk Shopping Center aligns with the nature of a commercial shopping district. In this case, the signage strongly represents advertising discourse, strategically designed to persuade and engage consumers.

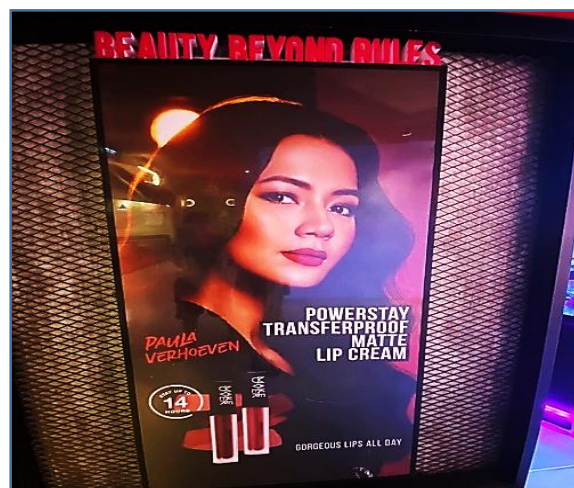


Figure 5. Outdoor Signage at the “Cosmetics” Outlet
Source: Researchers (2024)

Figure 5 presents the slogan displayed in front of a cosmetics outlet, which sells a variety of beauty products, including powder, lipstick, perfume, and other makeup essentials. The slogan “Beauty Beyond Rules” conveys both connotative and affective meanings. The connotative meaning suggests that beauty transcends conventional standards, encouraging women to embrace their uniqueness. The affective meaning evokes a sense of empowerment, inspiring consumers to feel confident in their own skin. This signage is written in English, emphasizing a modern and aspirational branding strategy. In terms of representational meaning, the banner features a smiling female model wearing Lip Cream, identified as Paula Verhoeven, a well-known model and actress. The black and red background colors symbolize elegance, energy, and sensuality, reinforcing the luxurious and passionate image of the brand. The interactional meaning of the advertisement is evident in how it showcases the visible effects of Lip Cream on the model, creating a persuasive appeal to potential customers. The compositional meaning suggests that all elements are prominently placed at the center and sides, ensuring that both the verbal slogan and brand imagery remain the focal points of the advertisement.

The findings of this study reveal that the linguistic landscape of Beachwalk Shopping Center primarily employs English and Indonesian, with English being more dominant due to its appeal to international tourists. The commercial signage in this shopping mall integrates both connotative and affective meanings, strategically designed to persuade and emotionally engage consumers. Applying Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) multimodal framework, the study identifies that each commercial banner incorporates representational, interactional, and compositional meanings, utilizing color, typography, imagery, and spatial positioning to enhance brand communication. Furthermore, the presence of bilingual advertising strategies and culturally significant color schemes indicates an effort to balance global commercial appeal with local branding elements.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examines the linguistic landscape (LL) of commercial signage at Beachwalk Shopping Center, Kuta, a key tourism hub in Bali, with a focus on the meanings embedded in commercial banners to understand how language influences tourist’s perceptions and destination branding. The findings reveal that English dominates the linguistic landscape, reflecting the globalized nature of the shopping center and its appeal to international tourists. However, some banners, such as Genki Sushi’s signage, incorporate Indonesian, demonstrating a localized branding strategy that caters to both domestic and foreign consumers. The commercial signage primarily conveys connotative and affective meanings, aiming to persuade consumers through emotionally engaging and aspirational messages. Additionally, semiotic elements, including color schemes, typography, and imagery, reinforce brand identity and consumer perception.

The application of Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) multimodal analysis framework highlights how representational, interactional, and compositional meta functions contribute to the effectiveness of commercial signage. Representationally, the banners depict active lifestyles (Under Armour, Map Club), cultural authenticity (Genki Sushi), and luxury branding (Cosmetics, Skechers). Interactionally, they establish relationships with consumers by using persuasive language, visual engagement techniques, and digital integration (e.g., social media links and mobile applications). Compositionally, the banners employ centralized layouts, bold typography, and high-contrast colors, ensuring maximum visibility and impact. These findings contribute to a

broadier understanding of linguistic landscapes in commercial tourism environments, revealing that language use in signage is not merely informative but serves strategic marketing functions.

The findings of this study have significant implications for business owners, marketing strategists, and tourism policymakers. Retailers should consider optimizing their linguistic and visual strategies to enhance brand identity and consumer engagement. While English remains the dominant language in commercial signage, integrating localized elements such as cultural symbols, bilingual messaging, or regional aesthetics may strengthen brand authenticity and emotional appeal. Future research could explore consumer perceptions of linguistic landscapes to determine how language choices in signage influence purchasing behavior and brand loyalty. Additionally, comparative studies across different shopping districts or tourism destinations could provide deeper insights into how linguistic landscapes evolve based on cultural and economic contexts. By expanding research on multimodal linguistic landscapes in commercial spaces, scholars and practitioners can better understand the interplay between language, branding, and consumer experience in a globalized marketplace.

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