



## Articles

# Linguistic Landscape of Jalan Gajah Mada Heritage Area in Denpasar City

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<sup>1,2,3</sup>Linguistic landscape, language contestation, heritage area, signboard, public space

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## A B S T R A C T

This study aims to explain the contestation of languages on outdoor signboards found in the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada in terms of linguistic landscape and how the implementations of government policies for language use in the public space. The heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada was originally a trading center but recently it is starting to be developed into a tourist attraction of Denpasar old city. The study was done by analysing 275 photos of outdoor signboards which were taken along the Jalan Gajah Mada. Those photos were classified based on the type of outdoor signboards, the maker, the number of languages, the number of scripts. The results show that the language that is mostly used in outdoor signboards in this area is Indonesian, even though the shops are mostly owned by Chinese descendants and several Indian and Arabian descendants. The study also showed that an outdoor signboard can have one, two, three, or even four languages simultaneously. For those outdoor signboards that use three and four languages, the two of them for sure are Indonesian and English. In accordance with the Regulation of the Governor of Bali Province Number 80 of 2018, especially with the regulation of the use of Balinese and Roman script, the implementation of government policies has not been implemented consistently. The outdoor signboards of government agency names were written exactly following the rules while other outdoor signboards are not.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is very important to show identity, communication, social interaction, education, development and so forth (Edwards 2009). Language is the most powerful device in maintaining cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible culture. A language becomes stronger when it is not only spoken, but also written. Languages that are written will ensure the existence of that language longer than languages that are only spoken. Outdoor signboard is one of the media to show the existence of the language used by the people living around it, as well as showing how the life of the people living around it.

The Denpasar City Heritage Area is established through the Denpasar City Regional Regulation Number 27 of 2011 concerning the Denpasar City

spatial plan for 2011-2031. In article 15 paragraph (2) part b number 1 it is stated that “the Catus Patha Agung area of Denpasar City and around Jalan Gajah Mada as a center for trade and service activities, social activities, cultural activities, government and heritage areas” (Pemerintah Kota Denpasar 2011). Based on the map of the heritage area found on the information board located in front of Badung Market, the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada stretches from the Bali Museum as the easternmost area to Maospahit Temple as the westernmost area. The boundaries of this area are written on an inscription placed on Jalan Gajah Mada, in the north of Badung Market. The inscription was written in Indonesian using Balinese and Roman script as shown in figure (1)

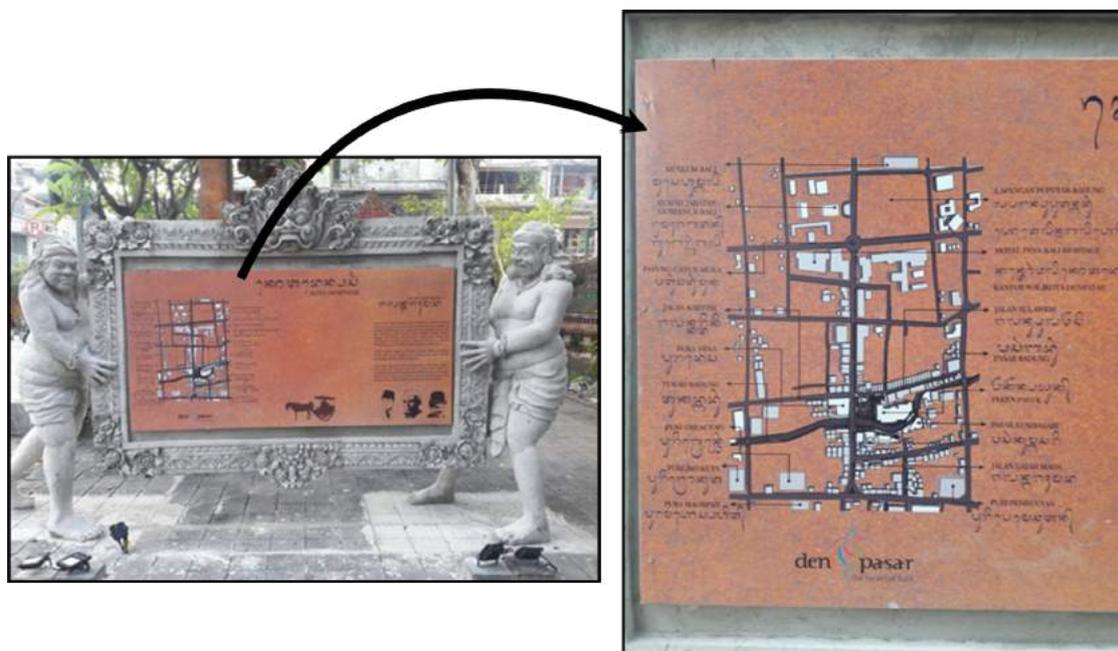


Fig. 1. Information board of Heritage Area in Jalan Gajah Mada



Fig. 2. Jalan Gajah Mada Heritage Area

This area has always been a trading center and a place for various ethnic groups to interact. This place is inhabited by Balinese, Javanese, Chinese, Arab, and Indian. Jalan Gajah Mada consists of a row of various shops which are mostly owned by Chinese descendants. Arab and Indian descendants mostly live in the area on the Sulawesi Street as cloth sellers. Balinese people are mostly traders in the Badung Market and Kumbasari Market areas. Among these various ethnicities, there are also Javanese descendants who are also sellers at Badung Market.

There are several roads and locations that are being part of the heritage area of Denpasar, but Jalan Gajah Mada is inaugurated as the center. This area is often regarded as the Chinatown area of

Denpasar, although in its current development, this area is not only inhabited by Chinese descendants, but also other ethnic descendants.

A number of studies related to the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada have been carried out, but all of them tend to look at the tourism aspect or the architecture of the buildings (Rinyanthi et al. 2018; Runa, Warnata, and Mahaputra 2011; Wijaya and Giriwati 2019; Yusiana 2016). None of them look at the languages used in the outdoor signboards placed in the area. Whereas research on language choice in the linguistic landscape is closely related to economic development which is also related to tourism development as seen in the Macao heritage area in China (Yan 2018). In other words, the research on language choice for the

outdoor signboards is as important as other research in other to develop the tourism aspect as well as the economic aspect. The language itself has its own power for a great economic aspect by using it for marketing (Hult and Kelly-Holmes 2019), it is also useful as a language learning object (Barni 2014; Gorter 2018; Shang and Xie 2019)

The heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada is developed as a tourism object, but since it's establishment as the tourism object in 2011, this area showing no great improvement. This place just like other bussiness area which is visited mostly by those who just wants to buy or sell something, not by those who wants to do sightseeing as a tourist. Considering the statement that the language has its great power for marketing (Hult and Kelly-Holmes 2019), we can say that the language use in the area may contribute to the successfulness or unsuccessfulness of the tourism object development, because language can provide a very important service of information needed by the tourist.

The outdoor signboards in Jalan Gajah Mada heritage area are interesting object of research considering the many ethnicities that contribute to the languages used in the outdoor signboard. However, until now, there has been no research that focuses on examining how the contestation of languages on outdoor signboards in Jalan Gajah Mada heritage area. Since this area covers several streets and places and it is very vast, the research is only limited to a road section designated as the center of this heritage area, namely Jalan Gajah Mada. This road was chosen because it has a wide variety of observation objects such as outdoor signboards on government offices, places of worship, shops, banks, and so forth. This condition gives a great variation for the top down and bottom-up outdoor signboard classification.

Research on the linguistic landscape on a road is not a new object. Research like this has been done by Rosenbaum, et al. in 1977 to analyse the use of English on Keren Kayemet Street in Jerusalem (Cenoz and Gorter 2006). The results of the analysis show that there has been a contest between Roman and Hebrew writings, but language policy favors the use of Hebrew scripts. The use of Roman writing is more common in bottom-up than top-down group outdoor signboards. English as a third language is more likely to be used for commercial purposes (Cenoz and Gorter 2006).

With reference to this research, Cenoz and Gorter (2006) also made a study by comparing two streets in two different cities. They use only one object in each city. There are two cities used as research sites, namely Donostia city in Spain and Ljouwert city in Netherlands. Each of these cities has two official languages, Basque and Spanish in Donostia city, while Frisian and Dutch in Ljowert city. The results of their research show that in Donostia city, the most languages use in the outdoor signboard was Spanish in the first place, followed by Basque and English in the second and third place. In Ljowert city, Dutch became the the most language use in the outdoor signboard, followed by English and Frisian.

The heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada as the object of this research is an area located in Denpasar City, Bali Province, Indonesia. As an area within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Indonesia, this area should be subject to the national political policy regarding the use of Indonesian as the national language which refers to the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 63 of 2019 concerning the Use of the Indonesian Language. In addition, this area must also follow the regulations issued by the Governor of Bali regarding the use of the Balinese language as stated in the Governor of Bali Regulation Number 80 of 2018 concerning the Protection and Use of Balinese Language, Script, and Literature as well as the Implementation of the Balinese Language Month. (Pemerintah Provinsi Bali 2018).

The linguistic landscape is a display that shows the use of language in public spaces that is built symbolically (Shohamy and Gorter 2009). Public spaces provide various research objects in the form of written language on signboards, bulletin boards, advertisements, topographic information and regional maps, emergency instructions, and so forth. Research on language in the public space is an invaluable tool for exploring the existence of different languages and writings in a particular area (Backhaus 2007, 141).

The languages in various signboards in public spaces are addressed for the public domain, not limited only for certain groups of readers. The variety of languages and writings therein reflects the linguistic landscape of the area in question (Backhaus 2007, 1–5). Based on the languages used in the public space, readers can find out which languages are accepted in the area. In addition to

showing certain messages, these languages can also be used as language learning materials in “real” situations and can be used as materials in conducting comparative linguistic analysis.

So far, Linguistic Landscape has received little attention in terms of language planning. Based on a large-scale study of language politics, Leclerc (1994) shows that there are thirty countries and states that have passed the regulation of language use in public spaces, one of which is Indonesia (Landry and Bourhis 1997). The linguistic landscape can be used as an effective method to determine the evolution of an urban space because the linguistic landscape shows the identity of the city by defining the language used by its inhabitants at that time. The language policy has a very important relation to the linguistic landscape (Savski 2021; Wang and Xu 2018).

There are two main problems in this study. The first is the language contestation in the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada in Denpasar City, Bali in terms of linguistic landscape. The second is the implementation of Bali government policies for the regulations issued by the Governor of Bali regarding the use of the Balinese language.

The result of this study can be used as a reflection on how the society maintain the language. By considering the result of this study, the government can determine the language policy and start thinking the importance of language use in maintaining the area to provide a proper information for everyone.

## 2. METHODS

Data analysis in this study was carried out using linguistic landscape theory based on descriptive qualitative method. The data analysed in the form of photos taken in December 2019, January 2020, and April-July 2021. Data collection was carried out using the observation method and was carried out in the heritage area of Denpasar City by focusing observations on the Gajah Mada Street. The data collected in the form of photos of name board, signage, announcements, advertisements, and banners. There are 275 photos that met the requirements for analysis.

The photos are classified based on several variables, those are the type of outdoor signboards, the maker, the number of languages, the number of scripts. Types of outdoor signboards are grouped into 21 consisting of shop name boards,

bank names, names of places to eat, street names, market names, place names, government agency names, coffee shops, information, advertisements, announcements, congratulations, prohibitions, traffic signboards traffic, public service advertisements, road signboards, police stations, drugstore names, places of worship, government project information boards, and alley names.

The outdoor signboards can be classified into the top-down and bottom-up categories, based on the maker of the signboard (Cenoz and Gorter 2006). The data groups that fall into the top-down category are outdoor signboards made by the government, while the bottom-up category are outdoor signboards made by the non-governmental parties.

Classification was also done by defining the number of languages used. This is also related to the position of these languages to other languages in an outdoor signboard. The last variable is the script used in the outdoor signboard. This script refers to Roman script, Balinese script, or other letters that may appear on outdoor signboards in this area.

## 3. RESULTS

### Outdoor Signs in the Heritage Area of Jalan Gajah Mada

The Heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada is a street in the middle of Denpasar city which is a business center area. Shops in this location are mostly owned by Chinese descendants. Along Jalan Gajah Mada, businesses found not only common shops, but also coffee shops, restaurants, and banks, as well as temples and government offices.

The relationship between language and identity has been an issue in various studies since long time ago and it is very common to see an area with a number of outdoor signs that use more than one languages (Banda and Jimaima 2017; Pakarinen and Björklund 2018). This can also be seen in the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada. However, the results of the analysis show that the main language spoken in this region is Indonesian.

Every shop and other businesses along Jalan Gajah Mada have their own signboards which show their names. In addition to the signboard that was made by the business owners, the Denpasar city government also made a signboard with a blue color background and written in Roman and



Fig. 3. Shop names on Jalan Gajah Mada

Balinese script. However, unfortunately not all the shop's names are still in good a condition. Some of them have their color changed into light blue or even just white. This condition can be seen in figure (3).

The outdoor signs in this area can be divided into top-down (made by the government) and bottom-up (made by the private sector). The bottom-up classification is further divided into outdoor signs made by business owners and outdoor signs made by owners of the products sold in a shop/business place. Quantitatively, the 275 outdoor signs can be divided into top-down classification (113 outdoor signs) and bottom-up classification (162 outdoor signs). From 162 outdoor signs which belong to the bottom-up classification, 142 outdoor signs were made by the business owner and 20 outdoor signs was made by the product owners marketed in the business place. The details can be seen in figure (4) below.

According to the types of outdoor signs, the results show that store names are the most common outdoor signs, both from top-down and bottom-up classifications. This is due to the condition of the Jalan Gajah Mada area which consists of various shops, ranging from textile shops, electronics stores, drug stores, office stationery, to hardware stores.

Top-down outdoor signs are outdoor signs made by the government, but in this area, outdoor signs showing shop names are generally made by shop owners – in this case private parties – are also found in the top-down classification. Basically, the shop's name was created by the shop owner, but the design of the signboard was made by the government. The design is in the form of a blue color background with white letters. Balinese script is written on the top of the board horizontally, while Roman script are written vertically. The written Balinese script is a transliteration of the Roman

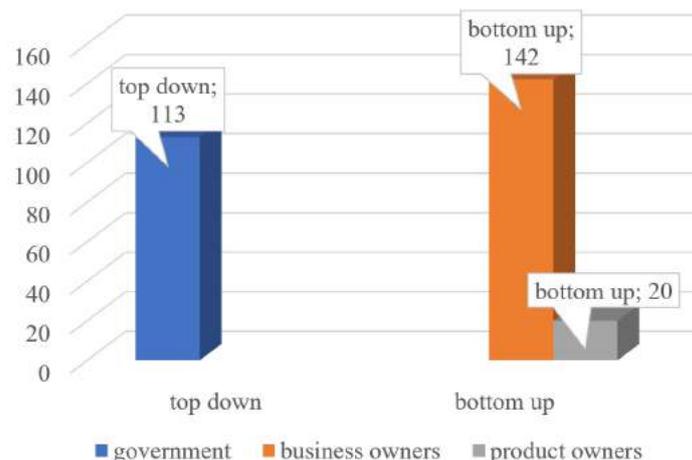


Fig. 4. Top-down and bottom-up classification chart

script which are the shop names. This board was made by the Denpasar city government as an effort to support this area as a tourism object.

In table (1) below the top three of outdoor signs in the top-down classification are shop names (26), information boards (13), and traffic signs (11). For the bottom-up classification, the top three position are shop names (107), advertisements (15), and names of places to eat (7), congratulatory messages (7), drugstore names (7).

**Table 1. Top-down and bottom-up classification**

No	Type of business	Numbers based on its classifications	
		top-down	bottom-up
1	shop name	26	107
2	drugstore name	0	7
3	bank	9	4
4	restaurant	1	7
5	street name	7	0
6	aisle name	1	0
7	market name	1	0
8	place name	2	0
9	government institusion name	3	0
10	coffee shop	1	4
11	information	13	4
12	adverstisement	6	15
13	announcement	7	4
14	congratulatory words	2	7
15	prohibition	4	3
16	traffic signs	11	0
17	public service Advertisement	8	0
18	street sign	7	0
19	police station	2	0
20	temple	1	0
21	government project information board	1	0

The number of signboards that use the government design should be equal to the number of businesses in this area. However, it turns out that the existence of the board shows inconsistency. Not all of them have the “blue signboard”. Some of them have signboard with different name from the one on the blue signboard. This was caused by a change in the ownership of the shop so that the name of the shop changed, but the blue signboard remained unchanged. In addition, in several shops

it was seen that the signboard of the business name made by the government were not well maintained, unreadable, some had even changed color to white.

This condition shows us that the development of the business is not accompanied by government efforts to organize this area, especially outdoor signs that display information about shop names.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### Contestation of Languages on Outdoor Signs in the Heritage Area of Jalan Gajah Mada

The use of languages in Jalan Gajah Mada heritage areas shows the diversity. There are six languages appear in the signboards in this area. Indonesian is the most language appear in the signboard, followed by English, Mandarin, Arabic, Balinese, Japanese. Historically, Indonesian language is the *lingua franca* of different ethnic groups in Indonesia. Since Jalan Gajah Mada is the place where various ethnic groups interact to each other, Indonesian language is the main choice for communication because it is understood by everyone.

Due to the development of this area into a tourist destination, the foreign language, especially English, is started to be used in the signboard. An outdoor sign can consist of one, two, three, or even four languages. Quantitatively, the number of outdoor signs that use certain types of language can be seen in the following diagram.

**Table 2. The language(s) use in the sign board**

No	Language(s) name	Number
1	Indonesian	174
2	English	13
3	Mandarin	2
4	Arabic	1
5	Indonesian & English	66
6	Indonesian & Arabic	4
7	Indonesian & Balinese	4
8	Indonesian & Mandarin	2
9	English & Mandarin	1
10	English Arabic	1
11	Indonesian, English, Mandarin	2
12	Indonesian, English, Arabic	3
13	Indonesian, Balinese, English	1
14	Indonesian, English, Mandarin, Japanese	1

The signboard does not always use only one language. In a single outdoor sign, multiple

languages can appear together. There is an outdoor sign that even use four languages simultaneously. This outdoor sign was found in a coffee shop, namely Bhineka Djaya. This further will be explained below in the explanation of figure (9).

Indonesian language is used in almost every outdoor sign in this area, in the form of business place names, government offices, banners, advertisements and others. This can be seen in Figure (5). Quantitatively, there are 174 outdoor signs that only use Indonesian.



Fig. 5. Sign board written in Indonesian

Figure (6) shows several outdoor signs that only use English. There are 13 outdoor signs like this.



Fig. 6. Sign board written in English

Quantitatively, the frequency of English occurrence in the signboard is the second after Indonesian. However, the English mostly use in the signboard along with the Indonesian language. There are 66 signboards that use Indonesian and English simultaneously. The types of the signboard are shop names, restaurant names, place names,

information, advertisements, announcements, traffic signs, public service advertisements, road signs, police posts, and drug store names.

On outdoor signs that use Indonesian and English there is no provision that Indonesian appears before English or vice versa. The use of Indonesian and English are complementary. The English used is not the result of a translation from the existing Indonesian language, but as additional information from what has not been conveyed in Indonesian. This can be seen in Figure 7.



Fig. 7. Signboard written in Indonesian and English

In addition to signboard in two languages, there are signboards in three and four languages. On an outdoor sign with three or four languages, it is certain that the two languages that are always present are Indonesian and English. Outdoor signs that use three languages are found in types of outdoor signs in the form of shop names, advertisements, and drugstore names. Examples of outdoor signs that use three and four languages can be seen in figures (8) and (9).

Figure (8) is an outdoor sign in the form of an advertisement placed in a drug store. The main message is written in Chinese and in Mandarin because the product offered is a Chinese product, judging by the name of the product, which is "Naoxintong capsule". The product description is written in English "capsule". The advertisement uses Indonesian, English, and Mandarin. Most of the information provided is written in Indonesian.

Information in English only shows the name of the drug, while information in Chinese shows the benefits of the drug.



Fig. 8. Sign board written in 3 languages

Figure (9) is also an advertisement. The advert is for a coffee shop selling Balinese coffee under its own brand. Product types and product brands are translated into English only, but advertising slogans are also translated into Japanese and Chinese. On this signboard, the position of Indonesian is always above English. Japanese and Mandarin are placed between Indonesian and English. This ad is the only outdoor sign in four languages.



Fig. 9. Sign board written in 4 languages

The use of several different languages is usually followed using several scripts that accompany the language. In outdoor signs like this, Indonesian is always present even though it is not always in the main position. In the picture (9) above, the main message to be conveyed is “kopi bali”. The phrase “kopi bali” is followed by its English translation, “Bali coffee”, but in the brand name, this position is changed. The brand in English is written above, “the butterfly globe brand”, while the name in Indonesian is written below, namely “kupu-kupu bola dunia”. Subsequent messages were written in four different languages, in order of Indonesian, Japanese, Mandarin, and English. This writing order seems to be made more on aesthetic appearance, because with the same font size, Indonesian is written the shortest, while English is

written the longest, so it is placed at the bottom. In addition, the same script used by Indonesian and English makes messages written in these two languages something that is easily caught by the eye.

In addition to the use of language, contestation is also seen in the use of letters. In Figures (8) and (9), the letters used are adjusted to the language used. Japanese messages use Japanese characters, while Chinese messages use Chinese characters.

If we see the contestation of the languages use in the area, we can see clearly that this area is not prepared for international tourism object because the outdoor signboards mostly written in Indonesian language. This area has lack information in English. Futhermore, from the fact that Indonesian is the main language in the area, we can conclude that people in this area tend to emphasize their identity as Indonesians rather than as citizens of a certain ethnicity. The function of linguistic landscape as a tool to know where the signboard took place can not be seen from the language(s) used in the signboard in this area. We know the information about the location of signboards not from the language(s), but from the Balinese script which is used in the signboard.

### Implementation of Government Policy on Outdoor Signs in the Heritage Area of Jalan Gajah Mada

The heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada as the object of research is an area located in the city of Denpasar, Bali Province, Indonesia. As an area within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Indonesia, this area should be subject to the national political policy regarding the use of Indonesian as a national language which refers to the Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 63 of 2019 concerning the Use of the Indonesian Language. In addition, this area must also follow the regulations issued by the Governor of Bali regarding the use of the Balinese language as stated in the Governor of Bali Regulation Number 80 of 2018 concerning the Protection and Use of Balinese Language, Script, and Literature as well as the Implementation of the Month of Balinese Language.

The regulation issued by the Governor of Bali state the use of Balinese in article 3. It mentions that Balinese as a means of (1) communication in Balinese family life; (2) communication in all Hindu religious activities, customs, and Balinese

culture; and (3) providing information on public services, both in government institutions and private institutions as Indonesian language companion. In addition to the use of Balinese language, Article 6 of the Governor’s Regulation also regulates the use of Balinese script which is placed above Roman script in writing names of places of worship for Hindus, traditional institutions, inauguration of buildings, buildings, government institutions, private institutions, roads, tourism facilities, and other public facilities.

With the issuance of the governor’s regulation, the design of signboards, both for government and private institutions, which previously only contained Roman script, turned into signboard written using Balinese script and Roman script with Balinese script positioned above Roman script. However, the language written using the Roman script is not always Balinese, but also Indonesian or even foreign languages.

Long before the regulation was issued, the Denpasar city government had taken steps to use Balinese script in writing the names of shops, restaurants, banks in the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada Denpasar. The shop name is written in the signboard in the same design for all the business place in the area. The name of the shop using Balinese script is written horizontally at the top and the name is written using Roman script written vertically at the bottom.

Unfortunately, this design is not updated based on the new regulation from the Governor of Bali. The area was beautified by adding several ornaments, but the design of the signboard was not maintain properly.

Not all the outdoor signboard in the area follows the regulation. There are various types and designs of outdoor signboard. In figure (10), the shop name is written using Roman script and Balinese script. Signboard like this is the most common things that fall into the top-down classification.

The name of the temple as a place of worship and the name of Bank Mandiri as the name of a state-owned company can clearly be classified as top-down outdoor signs because both were made by certain authorities who are above the community. However, the shop name in figure (10) cannot easily be classified into top-down or bottom-up groups even though they are both private businesses.

Implementation of Bali governor regulation



Fig. 10. Top-down shop name



Fig. 11. Government office name

no. 80 of 2018 is clearly visible on the signboard of government offices name, as shown in figure (11).

The signboard has a red and white background, with Balinese script on top of Roman script. Balinese script is a transliteration of information written in Roman script.

Although the shop name in this area has the same design which was made by the Denpasar City government, but a different case was found in the signboard for “Restaurant Hong Kong”. The signboard for this restaurant name contains Balinese script, but the design was made by the owner of the restaurant, there is no government intervention involved. Thus, this outdoor sign belongs to the bottom-up group.



Fig. 12. Outdoor signboard written in Roman and Balinese Script

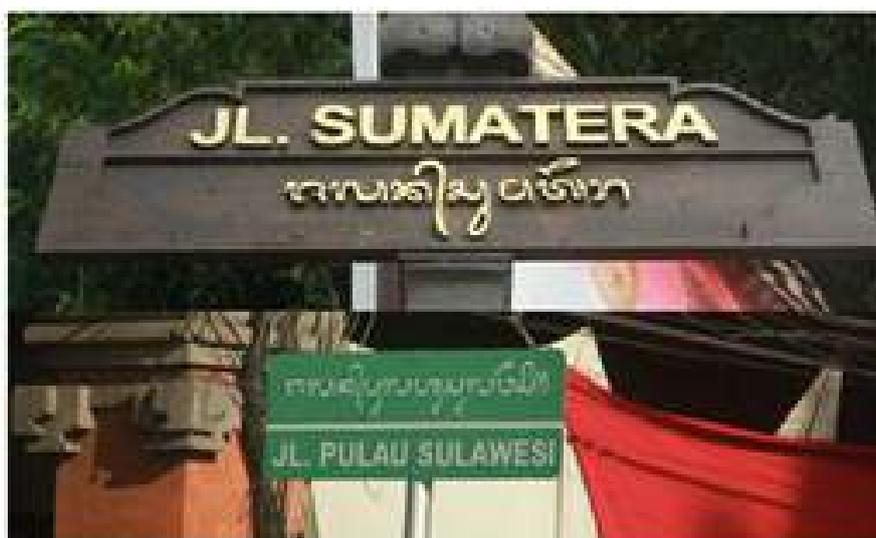


Fig. 13. Street signboard with Roman script and Balinese script

The outdoor signboard in figure (11) shows the consistency of the position of the Balinese script above the Roman script on the top-down outdoor signboard made by the government, although this can not be seen in the bottom-up outdoor signboard made by the private sector like the signboard for “Restaurang Hong Kong”. However, in several cases, the government also found inconsistencies in placing Roman script and Balinese characters as shown in Figure (13).

These two street signboards are government-made signboards, but the positions of the scripts are different. On the street name “JL. SUMATERA”, Balinese script are written at the bottom, while on the street name “JL. PULAU SULAWESI”,

Balinese script are written at the top. These two things show a contradiction. This shows that the implementation of Governor Regulation No. 80 of 2018 has not been fully implemented.

The position of the Balinese script under the Roman script does not also mean that the outdoor signboard violates the regulations because in Presidential Decree No. 63 of 2019, section 12, article 33 it is stated that in the national language politics, Indonesian is the main language. Indonesian is used for the names of hotels, inns, factories, places of business, and so forth. If the place has historical value, it can be written in a regional language, but the regional language must be written in Roman script and can be accompanied

by regional script.

In the case of street names above, it can be said that the writing system of “JL SUMATERA”, it follows the regulation state in the Presidential Decree No. 63 of 2019, while for “JL. PULAU SULAWESI” the writing system follows the Bali Governor Regulation No. 80 of 2018. However, this still must be explored whether the method of writing is already an implementation of the existing regulations or just a coincidence considering that the existing regulations were only published in 2018, while the road signboard is not known when it was made.

## 5. CONCLUSION.

Based on the discussion above, it can be said that Indonesian is the majority language in the heritage area of Jalan Gajah Mada eventhough this area is mostly inhabited by Chinese descendant. The number of outdoor signboards that use the Indonesian language alone is 174 out of 275 outdoor signboards. The second language that is widely used is English. Both Indonesian and English can be found on outdoor signboards independently or together. The use of Indonesian

language as the main language in the area shows that the people in this area tend to emphasize their identity as Indonesians rather than as citizens of a certain ethnicity.

The implementation of government policies was seen from the regulation in positioning the Balinese and Roman script in accordance with Governor Regulation Number 80 of 2018. This regulation was fully implemented only for the signboard for government offices name because others signboard has not been implemented it consistently. This can be seen obviously in the signboard for the street names. several street names has different design, especially for the positions of Balinese and Roman script. Though the street name obviously is a top-down signboard, which is of course made by the government, it seems that the language-related regulation have not been fully implemented.

The government have to take in to account the use of language and maintain the signboard in this area. They have to make sure that the signboard really usefull in providing the information needed by the tourist if they really want to develop this place as a tourist attraction.

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