



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Language forms, word formation, and meaning in the linguistic landscape of the Berastagi tourism area, Indonesia**Emeninta Prihartini Sitepu¹, Mulyadi^{1*}, Mhd. Pujiono¹ & Dardanila¹¹Linguistic Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia*Correspondence: mulyadi@usu.ac.id**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the linguistic forms, word-formation processes, and functions of public signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area (BTA), North Sumatra, Indonesia. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach based on 153 signs documented across tourism-related public spaces in Berastagi, Merdeka, and Dolat Rayat Subdistricts. Data were collected through photographic documentation and interviews with 12 sign owners, managers, or individuals knowledgeable about the background and meaning of the signs. The data were analyzed from linguistic, morphological, semantic, and multimodal perspectives. The findings reveal that the signage consists of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual forms, with Indonesian being the most dominant language (50.3%), followed by English (15.0%), Indonesian–English (12.4%), and Indonesian–Karo (7.8%). The linguistic diversity also includes Batak, Chinese, Arabic, Minang, and Javanese. In terms of word formation, endocentric compounds constitute a prominent pattern, occurring in noun + noun (N+N), noun + adjective (N+Adj), noun + verb (N+V), and noun + noun + conjunction + noun (N+N+Conj+N) structures, alongside abbreviations and acronyms. Functionally, signage predominantly serves an informational function, realized through appeals, prohibitions, directional instructions, facility and service information, and warnings. The symbolic function, meanwhile, reflects modernity, local identity, and economic interests.

KEYWORDS: Berastagi Tourism Area, linguistic landscape, multilingualism, public signage, word formation

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1. Introduction

The development of tourism facilities such as hotels, restaurants, and shops has led to the presence of various signs in tourist areas. These signs are installed to indicate the locations of tourism facilities. Signs are also used as a medium to promote products and services offered to tourists. According to Jaworski and Thurlow (2010), signs not only convey information but also shape a place's image through language and visual elements, thereby attracting visitors. Upon closer examination, each sign can convey a message directly to tourists who read it, in accordance with the information it contains and the purpose for which it was installed. This phenomenon of communication in public spaces is an interesting topic for further study, particularly regarding the use of language on the various signs found in the area.

One factor of concern is the language used on signage. The language used on signs can affect the effectiveness of communication and tourists' understanding of the intended message; naturally, tourist areas are highly dependent on the languages spoken in the region. This means that the use of language on signs in a tourist area reinforces the area's identity, since the first thing tourists encounter is written language in public spaces, followed by the spoken language used by tourism stakeholders. Thus, the initial linguistic contact in a tourist area occurs through the use of language on signs in public spaces (Lytra, 2012).

The use of language on signs in public spaces in the Berastagi tourism area has become increasingly diverse as tourism in the region has grown. One example is the use of English in the tourism sector, which, according to Wibowo (2018), aims to attract both domestic and international tourists and plays a crucial role in promoting tourist attractions to stimulate visits and increase the number of tourists, thereby generating economic incentives for consumers. This occurs because of the economic system linked to the tourism sector, which necessitates adapting the language used in public spaces to meet tourists' needs. Khazanah and Kusumaningputri (2021) confirm that economic considerations primarily drive the use of English on signage in tourist areas. English is chosen because it is commercially valuable and can enhance a business's appeal and reach a broader range of tourists.

The use of languages and their variations indicates the multi-ethnic composition of a region's population (Mulyadi et al., 2021; Yusuf et al., 2023). This demonstrates that as an area develops, its linguistic diversity increases. Such diversity is evident in the signage displayed in public spaces. Language use in the public spaces of Berastagi is highly varied; foreign and regional languages feature prominently alongside others in this tourist area. Consequently, the presence of multilingual signage signals the arrival of international tourists and demonstrates that signage choices are tailored to their needs.



Figure 1. Welcome Signage
Source: Writers' documentation, 2024

Based on field observations and documentation, multilingual signage was observed at a tourist attraction on Jalan Perwira, Gundaling I Village, Berastagi Subdistrict. The sign uses three languages simultaneously, English, Indonesian, and Karo, with the text "Welcome - Selamat Datang - Mejuah-juah." Although this reflects linguistic diversity, the multilingual usage does not appear to have been systematically organized or to follow a consistent pattern. This situation has the potential to cause confusion among visitors, particularly tourists who do not understand one of the languages used, thereby reducing the effectiveness of information delivery.

Subsequently, a functional analysis was conducted by describing the informational and symbolic functions as proposed by Landry & Bourhis (1977). The informational function of signage in the linguistic

landscape (LL) is intended to help tourists understand information on signs in public spaces, including language on announcement boards, vehicle rental signs, lodging names, and so on, while its symbolic function is to represent specific cultural symbols, such as demonstrating the power, values, and ideology of a particular community or ethnic group. The symbolic function of language use in public spaces usually carries implicit meaning, whereas the informational function is explicit.



Figure 2. Signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area (BTA)

Source: Writers' documentation, 2024

Signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area (hereinafter abbreviated as BTA) was also analyzed using Ogden and Richards' (1923) concept of referential meaning, combined with an analysis of sign meaning that takes into account multimodal aspects (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Data regarding linguistic meaning were obtained through participant observation of the signage in the BTA, followed by interviews with the creators of the linguistic landscape (LL).

Linguistic landscapes are frequently studied by researchers both in Indonesia and abroad. In Indonesia, linguistic landscape studies have been conducted by Yendra and Artawa (2020), resulting in a book titled *Linguistic Landscapes: Introduction, Explanation, and Application*. In addition, linguistic landscapes have frequently been studied by various researchers through diverse approaches, such as language contestation (Rahmawati, 2022), onomastics, semiotics, and spatial studies (Sahril et al., 2019), as well as studies on messages and symbols of identity (Ardhian et al., 2023) and other related researches. The linguistic landscape has also been examined from various perspectives by researchers outside Indonesia. It has been studied by researchers such as Ben-Rafael (2009), Gorter (2009), Coulmas (2009), and Spolsky (2009), who have analyzed the linguistic landscape from social, sociolinguistic, and economic perspectives.

Furthermore, there are also discussions on the linguistic landscape from the perspective of multilingualism, which examine language variation within a country or region (Barni & Bagna, 2009; Guilat, 2010; Kallen & Dhonnacha, 2010). Additionally, research on the linguistic landscape examines ideologies related to identity and power, as studied by Waksman and Shohamy (2010). The concept of the linguistic landscape is also frequently linked to language policy and planning, as illustrated in Backhaus's contribution to the book edited by Shohamy and Gorter (2009).

Previous studies have demonstrated that linguistic landscapes play a significant role in shaping tourism destinations, particularly in relation to education, business, local identity, and tourists' experiences. Yanhong and Rungruang (2013), for instance, examined the linguistic landscape of Chiang Mai as a tourism destination and highlighted its contribution to educational and business development. Similarly, Thongtong (2016) emphasized that the spatial arrangement and linguistic features of tourist destinations can construct a positive socio-cultural image of local communities, attract visitors, create memorable travel experiences, and enhance tourists' perceptions of safety. Research by Moriarty (2015) in the Dingle region of southwestern Ireland further illustrates how public signage reflects competing linguistic ideologies. Based on observations of frequently visited tourist areas, Moriarty categorized signs according to location, language, type and ownership, and visual characteristics, revealing a tension between the state's "one nation, one language" ideology and local residents' promotion of multilingualism as a means of representing and marketing their region. A similar pattern of linguistic marginalization was identified by Mulyawan (2017) in Kuta Village, where public signage

predominantly represented commercial tourism facilities, with 70.32% of outdoor signs being commercial. Notably, Balinese language or script appeared on only 3.8% of public signs, while no commercial signs used Balinese, indicating the growing dominance of foreign languages in the local linguistic landscape. In a different tourism context, Xiao and Lee (2019) examined the Palace Museum in China and found that although Chinese remained dominant as the official language, English functioned as a **de facto lingua franca**. Its presence was supported by market demands, the popularity of English, language policy, and contextual factors within the museum environment. Collectively, these studies suggest that linguistic landscapes in tourism are not merely communicative resources but also reflect the complex interaction of language, identity, ideology, commercialization, policy, and the needs of international visitors.

This study is significant for two reasons. First, BTA has become a premier tourism destination. Three of the five most famous tourist destinations in Karo Regency are located in the city of Berastagi, which is renowned for its agricultural products and natural beauty (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Situated in the highlands with views of Mount Sibayak and Mount Sinabung, the Berastagi Tourism Area offers breathtaking natural beauty and cool air. At the same time, the unique culture of the Karo people is a major attraction for the city of Berastagi.

Based on this, the objectives of this study are as follows.

1. To present a description of the linguistic forms found on signboards in the Berastagi tourism area.
2. To summarize the functions of the linguistic landscape on signboards in the Berastagi tourism area

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Linguistic Landscape and Its Function

The concept of “landscape” in relation to LL has evolved. One very popular definition of LL can be found in the work of Landry and Bourhis (1997), who define LL as the use of written languages on road signs, billboards, street names, place names, store names, and the names of government institutions as a form of identification and a marker of a region, whether in urban or rural areas. The above definition of LL serves as a starting point and foundation for studies related to LL and its scope.

Furthermore, Gorter (2006) argues that LL is an approach for describing multilingual linguistic situations or linguistic landscapes in a given area. Gorter’s definition of LL is very broad and complex. Therefore, the themes that can be described through LL studies include multilingual situations, language contact, code-mixing, social and cultural aspects, language choice, language shift and change, language variation, the functions and roles of language, the design of language forms and landscapes, and language learning.

A broader scope of the LL concept is also presented by Shohamy and Gorter (2008), namely that LL encompasses language in the form of words and images visible in public spaces. The visual elements of words and images in LL become the center of attention and attract people’s interest in reading them. The above definition confirms that LL encompasses language in public spaces, including both written words and visual elements. Thus, the study of LL analyzes the use of written language from two perspectives: 1) linguistic signs or linguistic units, and 2) nonlinguistic signs or nonlinguistic units.

The functions of LL explain the two main functions of LL usage in a given area, including tourist areas: 1) the informational function and 2) the symbolic function (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The informational function, among other things, indicates that a language is intended for communication, for example, to sell a product or promote a tourist area. The symbolic function refers to the value and status of a language as perceived by a linguistic community in comparison to other linguistic communities. In other words, the symbolic function provides readers with a comparison of one language against another. Furthermore, this aligns with what Landry and Bourhis (1997) state: the informational function is also referred to as the explicit conveyance of a message. Thus, the informational function of LL is intended to help readers understand the information conveyed in public spaces, including language on bulletin boards, vehicle rental signs, lodging names, and so on.

Conversely, the symbolic function reflects the power, values, and ideology of a particular social group

or ethnic group. The symbolic function of language use in public spaces typically carries implicit meaning. The symbolic function in LL can be observed, for example, through the shape and size of letters, color schemes, salience, and other elements that readers implicitly understand. The concept of the factors underlying the informational and symbolic functions was proposed by Dagenais et al. (2009), who emphasized that the informational function conveys explicit meaning through the performance of LL, including color, font type, material, and display style or pattern. Readers can understand the message on LL through color, font type and size, design, and location. Furthermore, according to Dagenais et al. (2009), some factors support the symbolic function of LL; among these factors are the linguistic meaning of LL as it relates to cultural elements, linguistic community identity, linguistic power relations or linguistic dominance, and the linguistic status in which the LL is presented.

Based on their locations, various LL observation studies have been conducted. Researchers such as Dagenais et al. (2009) and Dressler (2015) identified schools as settings where LL is prevalent and warrants study. Next, train stations were examined by Lock (2003) and Backhaus (2006). Hanauer (2009) focused on science laboratories. Two researchers, Jaworski and Yeung (2010), studied apartment buildings. Four researchers, Abousnnouga and Machin (2010) and Shohamy and Waksman (2009), focused on public monuments. LL studies examine the virtual world, specifically, the languages reflected on websites and social media, as conducted by Ivkovic and Lotherington (2009), Jones (2010), and Troyer (2012). Based on the above conceptual description of LL, it encompasses all linguistic aspects across all fields and locations. Furthermore, Gorter (2006) argues that LL is an approach for describing linguistic situations or linguistic landscapes in a given area. If we rely on Gorter's definition of LL, the linguistic landscape of an area, especially a heterogeneous one, is, of course, vast and highly complex.

3. Method

This study was conducted in three subdistricts that are part of the Berastagi tourism area, namely Berastagi Subdistrict, Merdeka Subdistrict, and Dolat Rayat Subdistrict. Berastagi Subdistrict consists of six villages, Daulu, Gurusinga, Lau Gumba, Raya, Rumah Berastagi, and Sempajaya, as well as four urban villages: Gundaling I, Gundaling II, Tambak Lau Mulgap I, and Tambak Lau Mulgap II. However, the research focused on areas with tourism potential and activity, namely the villages of Daulu, Lau Gumba, Raya, and Sempajaya, as well as the urban villages of Gundaling I and Tambak Lau Mulgap II. In addition, research was conducted in the villages of Gongsol, Jaranguda, and Semangat Gunung in Merdeka Subdistrict, as well as in the village of Dolat Rayat in Dolat Rayat Subdistrict. The research data focused on linguistic landscape (LL) texts found on signs installed in these tourist areas. Furthermore, data collection may also be conducted on roads connecting tourist attractions if linguistic landscape texts relevant to the research objectives are found. Thus, this study covers not only the core areas of the tourist destinations but also the public spaces that support tourist activities and mobility within the Berastagi tourism area.

The data in this study consist of written texts and signs found on nameplates in the Berastagi tourism area. The data sources used in this study fall into two categories: primary and secondary. The primary data sources for this study are the nameplates containing text or symbols in the Berastagi tourism area and the informants (the creators of the nameplates). Secondary data were obtained through interviews with informants, specifically, the owners of the nameplates, to gather additional information on the meanings and reasons behind the selection of names and symbols used on the nameplates. Secondary sources were further supported by previous studies relevant to this research. The following are the primary data sources and sign data from the Berastagi tourism area.

The data collection methods used in this study are based on Sudaryanto (2015), who divides them into the "listening" and "speaking" methods. The listening method is a data collection method that involves listening to or observing the use of the language under study. This method is similar to the observation method used in the social sciences (Zaim, 2014: 89). The observation method was carried out through documentation using an Android-based smartphone camera to capture images, specifically, photographs of nameplates found in the

study area, focusing on both linguistic and non-linguistic data, namely the text and symbols on the nameplates in the Berastagi tourism area.

The “talk and record” technique, in the form of interviews with informants (signboard creators), was also employed to obtain accurate, factual data. Interviews were conducted with informants regarding the creation of the signboards and their functions.

Interviews in this study were conducted with 12 informants based on the following criteria:

1. Informants are sign owners, managers, employees, or individuals who understand the background of the sign’s naming and are familiar with the history of the sign’s naming.
2. The selected informants range in age from 20 to 60 years old and include both men and women. This age range was chosen because these individuals are considered to have sufficient experience in running a business and understanding the reasons behind the naming of their signboards.

Informants were selected at random based on signboard naming patterns. During the interviews, a pre-prepared list of questions was used to ensure that all important aspects related to signboard naming, including their meanings, could be elicited from the informants.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Language Forms

Based on data from 153 signs in the Berastagi tourism area, a variety of language forms were found in their presentation. This is due to the diversity of tourists, strategies to attract visitors, efforts to preserve local cultural identity, and the impact of tourism development and globalization. The language forms found on signs in the Berastagi tourism area include those using one language (monolingual), two languages (bilingual), and more than two languages (multilingual). The following table shows the language forms used on signs in BTA.

Table 1. Language Forms in the Berastagi Tourism Area

Displayed Languages	Number	Percentage
Indonesian Language	77	50, 3%
English Language	23	15, 0%
Karo Language	6	3, 9%
Indonesian–English Language	19	12, 4%
Indonesian–Karo Language	12	7, 8%
Indonesian–Batak Language	1	0, 7%
Indonesian–Chinese	2	1, 3%
Indonesian–Arabic Language	1	0, 7%
Indonesian–Minang Language	1	0, 7%
Indonesian–Javaness Language	1	0, 7%
English–Karo Language	6	3, 9%
English–Batak Language	3	2, 0%
English–Indonesian–Karo Language	1	0, 7%
Total	153	100%

Indonesian accounts for the highest usage, with 77 instances, 50.3% of the total data analyzed. This is followed by English usage (23 instances, or 15.0%) and the use of a combination of Indonesian and English (19 instances, or 12.4%). The distribution of these language usages is illustrated in the following diagram.

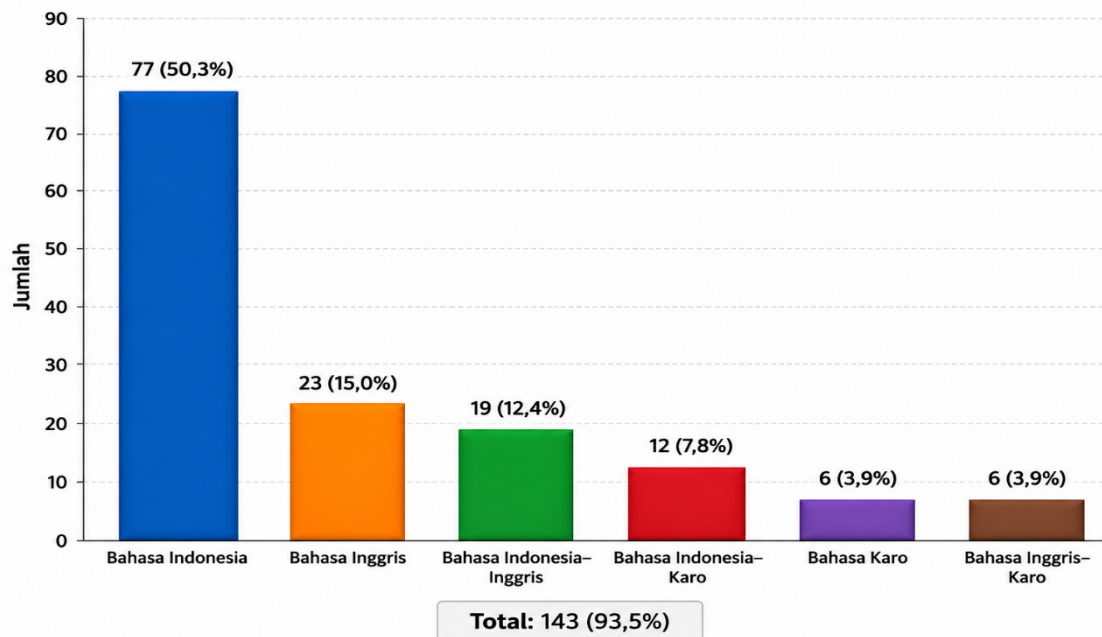


Figure 3. Linguistic forms on signage in the Berastagi tourism area.

Based on the diagram, the use of language on signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area is dominated by Indonesian, accounting for 77 instances (50.3%). This is followed by English (23 instances, 15.0%), Indonesian–English (19 instances, 12.4%), and Indonesian–Karo (12 instances, 7.8%). Meanwhile, Karo and English–Karo each appear in 6 instances (3.9%).

These six language categories account for 143 instances (93.5%) of the total 153 instances. The findings indicate that Indonesian is the most dominant language used for conveying information on signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area. On the other hand, the use of English reflects the area’s orientation toward both domestic and international tourists. In contrast, the presence of Karo, whether used alone or in combination with other languages, represents the local cultural identity preserved within the area’s linguistic landscape.

4.2. Word Formation

4.2.1. Endocentric Compounds

The results of the analysis show that endocentric compounds are a form of word formation found on signs in the Berastagi Tourism Area. Such compounds are formed through a head–modifier relationship, in which one element functions as the head (core), determining the grammatical category and primary meaning, while the other element functions as a modifier, providing identity or specification to the core element. Through the relationship between modifier and head, the signs can convey information about identity, business type, tourist attractions, and services concisely and in a way that is easily understood by both the local community and tourists. Based on morphological structure analysis, the endocentric compositions on the sign can be classified into four patterns: noun + noun (N+N), noun + adjective (N+Adj), noun + verb (N+V), and noun + noun + conjunction + noun (N+N+Conj+N).

4.2.2. Noun-Noun Compound

The results of the analysis show that the noun + noun (N+N) composition is the most dominant pattern found on signboards in the Berastagi Tourism Area. This pattern consists of two morphemes, both of which are nouns, with one morpheme functioning as the head and the other as a modifier. Examples in this category include Dersik Kopi, Uluna Hotel, Puncak Tangke Tabu, Deleng Singkut, and Coffee Shop.

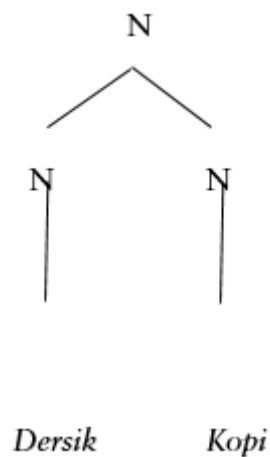
This finding suggests that using two noun elements on signs strikes a balance between identity and information. The modifier element generally takes the form of a place name, brand name, or local cultural element. In contrast, the head element indicates the type of business or object in question, such as coffee, hotel, and peak. Thus, the N+N pattern makes it easier for readers to recognize the sign’s function while distinguishing each business or destination.

The data for Dersik Kopi is a compound consisting of two morphemes: Dersik and Kopi. See the image below.



Figure 4. Dersik Kopi
Source: Writers' documentation, 2025

Based on the figure above, the composition “Dersik Kopi” exhibits a modifier–head (M–D) relationship. The morpheme “Dersik” functions as a modifier that provides identity or specification to the head, while the morpheme “Kopi” functions as the head that determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition. Thus, the element “Kopi” serves as the head of the composition. The relationship between these two morphemes can be explained through the following hierarchical structure.



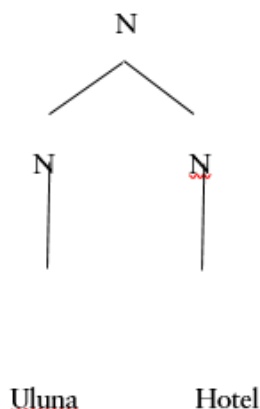
Based on this hierarchical structure, the compound “Dersik Kopi” consists of two morphemes, both of which belong to the noun category. The morpheme “*Dersik*” functions as a modifier, while the morpheme “*Kopi*” functions as the head, which determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the compound. Thus, “*Dersik Kopi*” is an endocentric compound following the noun + noun (N+N) pattern.

Next, the term “Uluna Hotel” is a compound consisting of two morphemes: the morpheme “*Uluna*” and the morpheme “Hotel.” See the image below.



Figure 5. Uluna Hotel
Source: Writers' documentation, 2025

In terms of English word structure, the relationship between the morphemes is a modifier–head (M–D) relationship; consequently, the morpheme “hotel” serves as the head of the compound. The morpheme “*Uluna*” acts as the modifier; the head within this data can be identified in the following hierarchical structure.



Based on this hierarchical structure, “Uluna Hotel” is an endocentric composition following the noun + noun (N+N) pattern. The morpheme “Uluna,” which is categorized as a noun, functions as a modifier that identifies the business, while the morpheme “Hotel,” also categorized as a noun, functions as the head that determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition, serving as both a marker of the business type and an easily recognizable identity for the business among the public and tourists.

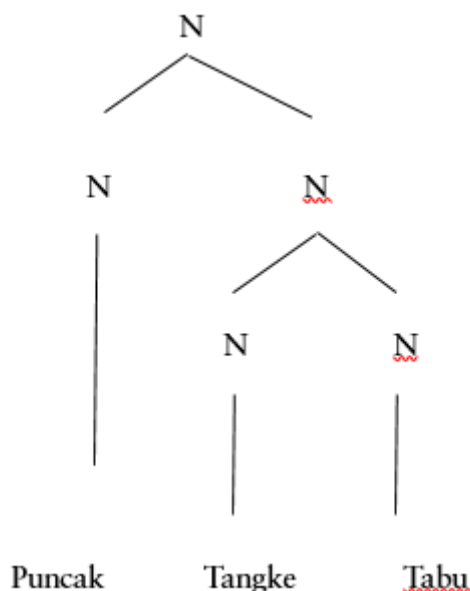
The next data point, *Puncak Tangke Tabu*, demonstrates a compositional process in Indonesian that combines several morphemes. Figure 6 shows a photograph of the entrance to Puncak Tangke Tabu, featuring a wooden structure with a thatched roof and a sign that reads “PUNCAK TANGKE TABU” in red letters.



Figure 6. Puncak Tangke Tabu

Source: Writers’ documentation, 2025

The *Puncak Tangke Tabu* data consists of three morphemes, *Puncak*, *Tangke*, and *Tabu*, all of which are nouns. Based on its compositional structure, this data exhibits a hierarchical head–modifier (D–M) relationship. The morpheme *Puncak* functions as the head, which determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition, while *Tangke Tabu* functions as a modifier that provides identity or specification to the head. Thus, the overall meaning of the composition refers to a peak named Tangke Tabu. The relationship between these morphemes can be explained through the following hierarchical structure.



Based on this hierarchical structure, *Puncak Tangke Tabu* is an endocentric composition following a noun + noun (N+N) pattern. The element “*Puncak*, ” as the head, determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition. In contrast, the element “*Tangke Tabu*, ” as a modifier, provides a more specific identity for the location. This composition serves as a marker for a tourist destination that not only identifies the type of site but also represents local identity through the name “*Tangke Tabu*.” The use of this local name reinforces the character of the Berastagi tourist area while making it easier for both locals and tourists to identify the location.

4.2.3. Noun + Adjective Compositions

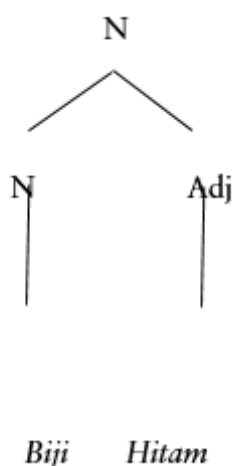
The research findings indicate that noun + adjective (N+Adj) compositions were found in the data for “*Biji Hitam*” and “*Nasi Sejiwa*.” In this pattern, the noun functions as the head, while the adjective modifies the head. In the context of the linguistic landscape, the use of adjectives on signboards is a strategy for building a product’s image. Adjectives not only describe the product’s characteristics but also create a specific impression intended to attract consumers’ attention.

The data entry “*Biji Hitam*” is an endocentric composition following the noun + adjective (N+Adj) pattern, formed by two morphemes: “*Biji*” and “*Hitam*.” The morpheme “*Biji*” is a noun, while the morpheme “*Hitam*” is an adjective. The following image illustrates this data entry.



Figure 7. *Biji Hitam* (LL/BTA/17)
Source: Writers’ documentation, 2025

Based on the image above, the compound “*Biji Hitam*” exhibits a head–modifier (D–M) relationship that is common in Indonesian. The morpheme “*Biji*, ” which is a noun, functions as the head (core) that determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the compound. In contrast, the morpheme “*Hitam*, ” which is an adjective, functions as the modifier (descriptor) that provides characteristics to the core element. Thus, the compound’s overall meaning is “black seed.” The relationship between these two morphemes can be explained through the following hierarchical structure.



Based on this hierarchical structure, it is evident that “*Biji Hitam*” is an endocentric composition following the noun + adjective (N+Adj) pattern. The element *Biji*, as the head, determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition. In contrast, the element *Hitam*, as a modifier, provides a specification for

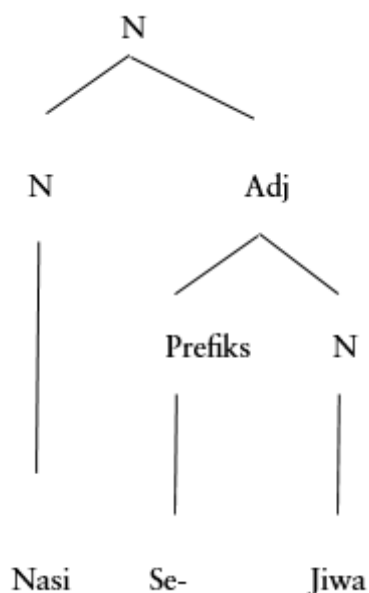
the core element, thereby forming a more specific meaning. This composition refers to the product being offered, namely, coffee beans with specific characteristics associated with the color black or a distinctive flavor. The use of the adjective “Hitam” not only clarifies the product’s characteristics but also reinforces the product’s identity and image as displayed on the sign.

The next example is “*Nasi Sejiwa*,” which is an endocentric composition following the noun + adjective (N+Adj) pattern. This composition is formed by combining the morpheme “*Nasi*,” which is a noun, with the morpheme “*Sejiwa*,” which is an adjective. The morpheme “*Sejiwa*” itself is a derived form created through the process of affixation, specifically the attachment of the prefix “*se-*” to the free morpheme “*jiwa*.” An image of this data is presented below.



Figure 8. *Nasi Sejiwa*
Source: Writers’ documentation, 2025

In the “*Nasi Sejiwa*” example above, it can be seen that the morpheme *Nasi* functions as the head, which determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition, while the morpheme *Sejiwa* functions as a modifier that provides characteristics to the head. The relationship between these two morphemes follows the head–modifier (D–M) pattern common in Indonesian. The morpheme *Sejiwa* is formed by the prefix *se-* attached to the morpheme *jiwa*, resulting in an adjectival form that modifies the morpheme *Nasi*. This relationship can be explained through the following hierarchical structure.



4.2.4. Noun + Verb (N+V) Structures

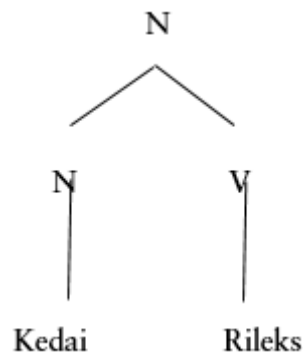
Noun + verb (N+V) constructions were found in the data from *Kedai Rileks* and *Rumah Makan*. This pattern indicates that the noun remains the core element, while the verb functions as a modifier that describes the function or activity related to the core element. The use of this pattern shows that signboards not only identify a place but also convey the experiences or activities offered to visitors. Thus, the verb element plays a role in clarifying the business’s function, making the information conveyed more communicative.

The “*Kedai Rileks*” data is an endocentric composition following the noun + verb (N+V) pattern, formed by two morphemes: “*Kedai*” and “*Rileks*.” The image of this data is presented below.



Figure 9. Kedai Rileks
Source: Writers' documentation, 2025

Based on the figure above, the “*Kedai Rileks*” composition exhibits the head–modifier (D–M) relationship typical of the Indonesian language. The morpheme “*Kedai*, ” which is a noun, functions as the head because it determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition, while the morpheme “*Rileks*, ” which is a verb, functions as a modifier that provides characteristics to the head element. Thus, the overall meaning of the compound refers to a business establishment, a café, that offers a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for visitors. The relationship between these two morphemes can be explained through the following hierarchical structure.



Based on this hierarchical structure, it is evident that “*Kedai Rileks*” is an endocentric composition following the noun + verb (N+V) pattern. The element “*Kedai*, ” as the head, determines the grammatical category and primary meaning of the composition, while the element “*Rileks*, ” as a modifier, provides a specification to the core element, thereby forming a more specific meaning. This composition refers to the name of a business that offers products or services centered on a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.

The next data point, *Rumah Makan Timur*, demonstrates a compositional process in Indonesian that combines several morphemes. Here is an image of the data.

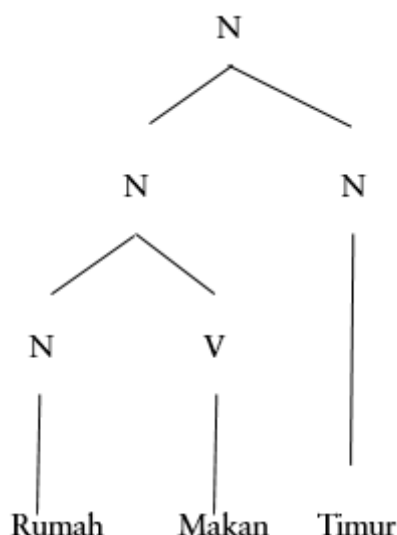


Figure 10. Timur Restaurant
Source: Writers' documentation, 2025

The term *Rumah Makan Timur* is a compound word formed in two stages. The first stage consists of two

basic elements: the morpheme *Rumah*, which is a noun (N), and the morpheme *Makan*, which is a verb (V). These two elements combine to form a new unit, *Rumah Makan*, which is a noun (N). In this compound, the morpheme “*Rumah*” functions as the head because it is the semantic center of the compound, while the morpheme “*Makan*” functions as a modifier that explains the function of the house, namely as a place for eating.

Next, the first compound “*Rumah Makan*” combines with a third element, the morpheme “*Timur*,” which is a noun (N), to form the compound “*Rumah Makan Timur*.” At this stage, the compound “*Rumah Makan*” continues to serve as the head. At the same time, the morpheme “*Timur*” functions as a modifier that provides additional information regarding the identity or distinguishing feature of the business name. For further clarification, the structure of “*Rumah Makan Timur*” is shown in the following hierarchy.



Rumah Makan Timur

4.2.5. Noun + Noun + Conjunction + Noun (N+N+C+N) Structures

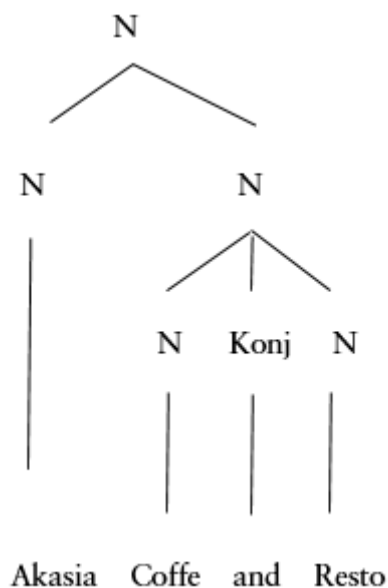
Noun + conjunction + noun (N+C+N) structures were found in data from *Akasia Coffee & Resto*, *Rudang Hotel & Resort*, and *Garuda Coffee & Eatery* in the Berastagi Tourism Area. This pattern indicates that two noun elements are connected by a conjunction, forming a single unit of meaning. Both noun elements play a role in establishing the identity or reference displayed on the sign, while the conjunction serves to clarify the relationship between the two elements. The use of this pattern demonstrates that signboards not only serve as markers for a place or business but also combine two interrelated pieces of information to form a more specific identity. Thus, the noun elements connected by the conjunction enrich the meaning and clarify the information conveyed to visitors.

The data for *Akasia Coffee & Resto* consists of the words “*Akasia Coffee*” and “*Akasia Resto*.” In the word “*Akasia Coffee*,” “*Akasia*” serves as the modifier, while “*Coffee*” is the head noun. Similarly, the word “*Akasia Resto*” is formed from “*Akasia*,” which functions as the modifier, and “*Resto*,” which means “restaurant” and serves as the head noun. See the data image below.



Figure 11. *Akasia Coffee & Resto*
Source: Writers’ documentation, 2025

In the data shown above, two composition processes occur: one involving the word “Akasia Coffee” and the other involving the word “Akasia Resto.” The hierarchical structure of the data composition is as follows: Akasia Coffee & Resto.



4.2.6. Abbreviations

Based on the data analysis, abbreviations were identified as a form of language condensation. This form is used on various signs, such as those for product names, tourist attractions, businesses, and institutions. The use of abbreviations reflects an effort to condense language to make it more concise, effective, and easily recognizable. Lieber (2009: 53) states that an abbreviation is a shortened form created from the initial letters of the words that make up a name or phrase, resulting in a shorter form that is pronounced letter by letter, rather than as a single word.

The abbreviations identified in the data serve as brand identities, location markers, business names, and government agency names. Their formation process was analyzed by selecting the initial letters of each constituent element, in accordance with Lieber’s concept (2009:53). The following presents the data and analysis of abbreviation formation within the linguistic landscape of the Berastagi tourism area.

This process of abbreviation formation was found in several data points, namely BSB, TWS, BKC, BPK, LG, RM, FC, PUTR, and BPBD, which were analyzed based on the selection of the initial letters of each constituent element. The following presents an analysis of abbreviation formation based on the research data.

4.2.7. Acronyms

Based on the data analysis, acronyms were identified as abbreviations. Lieber (2009:53) explains that an acronym is a process of abbreviation that produces a new lexeme by combining letters or syllables from its constituent elements. Unlike abbreviations, which are read based on the order of letters, acronyms can be pronounced as a single word and function lexically like other word forms. In the data, the process of acronym formation was identified through several patterns: combining two syllables, combining three syllables, and creative acronym formation.

4.3. Functions of Signage in Public Spaces within the Berastagi Tourism Area

4.3.1. Informational Function

The results of the study show that the dominant function found in signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area is the informative function. This function is realized through various signs that serve as a medium for conveying information to visitors regarding rules, instructions, warnings, and services available in the tourism area. The presence of these signs demonstrates that language in public spaces functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium that helps tourists understand the tourism environment, obtain necessary information, and adjust their behavior to comply with applicable regulations.

Based on an analysis of the research data, the informative function within the linguistic landscape of the Berastagi Tourism Area is classified into five forms: appeals, prohibitions, directional instructions,

warnings, and information regarding facilities or services. Each form exhibits distinct linguistic and semiotic characteristics corresponding to the purpose of conveying the information. These functions are realized through various linguistic forms, such as imperative and declarative sentences. They are supported by visual elements such as symbols, illustrations, colors, typography, and combinations of verbal and visual elements that construct meaning in a multimodal way.

4.3.2. Advisory Information Function

Based on the research findings, the informational function of public service announcements is one of the forms of informative functions found on signage in the Berastagi Tourism Area. This function is realized through messages aimed at inviting, reminding, and encouraging tourists to take specific actions to promote cleanliness, order, safety, and the sustainability of the tourism area. These appeals are conveyed not only through verbal elements but are also supported by visual elements that reinforce the message, making it easier for visitors to understand.

The analysis shows that the informational function of appeals is realized in three forms: appeals using the marker “-lah”, imperative verbs, and appeals through visual elements. These three forms have different linguistic and semiotic characteristics, but all serve to guide tourist behavior persuasively. A description of each form of the advisory’s informational function is presented in the following subsections.

The “Save Our Earth” sign is an advisory sign located in the Gundaling tourist area. The following is an analysis of it.



Figure 12. Save Our Earth
Source: Writers’ documentation, 2025

Table 2. Data Analysis: Save Our Earth

Data	Save Our Earth
Function	Informative
Type	Appeals Using the Imperative Verb
Purpose	Encouraging visitors to protect and preserve the Earth and the surrounding environment so that they remain clean, green, and comfortable.

The text above is from a sign posted in the Gundaling tourist area. The sign serves an informative function, urging tourists to protect and preserve the environment. The message is conveyed through an imperative sentence in English: “Save Our Earth.” Grammatically, the word “save” is a base verb that forms an imperative sentence and serves to direct the reader to take action to save or preserve the Earth. Unlike Indonesian imperative sentences, which can be marked by the particle -lah, imperative sentences in English generally use the base form of the verb directly without any specific markers.

4.3.3. Prohibitions with “*dilarang parkir*” Signs

The “*dilarang parkir di depan gerbang*” sign serves to inform visitors and road users that they are prohibited from parking their vehicles in front of the gate of the Pusaka Karo Museum on Perwira Street, Gundaling I, Berastagi. This prohibition is indicated by a “no entry” symbol, which functions as a negative imperative marker. The use of this symbol indicates that parking in this area is not permitted in an effort to maintain order and ensure smooth entry and exit to the tourist area. Below is an image of the sign and its analysis.



Figure 13. Dilarang parkir
Source: Writer's Documentation, 2025

Table 3. Data Analysis: Dilarang Parkir di Depan Gerbang

Data	<i>Dilarang Parkir di Depan Gerbang</i>
Fungsi	Informative
Jenis	Prohibition Sign: No Parking
Tujuan	Prohibits visitors or road users from parking vehicles in the area in front of the gate to maintain smooth entry and exit, prevent traffic congestion, and ensure the safety and comfort of facility users

Syntactically, the data follows the pattern “prohibited + verb phrase, ” namely “*dilarang parkir di depan gerbang*”. The verb phrase “parkir” indicates the action targeted by the prohibition, while the prepositional phrase “*di depan gerbang*” clarifies the location where the prohibition applies. This syntactic pattern is concise, straightforward, and explicit, ensuring that the message can be easily understood by both residents and visitors without causing ambiguity. The direct presentation of information reflects a linguistic strategy aimed at restricting parking in areas that could potentially obstruct vehicle access.

4.3.4. Informative Functions of Facilities or Services

The informational function of facilities or services is the function that provides information regarding the availability of various facilities and services in the Berastagi tourism area. This information aims to help tourists identify, locate, and utilize the facilities provided so that tourism activities can take place more easily, comfortably, and efficiently.

Based on the analysis results, the informative function of facilities or services is realized through three forms: facilities or services indicated by symbols; facilities or services incorporating both verbal and visual elements; and facilities or services based solely on verbal elements. These three forms demonstrate that the communication of information about facilities and services within the linguistic landscape utilizes various semiotic resources, including symbols, visual elements, and verbal language.



Figure 14. Free Wifi
Source: Writers' documentation, 2025

The “Free WiFi Inside” sign is an information board that fulfills its informative function through the use of the WiFi symbol as the primary visual marker. This symbol indicates the availability of wireless internet access provided for visitors at Penatapan Berastagi. The presence of the WiFi symbol makes it easy for tourists to

quickly recognize the availability of the service, as it is widely recognized as a universal indicator of internet access. The following presents the data and its analysis.

4.3.5. The Informative Function of Warnings

Based on the results of the analysis, the informative function of warnings is realized through three forms: warnings with “*Hati-hati*” markers, warnings with “*Perhatian*” markers, and warnings with imperatives. These three forms indicate that the delivery of warning messages within the linguistic landscape utilizes verbal markers that serve to attract attention, increase vigilance, and guide the actions of road users. A discussion of these three forms is presented in the following subsection.

The sign reading “*Hati-hati Kurangi Kecepatan Jalan Menikung Dan Menurun*” serves as a medium for conveying warning information to road users in the tourist area leading to Bukit Gundaling, Gundaling I Village, Berastagi. The informative function of this sign is realized through the use of the “*Hati-hati*” marker, which is used to draw road users’ attention to specific conditions that pose potential safety risks. Below is an image of the sign and its analysis.



Figure 15. *Hati-hati kurangi kecepatan*
Sumber: Writers’ documentation, 2025

4.4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the linguistic landscape of the Berastagi Tourism Area (BTA) reflects a dynamic interaction between communication, tourism, cultural identity, and economic interests. The dominance of Indonesian (50.3%) indicates that it remains the principal language for delivering information to visitors, while the presence of English (15.0%) and Indonesian–English combinations (12.4%) demonstrates the increasing orientation of the tourism area toward a wider, potentially international, audience. At the same time, the presence of Karo, either independently or in combination with other languages, indicates that local identity remains visible in the public linguistic space. This finding supports the argument that linguistic landscapes are not simply collections of written signs but representations of social, cultural, and economic relations within a particular space.

The coexistence of Indonesian, English, Karo, and other languages, however, also reveals a potential tension between commercial accessibility and cultural representation. English can increase the attractiveness and accessibility of tourism businesses, but the relatively limited use of Karo suggests that local language may have a weaker position in commercially oriented signage. This pattern is particularly important because the BTA is not only a tourism destination but also a space associated with Karo cultural identity. Thus, multilingualism in BTA should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of linguistic equality; rather, the frequency and positioning of languages may indicate different degrees of social and economic power.

The findings on word formation further show that signage is strategically constructed to achieve brevity, recognizability, and identity formation. The dominance of endocentric compounds, particularly N+N structures, enables businesses and tourist destinations to combine an identifying element with a clear reference to the type of place or service. Meanwhile, the predominance of the informational function demonstrates that signage primarily facilitates tourists’ navigation, safety, behavioral regulation, and access to services. These functions are reinforced through multimodal resources such as typography, symbols, illustrations, and layout. Overall, the findings suggest that BTA’s linguistic landscape is both functional and ideological, communicating practical information while simultaneously negotiating local identity, tourism globalization, and commercial interests.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results of research on the linguistic landscape of signboards in the Berastagi Tourism Area (BTA), it can be concluded that the linguistic forms, functions, and meanings found on the signboards exhibit complex characteristics. These three aspects represent the interaction between linguistic, social, cultural, and economic elements that shape the linguistic landscape in the public spaces of the tourism area.

First, the linguistic forms on the 153 signs consist of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual forms. The use of language is dominated by Indonesian, followed by English and Karo; meanwhile, bilingual and multilingual forms are realized through various combinations of Indonesian, English, Karo, Batak, Chinese, Arabic, Minang, and Javanese. These findings indicate that Indonesian serves as the primary medium for conveying information, English represents the tourism area's global orientation, while Karo represents local cultural identity. This linguistic diversity is manifested through various word-formation processes dominated by endocentric composition with the following patterns: noun + noun (N+N), noun + adjective (N+Adj), noun + verb (N+V), and noun + noun + conjunction + noun (N+N+K+N). Endocentric composition is the most dominant form, featuring a hierarchical structure that reflects head-modifier relationships. Additionally, shortening processes in the form of abbreviations and acronyms were identified, with formation patterns involving the combination of two syllables, the combination of three syllables, and creative acronymization. These findings indicate that word formation on signage not only follows morphological rules but is also utilized as a naming strategy to build identity, convey information effectively, and strengthen the image of businesses, facilities, and tourist destinations.

Second, the linguistic landscape function of signs at BTA serves two primary functions: the informative function and the symbolic function. The informative function is more dominant and manifests in five forms: advisory messages, prohibitions, directional signs, facility or service information, and warnings. The advisory function is used to guide tourists' behavior through persuasive messages expressed in the imperative form using the marker *-lah*, imperative verbs, and supporting visual elements. The prohibition function is realized through the use of the marker "*dilarang*" (prohibited), illustrations, and symbols that serve to restrict certain actions in order to maintain safety, order, and the preservation of the tourist area. The directional guidance function helps tourists orient themselves within the space through the use of symbols, distance markers, and verbal elements. Furthermore, the facilities or services function provides information regarding available amenities through a combination of verbal and visual elements. Meanwhile, the warning function is used to heighten visitors' awareness of conditions or potential hazards through verbal markers such as "*Hati-hati*" (be careful), "*perhatian*" (caution), and imperative forms. The symbolic function reflects the values and identity that have developed within the tourist space. This symbolic function is divided into three categories: the symbolic functions of modernity, identity, and economy. The symbolic function of modernity is demonstrated through the use of foreign languages, particularly English, as well as visual designs that project a modern, professional, and globally oriented image. The symbolic function of identity is evident through the use of the Karo language, local names, and cultural elements that represent the character of the local community and culture. Meanwhile, the symbolic function of the economy is evident through the use of language and visual elements as branding strategies to attract tourists, build a business image, and enhance commercial appeal.

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