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# Multilingualism in Sunan Ampel Tomb Complex:
# A Linguistic Landscape Study

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***Abstract***

*The present study focuses on the languages operating on the written signage that contribute directly to the formation of the linguistic landscape. The study chose Sunan Ampel Tomb in Surabaya, Indonesia, as one of the sites that has become a heritage conservation due to the history hidden in the site. This site is a part of the other sites in a series leading to the history of nine saints (Wali Songo) who brought Islam to Indonesia through one of the islands, Java. The study aimed at describing the linguistic landscape of the site to help learn about the languages operating on the signage found in Sunan Ampel Tomb complex and the hidden history leading to multilingual multilingualism in the area. By using a direct observation and interview to gather the data, the study informs that the sites are typically dominated with Indonesian language operating in monolingual signage. Despite a few in number, the multilingual signage can still be found to depict several languages including English, Arabic, and Indonesian language. The domination of Bahasa Indonesian demonstrates the implementation of policy for using the language as the national language. While English and Arabic are used for the business purpose. The study also discovers the characteristics of the language displaying on the signage from the size of the fonts. In conclusion, linguistic landscape in Sunan Ampel Tomb describes the history of how the saint brought Islam to the society. Arabic artifacts stereotyping Islam existence can hardly be found here, and it becomes a proof the saint taught Islam without trying to change the already existing customs, cultures, and languages as well.*

**Introduction**

The study of the linguistic landscape (LL) focuses on how language(s) are represented in public space (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Van Mensel et al., 2017) Any visible display of written language (a «sign»), as well as people›s interactions with these signs, can be the subject of research. As a result, it is a highly interdisciplinary research subject, with ideas and disciplines ranging from language policy to sociology to semiotics to literacy studies to anthropology, social and human geography, politics, and urban studies. The idea of what constitutes LL research has expanded.

The linguistic landscape, according to Landry & Bourhis (1997), comprises public road signs, government building public signs, billboards, street names, place names, and even commercial shop labels. Yet, the area has integrated and accepted a variety of theoretical and epistemological positions, created new approaches, and encompassed a wide range of linguistic artifacts beyond those initially identified by Landry and Bourhis. In addition, language on posters and even graffitti, according to Gorter and Cenoz, can also be utilized to construct linguistic landscapes (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015). The observations of the linguistic landscape are concerned with language usage, as well as syntactic and semantic aspects (Grishaeva, 2015).

The linguistic landscape research is recognized as an innovative approach to multilingualism, concentrating on the observation of public signs or written material in public settings that incorporate language signs (Gorter, 2006). Moreover, the diversity of languages in LL is influenced by multilingualism which has become a common phenomenon worldwide. Language diversities existing all around the globe carry important implications for individuals and societies. Gorter (2009) categorizes numerous factors in the LL›s multilingualism setting. One of the factors is historical or political movements like imperialism and colonialism. In this situation, the spread of some languages, such as Spanish, to Latin America leads to the coexistence of various languages. Then, there are economic movements, such as migration. The weak economies of some areas and countries results in movements of the population to other countries and to the development of multilingual and multicultural communities in the host countries. Another factor is the increased communication among people in different parts of the world, as well as the growth of more widely spoken languages. This is a situation in which new technologies and science are being developed. English is the most widely spoken language, and millions of individuals speak it in addition to their native tongue. Interest in minority language preservation and resurrection, as well as social and cultural identity. This interest creates situations in which two or more languages co-exist and are necessary in everyday communication. Additionally, in education, second and foreign languages are part of the curriculum in almost every country. Finally, religious movements result in people moving to a new country.

Unlike Gorter, Landry & Bourhis (1997) simplifies that LL of a territory serves two factors: functions and symbols. According to Van Mensel et al., (2017), this reflects ethnolinguistic vitality and directly indicating the power and status of linguistic communities of speakers in a particular setting. Several previous research have similar discursive, they use linguistic landscape to identify and to recognize the status of different languages operating on the written symbols to tell or indicate the power and status of linguistics communities in particular settings (Alfaifi, 2015; Backhaus, 2006). Similar to these research, other research construe symbols as a relative power in spesific sociolinguistic contexts functioning to raise the language awareness (Brueckner, 2013), and to recognize nations and groups' identity (Lu et al., 2020).

Languages used on signs can be assigned distinct values, evoking variances in semiotic meaning and value in different socioeconomically scaled "sites," as we previously

discussed. Lanza and Woldemariam (2014) show that the using of English language and cloning of internal brands are perceived as modernity and prestige by the local people in Ethiopia. At the same vein, in Khamis Mushait Saudi Arabia, people use English more frequent for all commercial purposes in the commercial zones (Alfaifi, 2015), and in three European cities: Paris (France), Berlin (Germany) and Kazan (the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation), the same phenomenon exists that English takes an important role to catch up with globalization (Takhtarova et al., 2015).

Besides semiotic approach, the use of English in LL can be approached from various hierarchically structured sociolinguistic scales of meaning-making Say for example, in a city like Brussels. It is rather difficult—if not almost impossible—to come across a street or square where there is no English to be seen in the landscape. As Brussels is a city which in itself is related to different scale-levels—both regional, national, and transnational, as both the Flemish, Belgian, and de facto European capital (Van Mensel et al., 2017).

LL is open to a highly interdisciplinary research domain, grounded in a wide range of theories and disciplines. Several ethnography research reveals how linguistic diversities occur in language policy (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015). Minority language on the LL is due to some cases like migrations. Migrations from one nation to others has led a territory inhibited by speakers of different languages and cultures. Living as migrant in new territories, they cannot deny the loss of their languages and cultures due to the restrictions made by the policy (Baranova & Fedorova, 2019). Other cases leading to specific issue in LL involve religion movements (*see again* Gorter, 2009). Missionaries migrate to bring religions and they usually immerse with the local territories. In Andalusia, the spread of Islam in the past still can be identified from the minor signage existing along the city (Said & Rohmah, 2018). Such phenomenon is assumed to have more evidence; unfortunately, there is only a few researchers focusing on the topic. Not to mentioning Indonesia, the country with multi-religions is supposed to have rich histories hidden behind every religion movement.

The lack of evidence regarding religion movement that lead to linguistic diversity in LL becomes the focus of the present study. Demographically, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. There are around 225 million Muslims in Indonesia. They constitute in most regions of Java, Sumatra, West Nusa Tenggara, Sulawesi, Kalimantan and North Maluku (Budiarto et al., 2016). Islam was brought into Indonesia throughout a trade-mission in the Java Island. In such mission 9 saints, or commonly named *Wali Songo*, migrates to Indonesia to introduce Islam by immersing into local languages and cultures. From here, it can be assumed that multilingualism in the LL must have been constructed and become potential research to describe LL in specific social contexts.

Due to historical record, Islam in Indonesia was first introduced by the Arabian 9 Saints popularly named *Wali Songo*. In the scripts of historiography in Java, *Wali Songo* is appraised as *waliyullah* or *waliyul amri*, or people who are protected from sins, so that they were given duty to introduce Islam by immersing into the lives of the lay people ((Sunyoto, 2016). Their knowledge and spiritual power made the missions done. People trusted them and finally decided to be their followers, or *ummah*. Due to their decent and blessed way of lives, they stay respected even after their death. Until now, people pilgrimage their tombs and some even still expect their blessings, or *ngalap barokah* (Sunyoto, 2016).

Among the 9 Saints, Raden Rahmat (or known as *Sunan Ampel*) was known as the first Saint coming to Java Island and lived with the people in a region named Ampel Denta, which is located in Surabaya city in East Java province. In Ampel Denta, *Sunan Ampel* built a boarding house (*pondok pesantren*). In the beginning of 15 centuries, the *pesantren* became the education center which influenced regions in Nusantara even overseas. Instead of using Arabic, Sunan Ampel taught Islam using Javanese language and culture. He acculturated Islam teaching

and Javanese cultures so that his mission to teach Islam did not change all existing customs, cultures, and languages of the people; moreover, religion learning became an easy lesson to understand. This had made him closer and even highly respected by the people around Ampel Denta. Therefore, when he passed away, people in Ampel built him a tomb around the mosque (Sunyoto, 2016)) and they stay pilgrimage the tomb until today (Budiarto et al., 2016).

From the historical background, it is then assumed that the areas or complex around Sunan Ampel tomb in Surabaya must have constructed typical characteristics of LL that is potential to be investigated. Moreover, the site is currently listed into the historical heritage conservation targets. The site is one of the nationwide tourism destinations that is currently developed to be visited and pilgrimaged by people all over the country. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, there are no data available for describing the linguistic landscape of the site that will be beneficial for the tourists or pilgrims to understand what is behind the linguistic diversity occurring around the sites. that can guide them a direction prior to their visit to the site.

Based on the elaborations, the present study is aimed to answer several questions,
1. How are multilingualism represented in every single sign found in *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex?
2. What are the implications for the languages operating on the signs?
3. What role does the historical context play in the creation of multilingualism in *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex?

## Method

This study uses a qualitative research approach to investigate and describe the phenomenon that led to the construction of multilingualism in the LL surrounding the Sunan Ampel tomb in Surabaya. Data collection processes were comprised into 2 activities. Firstly, to have a better understanding of the occurrence, an observation was carried out. All Signs, shop labels, and billboards founded around the sites were used as source of data. Then, an interview with the tomb's keeper was also performed to obtain further information needed to back up the observation results.

There were 150 signs collected in the forms of photographs that were taken during the observation on the site. There were more signs found in the sites but some had to be sorted out because they were repetitions, and such data were counted once. For example, there were numerous data "*Khusus Wanita*" on mosque, graveyard area, and toilet, but only one was taken for representing a whole The interview gave information regarding the history hidden and underpin the use of languages on the signs.

The collected data were tabulated and then analyzed based on the languages operating on the signs. They were they grouped according to the number of languages appear in every single sign. The interpretations were made based on the implications of the languages operating on the signs. To serve reliable interpretation and reduce the researchers' subjectivity, interview results were used to triangulate the interpretation. Finally, from the languages identified in the signs, the implications of historical context were figured out.

## Result and Discussion

Languages operating on 150 signs were identified and enlisted accordingly. As they were listed, several signs appeared the same so that they had to be sorted out. After sorting out some signs, there were only 65 signs that can be used as the source of data for the present study. The results as well as the discussions are presented according to the research questions stated previously in the introduction section.

*Multilingualism depicted from the signs found in Sunan Ampel Tomb complex.*
After listing all the signs collected during data collection process, the selected signs were classified 4 types that represented number of languages appear together in every single sign. The results were depicted in Figure 1. The figure presents the results of the number of signs found in shop's signs and billboards in Sunan Ampel's tomb area.
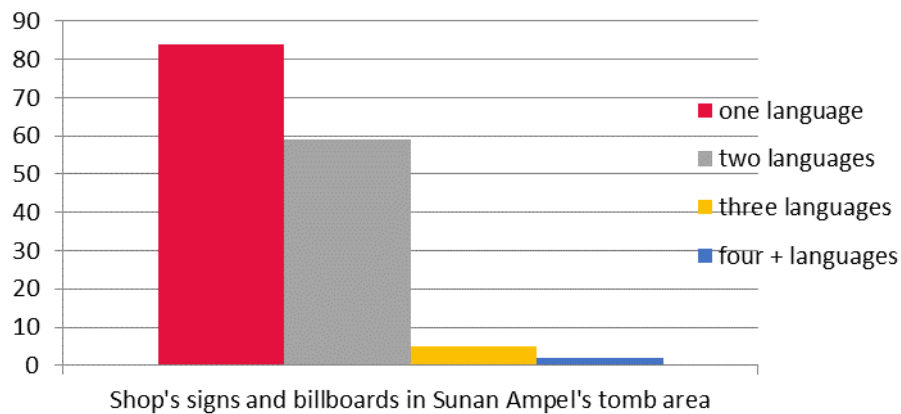


**Figure 1. Signs depicting number of languages operating on the signs**

Figure1 depicts that one language signs are the highest in frequency. It is followed by signs depicting two languages. The next is the signs with three languages, and the last is the signs with four or more languages. This implies that the area of Sunan Ampel's tomb is dominated by the vast majority of the shop's signs and billboards which use one language (around 84 signs), then followed by the signs with two languages (59 signs). There are around 5 signs utilizing three languages, and the rest 2 signs use more than 3 languages.

Signs utilizing a single operating language can be easily identified in many places. In the area of Sunan Ampel Tomb complex, this kind of signage dominate and may characterize the LL along the area. Several similar studies conducted to heritage sites have identified the LL of the sites. Say, in Rome, Gorter (2009) similarly figured out that the linguistic landscape drawn from four different neighborhoods in the city center of Rome is dominated by one language displayed on the signages collected from those four sites. At the same vein, Andalusia is a country whose government supports the use of Spanish as the only official language that has given a great impact on the LL in the country. If there is any other language, say Arabic, it will be in minor existence. Consequently, Spanish language dominates signs in public spaces (Said & Rohmah, 2018). Conversely, Lu, Li, & Xu (2020) unravels the LL of Hongcun Village, a cultural heritage in China that was established during the Song Dynasty 800 years ago. As a well-preserved cultural building, this has been transformed into worldwide destinations registered in the list of UNESCO World Heritage. Signs with a single language is undeniably displayed on the LL without necessarily diminishing the priority of existence Chinese languages and transcriptions.

Monolingual context displayed on most signs dispersed around the area of Sunan Ampel Town has similarities to other areas of studies of the previous research. State language is apparently to be chosen and used to be operated on the signs. This finding is congruent with that fact that Sunan Ampel Tomb has become one of the national heritages that is visited by Indonesia people from different parts of the country. As they live in different islands, provinces, or regions, they have different local languages and dialects. This is one of the reasons validating the use of Indonesian language in most of the signs. Additionally, the tomb's custodian mentioned in the interview that hundreds and even thousands of Muslim

Indonesia coming all over the country pilgrim and pray in the complex of *Sunan Ampel*.

Despite dominance of Indonesia language, some other languages are also used together with the language operating in one signage. Several languages identified to be displayed on the signage are enlisted in Table 1.

**Table 1**
**List of the different languages found on the signage (n = 9).**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. | Indonesian |
| 2. | English |
| 3. | Arabic |
| 4. | Madurese |
| 5. | Javanese |
| 6. | Malay |
| 7. | German |
| 8. | Dutch |
| 9. | Japanese |
| 10. | Chinese |
| 11. | French |

Table 1 enlists all languages that could be diversified. There are a total of 11 different languages found on the shop's signs and billboards in *Sunan Ampel* Tomb area. The languages consist of national language (Indonesian), regional language (Javanese, Madurese), Asian languages (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Malay), and European language (French, Dutch, German, English). The kinds of languages appear on the signs are determined by the languages of the visitors that have come to the site. Overall, Figure 1 depicts the linguistic diversity that makes up the linguistic landscape of the *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex, and the diversity demonstrates that the majority of signs in the *Sunan Ampel* Tomb area are monolingual.

Multilingualism, on the other hand, can still be expressed by the number of languages utilized in a variety of ways, despite its lack of prominence. Figure 2 divides the signs into categories based on the number of languages used in each one, and charts the multilingualism patterns reflected by the number of languages found in *Sunan Ampel* Tomb. It is depicted by the figure that Indonesian language, as the country›s official language, is spoken the most and, in general, dominates the linguistic landscape. On the shop signs and billboards near the Sunan Ampel Tomb area, it is also evident that English and Arabic are usually utilized together with Indonesian. When all signs are gathered and studied, Indonesian language is revealed to be the most used, followed by bilingual Indonesian language and Arabic.
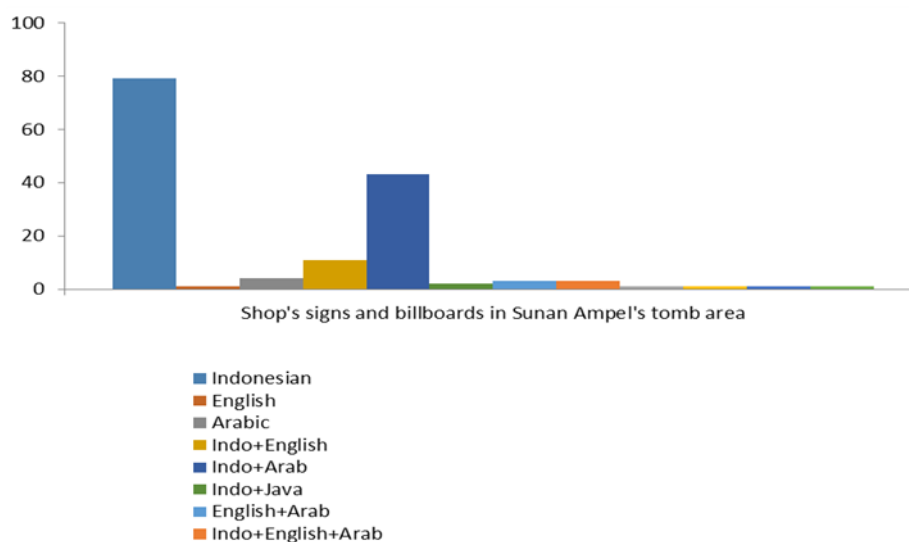
**Figure 2. Languages in the shop's signs and billboards**

Figure 2 figures out that *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex contains multilingualism. This suggests that people of various ethnic backgrounds visit, stay, and even live around the place. As previously said, the Indonesian language is dominant due to policy and its function of bringing people from different parts of the country together to engage. Other languages can also attest to the fact that there are persons, who are native speakers of the language, who have built multilingualism on this site. For example, Arabic is still used in a number of signs. The place is populated by Arabic descendants who are likely the speakers of the language (Mahfudi, 1995). Madurese language, on the other hand, appears to encourage multilingualism in the site for territorial reasons. Surabaya, the capital of Indonesia, is located next to Madura Island. Because this city is the center of trade and business, Madurese come to trade and stay, or even reside permanently in the city. They migrate and carry their language with them, enriching the city's multilingualism. As a result of migration and economic factors, multilingualism has emerged (Grishaeva, 2015)The existence of the Javanese language in the context of multilingualism is due to the fact that Surabaya's population are largely from the Javanese population. Their local language is Javanese language, so it is a good phenomenon that the local language is still preserved here unlike Gilgit in Baltistan that eliminate their local language from operating the signs (Ali, 2020).

Although multilingualism is less common on the site, there is evidence that it does occur, as seen by different languages coming together on a single sign. Multilingualism is mostly developed from two factors: tourist attraction destinations and commerce.

*The implications for the languages operating on the signs*
Arabic words are loaned and adjusted by converting them in the form of writing inscription. The Arabic is mostly written in Latin than in Arabic inscriptions. One most possible reason is, according to (Said & Rohmah, 2018), that Latin is present in commemorative inscriptions. As a result, the Arabic word is assimilated into Indonesian words to make them easy to be understood by Indonesian tourists who visit and pilgrim in the site. Figure 3 shows that it can easily be found along the market walkway the Arabic words that are borrowed and converted into Indonesian inscription depicted in the shops' signs, like *"Rohmah"*, *"Barokah"*, *"Haramain"* *"Rizky"*, and the like.

**Figure 3. The use of Arabic language in Latin in shop's signs**

The usage of Arabic terms in shop labels has the potential to change the perception of tourism destinations in Ampel Tomb. They provide an Arabian atmosphere for guests. Hongcun village, like China, is promoted as a tourist attraction that highlights multilingualism by building a linguistic landscape in the area. Chinese characters are prevalent in the signs, in addition to the English language. This is done in order to give tourists a sense of China›s traditional rural culture (Lu et al., 2020).

Multilingualism can be found in the *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex, where languages are mixed together. Table 2 shows the various language combinations that are active in each sign. The table reveals that 65 signs are influenced by multiple languages. There are 58 signs that have two languages (or are bilingual), and seven signs that contain more than two languages (or multilingual type signs). Combinations of the languages operating on the signs in shops are formed from combinations of Arabic + Indonesian, Arabic + English, Indonesian + Javanese, or Indonesian + English, in terms of their frequency of occurrences. Then there are seven signs that use multiple languages in various combinations. Indonesian + Arabic + English, Indonesian + Arabic + Javanese + English, and Indonesian + Javanese + Arabic are among the three language combinations. The last two signs are multilingual sign types that operate in more than three languages. Indonesian + Arabic + English + Javanese + Madurese + Malay, as well as Indonesian + Dutch + German + French + Chinese + Japanese, are among them.

**Table 2**
**The combination of languages on a single sign**

| Languages operating on the signs | Sign Types | Freq (n) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indonesian + English | Bilingual | 11 | |
| Indonesian + Arabic | Bilingual | 43 | |
| English + Arabic | Bilingual | 2 | |
| Indonesian + Javanese | Bilingual | 2 | 58 |
| Indonesian + Arabic + English | Multilingual | 3 | |
| Indonesian + Javanese + English | Multilingual | 1 | |
| Indonesian + Javanese + Arabic | Multilingual | 1 | |
| Indonesian + Arabic + English + Javanese + Madurese + Malay | Multilingual | 1 | |
| Indonesian + English + Dutch + German + French + Chinese + Japanese | Multilingual | 1 | 7 |
| | | | 65 |

Despite the dominance of the state or national language on monolingual signs and billboards around *Sunan Ampel* Tomb, multilingual signs and billboards can also be found. It has become a regular occurrence among the LL of countries that emphasize the policy of using the state or national language as the primary language of the country (Aristova, 2016; Backhaus, 2006; Baranova & Fedorova, 2019). The fact that English was the initial lingua franca in the multilingual situation can thus be deduced from the findings. Other research (Akindele, 2011; Alfaifi, 2015; Grishaeva, 2015; Lu et al., 2020) have also claimed that English is the global language unifying individuals from all over the world. Furthermore, the existence of the vernacular language is the most remarkable finding concerning the LL in this site. Local languages, especially Javanese and Madurese, have been detected as being in use, which may indicate the burgeoning culture of the people who live in the area around the tomb. Most importantly, the languages used on the signs can indicate the existence of the origin societies that gave rise to the LL of the region. Finally, it's strange that the Arabic inscription is so rare in this location. This contrasts the tomb's history with the fact that the complex is in the same compound as the mosque, a site of worship that, in most other places, exposes the Arabic language and inscription. *Sunan Ampel* merges into the origin communities and bring Islam through cultures and local practices, according to Budiarto et al. (2016), which is one of the possible reasons why Sunan Ampel Tomb complex stereotype Indonesian culture.

A tomb's custodian argued that the existence of multiple languages to operate the signage around the tomb was a sort of outstanding service to all pilgrims. In an interview with the tomb's custodian, it was revealed that the usage of multiple languages in all signage around the tomb's area was intended to assist foreign visitors, as the *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex attracts a large number of them. Pilgrims, researchers, and visitors all flock to the site for a variety of reasons. They are from a variety of nations, including China, Japan, Germany, France, and certain English-speaking countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Their languages are employed as operating languages in some signs to assist them in comprehending crucial information, such as directions to the restroom and the entrance gate.

The interview also revealed information regarding the signage's bilingual background. Figure 4 illustrates the official billboardsign, which operates in seven languages: Indonesian, English, German, French, Dutch, Chinese, and Japanese. Sunan Ampel's tomb complex has two official billboards that use seven languages. One is in front of the market area (as shown in the photo, *see Figure 4*), while the other is in front of the Sunan Ampel mosque staff office. The usage of seven languages on the billboards in Sunan Ampel's tomb complex is for the ease of visitors, according to a tomb custodian. Tourists from the seven languages-speaking countries are common. As a result, the languages shown on the billboards imply that the location has gained international recognition. When compared to prior findings (Sunyoto, 2016)), it is agreed that the usage of seven languages on signage around *Sunan Ampel* Tomb region indicates that the monument is visited by a greater number of individuals from other nations. Some come to see a historical site, while others come to conduct research, and yet others come to learn about Indonesian customs and cultures (Sunyoto, 2016).

*The historical ground underpinning in the creation of LL in the Ampel tomb complex*
There are some histories that support the language choices as they appear in the signs, which then construct the linguistic landscape of *Sunan Ampel* Tomb, which may be discovered in the historical background. Despite the fact that two of the signals appear to be distinct from the others, they represent the condition that lies beneath the indication. Figures 5 and 6 display the signs that use Arabic transcriptions.

It is alarming to find that a location dedicated to commemorating the services of a saint who preached religion to improve people's lives has left no evidence of the authority that might have existed at the time. This is different from what happen in Andalusia (Said & Rohmah, 2018). As mentioned by Said and Rohmah (2018) that Since the Reconquest in the fifteenth century, Arabic inscriptions are no longer visible in most sites in public life in Andalusia. All remnants of Muslim culture were destroyed, including the Arabic language and songs. People were pushed to adapt into Christian faith and culture, abandoning their Arabic, Muslim culture, including the use of Arabic language and inscriptions, as a result of the brutal inquisition. As a result, Arabic inscriptions are no longer found in most public sites in Andalusia. In Indonesia, particularly Surabaya, where Sunan Ampel Tomb is located, such a terrible circumstance has never occurred.



**Figure 4. Photos of sings with the operating languages**

Figure 5 shows the Arabic inscription with the Indonesian language as the official language and English as a lingua franca. Despite the fact that it is utilized to point visitors to a critical location on the site, a restroom, its presence fails to reveal the history concealed behind the inscription's function.

Another Arabic inscription can be found in the only store that use Arabic inscription to label the shop (see Figure 6). Although it cannot be denied that several shops along the markets in *Sunan Ampel* Tomb complex use Arabic words written in Latin, it is strange that only one shop maintains using Arabic transcription. Moreover, the shops and market are located inside the complex of the tomb and mosque .



**Figure 5. The bilingual (Arabic-English) shop's sign**

According to an interview with the tomb custodian, this was influenced by *Sunan Ampel's* practices, who presented the lesson in Javanese language and culture rather than Arabic. Because he utilized Javanese languages more frequently than Arabic at the time, he left only a few relics indicating the Arabic language. This confirms that Sunan Ampel lived during the period of Japanese colonization in history. During this period, neither inside nor outside the mosques, the Arabic language is permitted. (Mahfudi, 1995).

The usage of Arabic words on the shop's signage is solely for business reasons, according to other information obtained from the interview. They strive to create positive

associations with the products for tourists and pilgrims. The things look more enticing as if they were imported from an Arab country when they are labeled with Arabic words. This data is consistent with various previous studies that employ English to improve a company's image so that it is more acceptable and identifiable in the worldwide market. As a result, English is employed in this scenario for business purposes in order to make deals and gain access to global trades and marketplaces (Aristova, 2016; Takhtarova et al., 2015). As a result, finding a language that can convey the history about *Sunan Ampel* in the past is difficult.

**Conclusion**

The study reveals the linguistic landscape of Sunan Ampel Tomb complex by emphasizing on the multilingualism represented in every single sign found in the site. The linguistic diversity of the Sunan Ampel Tomb complex's linguistic landscape reveals that the majority of signs in the Sunan Ampel Tomb area are monolingual. However, multilingual does exist there. Although it is less common on the site, there is evidence that it does occur, as evidenced by different languages coming together on one sign. Multilingualism stems mostly from two factors: tourist attractions and commerce.

The implications of the use of the languages chosen to be used on the signs vary from the reason of maintaining the atmosphere of Islamic heritage to giving excellent services to the people from different nations who pilgrim in the site. The Arabic words and inscriptions that appear on the signage authorize Sunan Ampel Tomb as the site established to commemorate Muslim saint. Therefore, those can help building the ambience so that the visitors or tourist can feel the sense of Islam around the sites. The other implication goes to the reasons of the use of varied languages that are utilized by several signage around the site. The languages represent the languages of the visitors so that the languages are utilized to help them find information easily. Then, the implication is the existence of the local or vernacular languages besides the state and other foreign languages in the site. This is an indication that local people reside around the site and still maintain the local language and culture to grow and use around the site. Finally, the last implication is the use of English language as a lingua franca that will unify all pilgrims from all over the countries who come to the site can have information in a relatively easy way.

The research aims to uncover the historical context that underpins the choice of languages used on signage. Sunan Ampel Tomb, as a religious heritage site, is thought to be rich with religious artifacts. Unfortunate, it can hardly be found in the site the information carried by language chosen on the signage that can represent the saint's journey in teaching Islam in the past.

Sunan Ampel Tomb is one of the religious heritages that has been designated as a conservation area. There are eight other *Wali Songo* tombs that may include special information that can lead to the linguistic landscape of Indonesian religious heritage sites. Further research should be done by identifying each attribute that leads to the linguistic landscape and comparing those nine sites to provide more holistic qualities that appear to form multilingualism and the linguistic landscape. More theoretical and empirical data are still needed, and this area has the potential to be further investigated.

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