

Language and Power Relations on Islamic Identity in the Linguistic Landscape of Gresik City, East Java

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to describe the social facts of language and power in the linguistic landscape in Gresik, East Java, Indonesia. This study applies a qualitative design to descriptively examine phenomena in the realm of shake agents, in this case the government in this case the government and society. LL studies and ethnographic studies are used for the purposes of studying the social context to direct deeper discussion. Data gathering is done by documenting public areas and observing people's attitudes. From the results of observations and studies of meaning as well as observations of the context of power, an explanation is obtained that there are information functions and commercial functions displayed in LL. Authorization in language is carried out by using terms that show that Islamic identity is attached to the area and gives a view of the value of blessing and sanctity. This encourages the tourism industry. Educatively, LL is important for knowledge about history in the younger generation. In LL, it is described the government's efforts, beliefs, and the expansion of people's language attitudes which also use the same paradigm as the use of phrases and words that refer to Islamic nuances. From this research, we can understand that a social paradigm, including religion, is used for various purposes according to how the belief exists. Impact appears as a result of direction. This form of direction uses language. Language is the power to shape views that produce greater impact.

Keywords: linguistics landscape, language and power.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Language and power are inherent parts. In the linguistic landscape it exists and melts together with human civilization. Language plays a role in maintaining and changing power relations (Fairclough, 2013). In language, historical events and the cultivation of power that have occurred can be recorded. A discourse produced by an agent has the power to instill that power. As stated by Habermas, language is also a medium of domination and social force (Wodak, 2002). Discourse has language facts and social facts that can reveal what happened and what interests are behind it (De Beaugrande, 2006).

One of the media that can show history is landscape linguistics. Landscape linguistics has power that can provide support to power and now we can understand what it is that the agents behind it want. Even in the naming of roads, the view of the linguistics landscape (LL) provides an overview of the ideology to be constructed, new views to be demonstrated (Fabiszak *et al.*, 2021). Language in its symbolic function provides space to inform and persuade (Shohamy, 2019). This can also be found in religious-linguistics-landscape. In this context a view or theory is shown to attach meaning and raise awareness. The role of education to politics appears in it (Wolf, 2004).

One of these phenomena can be seen in Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim population. In Indonesian culture, Islamic symbols develop rapidly because religious education is also carried out through symbols, including writing in public spaces or LL. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects. However, these signs do not have any value in themselves unless the general public interprets them and adds meaning to them (Dabbour, 2017). Meaning is a matter of perception that can be constructed at any time One of the cities with religious LL characteristics is Gresik, a city in East Java, Indonesia. The city is known for its Islamic history.

Apart from being a place where two charismatic saints (*wali* are people who teach Islam) reside, which are visited by many pilgrims from various regions in Indonesia, Gresik is also a place for students from various regions to study Islam. They live and live in many Islamic boarding schools, both in urban and rural areas. According to the Gresik Regency Religious Affairs Department, in Gresik there are 176 Islamic

boarding schools that already have operational permits and many more that do not yet have operational permits. In addition, there are also many schools with Islamic nuances, namely *Madrasah Ibtida'iyah*, *Tsanawiyah*, and *Aliyah*, to tertiary institutions. That is why. Because of the management of the city with the organization and educational facilities, Gresik is also often referred to as the city of *santri* (people who study Islam).

Language or terms are used to show authority. Not only the terms “bumi wali” or ‘earth guardian’ (in English) and “kota santri” or ‘santri city’ given to the city of Gresik turned out to be very influential in people’s lives in certain aspects. This influence occurs especially in the environment around the path of the pilgrims to the place of the guardian’s tomb and the environment where the Islamic boarding school was founded. The existence of the guardian’s tomb and the establishment of Islamic boarding schools in Gresik greatly influenced the activities and culture that existed in the Gresik community. One phenomenon that can be seen clearly is the large number of religious tourists who visit from various regions in Indonesia to make pilgrimages. There is a habit of commemorating national santri day in Gresik with quite lively events that involve many students and the general public. This activity by the local government of Gresik is aimed at reinforcing Gresik as a guardian land and a city of students as well as an effort to promote religious tourism destinations and Islamic boarding schools based in Gresik. Even so, this does not make Gresik abandon its unique tradition which has been preserved for generations by the local community. Another aspect that can reflect the identity of a city besides the habits of its activities is the use of lingual symbols in public spaces. Public space is a real portrait of the identity of a city. Each city can be seen from its uniqueness through public spaces. Public space can actually describe the situation or condition of a society through not only visual symbols but also the lingual symbols that are displayed. To what extent economic, educational, religious and cultural developments are reflected through lingual symbols in public spaces. This is the basis for this proposed research.

This research will discuss how the representation of lingual symbols in public spaces in the city of Gresik, which has the nickname of the guardian earth. In addition, what culture and influences or factors are behind the use of certain lingual symbols that represent Gresik as the earth’s guardian.

Some of the objectives to be achieved in this research are (1) To describe and explain lingual symbols in the public space that represent Gresik’s identity and traditions which are branded by the local government as “earth guardian” and “santri city” and (2) Describe and explain what factors or influences are behind certain lingual symbols used to reflect Gresik’s identity and tradition as “earth guardian” and “santri city.”

In the development of Islam in Indonesia, there is a group of figures who provide education about religion, called “*wali sanga*” or nine guardians. The nine people, two of them, Raden Paku (Sunan Giri) and Syeh Maulana Malik Ibrahim came from Gresik. This is what is the strong basis of Islamic culture in Gresik, which we want to use as the basis for categorizing Gresik as a region with a high level of religiosity, a great history of Islam, and eventually become a tourism center.

This study applies the theory of Landry and Bourhis (1997). In this theory, LL is divided into two functions, namely the information function and the symbolic function. The information function is the language function of text in public spaces which includes information from the government (non-commercial signs) and information by individuals or certain groups such as advertisements (commercial signs). Non-commercial signs are signs made by the government or certain agencies with the aim of providing information about something without any purpose for profit or profit. Commercial signs are signs made by individuals or companies to attract readers with the aim or orientation of profit or profit (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Abdullah & Wulung, 2021; Duizenberg, 2020).

The symbolic function in the LL study is found in the presence or absence of a group’s language on the boardwalk, for example, having an impact on the feeling of being part of that group. The symbolic function is also closely related to the representation of an ethnic identity (Duizenberg, 2020). This means that the symbolic function is the function of language signs in the public space by certain groups that have a relationship with existing language signs. This proves that the linguistic landscape has a function to represent certain groups or groups. To discuss LL theory, an analysis of (1) Micro linguistics, (2) Types of language codes, (3) Language behavior, (4) Psychological, (5) Socio-psychological, and (6) Sociological is required.

Microlinguistic analysis relies on the use of lingual units of phrases and clauses in linguistic landscape texts, how the text is written in the form of phrases, clauses, phrases+clauses, clauses+phrases, or clauses+clauses. It also discusses the use of language codes, namely monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual of which language is used. Analysis at this level looks at how the behavior of the language used.

In the sociological aspect, the analysis component rests on ethnolinguistic vitality. Ethnolinguistic vitality sees how society is equipped with political power, economic power, and demographic power. This analysis leads to the analysis of social power. If a text is produced by economic, political and population forces, will it affect the symbols that appear to the community and lead to local identity and culture.

The linguistic landscape theory version of Landry and Bourhis’s approach in this study is eclectic with the Ethnographic theory of Blommaert’s (2013) version in interpreting every language text or existing

lingual symbols. By applying these eclectic theories, it is hoped that new theories will be found in the study of linguistic landscapes.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research design is descriptive-qualitative research. The research data is the form of the use of language or lingual symbols on billboards with the theme of religiosity in public areas in the Gresik district, both in urban areas, especially around the tombs of two “wali sanga” namely Raden Paku (Sunan Giri) and Syeh Maulana Malik Ibrahim as well as in rural areas scattered throughout the Gresik region.

The research data was carried out using documentation and observation techniques. Documentation techniques are intended to obtain data directly from the research site. In this study, documentation was carried out to retrieve data in the form of language texts or lingual symbols in public spaces. The language texts that will be documented are all categories of lingual symbols found in Gresik public areas. In this study, social symptoms need to be observed. The intended social symptoms can be in the form of human behavior, work processes, and social phenomena around the research data. This aims to find supporting data as additional material for researchers to explain aspects of community identity and culture as well as the factors that cause language texts or lingual symbols to be made in public spaces. The data that has been collected is analyzed with constant comparative and its linearity is studied through the connections between lingual and extra lingual elements. Data analysis was carried out by applying functional analysis of LL Landry and Bourhis (1997) and Blommaert’s ethnographic theory (2013).

In carrying out a Linguistic Landscape (LL) analysis, the researcher conducted a research phase that refers to the formulation of the problem. In the formulation of problem one, landscape linguistic analysis was carried out through several stages, namely (1) Micro linguistic analysis, (2) Analysis of language code types, (3) Analysis of language behavior, (4) Psychological analysis, (5) Socio-psychological analysis, and (6) Sociological analysis. In the second problem formulation, in interpreting each language text or existing lingual symbols and the semiotic theory version of Gravelles’ approach (2017:45) which uses four levels in its analysis, namely examining (1) Signs, (2) Codes, (3) Myth, and (4) Ideology.

III. DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH RESULTS

A. *Lingual Symbols in the Gresik Religious Tourism Destination*

The mention of Gresik as a “wali city” gave birth to various influences in the fields of education, economy, social, culture, and other fields which are the cornerstones of life in Gresik society. This influence can be identified from the area around the guardian’s tomb. The existence of the guardian’s tomb greatly influences the activities of the Gresik community. One of the things that can be seen clearly is the large number of religious tourists visiting from various regions for pilgrimages and the habit of enlivening the commemoration of National Santri Day in Gresik with events that are quite lively and involve many students and the general public. This activity by the Regional Government of Gresik is aimed at promoting the city of Gresik as a guardian earth which has religious tourism destinations and at the same time completes various supporting facilities for religious tourism.

As the center of the area for religious tourism destinations in the city of “bumi wali,” the tomb complex of Sunan Giri and the tomb of Syeh Maulana Malik Ibrahim appears to be a multilingual place because of the development of religious tourism developed by the Gresik Regional Government and the impact of the national language policy. The multilingual atmosphere is clearly seen from the use of language symbols on signboards in public spaces in the area. The language used varies on nameplates in the area of mosques, tombs, museums, educational institutions, charities, roads, parking lots, terminals, and businesses (souvenirs, clothing and food). Based on the type, the lingual symbols on the religious board are names of graves, mosques, huts, roads, shops, places, banners, billboards, bulletin boards. The materials used as writing media also vary, some are in the form of paper, wood, plastic, metal, or carved stone. The presentation of the language is one language, two languages, and multilingual. As for the location, there are those that are installed outside and inside.

B. *The Use of Lingual Symbols in the Gresik Religious Tourism Destination*

From Table I it can be stated that the language used on the religious board is monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. In the monolingual classification, Indonesian appears as the most used language on outdoor signs with 61.8% of data, followed by monolingual Arabic with 15.5% of data, monolingual Javanese with 3.2% of data, while English monolingual not found (0%).

TABLE I: LANGUAGE USE

Type	Percentage
a. Monolingual	
Javanese	3.2
Indonesian	61.8
Arabic	15.5
English	0
b. Bilingual	
Indonesian-Javanese	0.5
Indonesian-Arabic	8.2
Indonesian-English	8.6
Javanese-Arabic	1.4
c. Multilingual	
Indonesian-Javanese-Arabic	0.5
Indonesian-Arabic-English	1.4

In terms of monolingual signs, Javanese as the identity of the local Javanese community in Gresik is very minimally used on religious boards. The use of the Javanese language with Javanese letters is only found in the reliefs on the tomb arches and was made in the early period of making objects, while the Javanese language with Latin letters can be found on the names of shops and places of sale. At least the use of monolingual Javanese, which is only less than 3.2%, shows that national identity is actually still valued. However, at the same time it appears that the use of Indonesian and Arabic which are quite dominant, namely 61.8% and 15.5% of the data, can be a threat to Javanese as a local language and as the language of local cultural identity. Javanese, Indonesian, and Arabic are used in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual compositions. English is also used in bilingual and multilingual compositions, but not in monolinguals.

The tomb complex of Sunan Giri and Syeh Maulana Malik Ibrahim is a space for the Islamic religion embedded in Arabic. So, it is very logical that the use of Arabic is quite high, as well as Indonesian because it is the national and formal language. Use of English in the area was also found. This shows that the area is open to international visitors. This finding is in accordance with the research of Mulyono and Wuryaningrum (2021). In that research it was reported that religious symbols or artistic symbols, in general, can lead to philosophical values, including religious values. It needs further study whether this is found in all regions of East Java, Indonesia, it seems that these two locations show qualitative relevance.

C. Linguistic Landscape Study of Religious Boards in Gresik

In this study, the analysis of informational and symbolic functions is distinguished based on two groups of institutions, namely government agencies and private institutions or individuals. These institutions in the form of agencies and facilities are owned by the state or private sector or individuals and can be utilized by the general public to meet their needs. In the information function, the meaning of signifiers in government and private institutions distinguishes the geographical area of the population that gives the language to the name or signifier. In other words, language functions as a marker of the territory of the speaking community and a differentiator from other population areas. In the symbolic function, language markers are used to represent a relationship with a symbol that is recognized by a community. The symbolic function is also closely related to the representation of an ethnic identity. According to Lou (2016) and Blommaert (2013), space is an arena for human social interaction and carrying out a series of cultural activities. The interaction space can be assessed as a form of action/action that space as something complex and contains layers of activity in it. Thus, the evidence presented in this linguistic landscape study becomes a pattern of human communication represented through written language. Boards in public areas, for example greetings of welcome, are an early phenomenon in the use of language that is known to people from outside the city. The brand image formed shows the interests of the Gresik government. The term “kota santri” is an image that in that city many young people learn about religion (Islam), Gresik is a peaceful, pleasant city with a high level of religious devotion.

D. Analysis of Information and Symbolic Functions

Data derived from shop markers, huts, roads, mosques, places, signboards, banners, billboards, bulletin boards, are identified and every word used in the data is written down.



Fig. 1. Welcome Greeting.

The ideology instilled is the ideology of ownership and power. In the picture there is a sentence that shows the authority that this area is the territory of the blessed wali 'saints'. Thus, the power appears that Gresik or the area is a good area for a visit. In history, not only has Gresik been the residence or educational area of Wali Sanga, but Gresik has taken the opportunity to make this part of history an important meaning to become a regional label. By labeling the name of one of the wali Maulana Malik Ibrahim), visitors will feel that Gresik is a big city with a history of the presence of guardians and the lives of other Islamic leaders. The sentence has an informational mode that contains a claim and will be an imposition or command that visiting Gresik is a holy journey.

E. Meaning Analysis

Data in the form of signboards, street names, writing on banners, and other markers were analyzed based on the relationship between the entry and the *wali* in the context of the slogan "Gresik as Bumi Wali" as well as messages from the place markers. This phrase gives a new meaning to the words "earth" and "wali" meaning "to own" or "place" which gives the view that Gresik has a specialty because it has given birth to a guardian with a big heart.

From this meaning, analogical thoughts and ideas are born. The names of shops or streets are also characterized by Islamic nuances. It can be seen in the shop name "Al Hikmah." The name means "blessing" or the benefits of God. The name was chosen to strengthen the cultural theme raised and strengthen Gresik's position as an area with Islamic civilization and history.

The dominant entries consist of *giri*, *sunan*, *pondok*, *Islamic boarding school*, and Gresik. The meaning of the dominant entries are as follows. The first entry is *giri* which means mountain, *giri* is a village in one of the districts. The second entry is *sunan* which means 1) the king's designation for the Surakarta palace (in Java); 2) the mention of names for the saints. The third entry is *pondok* which means 1) A building for a temporary place (such as one built in a field, in a forest, and so on); hovel; 2) House (a term for self-abasement); 3) Residential buildings with compartments with walls and thatched roofs (for the residence of several families). The fourth entry is the *pesantren* which means the dormitory where the santri or the place where the students study the Quran and so on; cottage. The *santri* are located in a complex which also provides a mosque for worship, space for study, and other religious activities.

Thomas Stamford Raffles in his book, *The History of Java*, reveals that the name Gresik comes from the word *giri gisik*, which means mountain on the beach, referring to the topography of the district which is on the beach. Gresik Regency is known as the Wali City, this is marked by historical excavations relating to the role and whereabouts of the saints whose graves are in Gresik Regency, namely Sunan Giri and Syeh Maulana Malik Ibrahim. In addition, Gresik Regency is referred to as the City of Santri.

The relationship with the slogan "Gresik as Bumi Wali" lies in the keyword *Bumi Wali* 'guardian earth'. Earth means 1) The planet where humans live; world; universe; 2) The 3rd planet from the sun; 3) The surface of the world; land. *Wali* or Guardian means 1) A person who according to law (religion, custom) is entrusted with the obligation to take care of orphans and their assets, before the child becomes an adult; 2) The person who becomes the guarantor in the care and upbringing of the child; 3) The bride's nanny at the time of marriage (ie, the one who made the marriage vows to the groom); 4) Pious (holy) people; religious propagator; 5) Head of government, and so on. Therefore, it can be seen that the meaning of "Gresik as Bumi Wali" is that the city of Gresik is known as a guardian city, this is marked by historical excavations relating to the role and whereabouts of the guardians whose graves are in Gresik Regency, namely, Sunan Giri and Syeh Maulana Malik Ibrahim. In addition, the city of Gresik can also be called the City of Santri, because of the existence of Islamic boarding schools and schools, namely *Madrasah Ibtida'iyah*, *Tsanawiyah*, and *Aliyah* to Universities which are quite a lot in this city. The *Bumi Wali* in this context is

land of pious (holy) people; religious propagator.

The results of this study indicate that there are signs in public spaces that can also force the audience to follow the rules of the game, with a number of shared norms and guidelines (Blommaert, 2013). Signs in public spaces are of course not made without reason. Signs have messages and are never neutral, connected with social structures, hierarchies, and power (Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009). The reason is that public space is an area as well as an instrument for regulating and controlling power. Through the slogan “Gresik as Bumi Wali,” the Gresik Regency Government strictly uses its authority with the aim of attaching an Islamic identity to the people of Gresik. According to (Blommaert, 2013) the semiotic regime of language? (“how does space organize semiotic regimes of language?”) Of course all the signs expressed through street signs carry out discourse practices with attributions to an ideology (Blackwood, 2015). Blommaert (2013) mentions that communication in public spaces cannot be separated from communication in the realm of power and is sociolinguistic in nature.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion found, it can be concluded as follows, (1) songage and power in the Gresik area is constructed with a claim as a place that has given birth to Islamic leaders and educators or guardians. This forms the opinion that the guardian gives blessings and the city of Gresik is a place to get blessings, (2) the language and power produce symbolic functions that lead to commercial functions that improve the economic order and social welfare with the religious paradigm attached to Gresik, (3) linguistically, LL provides a multilingual space with terms with Islamic nuances that are used and believed to be things that can increase belief in God’s blessings. The description of the use of language shows that there is an indicator of multilingualism in LL in Gresik and this is one of the variations in the use of language in sociolinguistics. LL’s analysis shows that space is an arena for human social interaction and carrying out a series of cultural activities. Gresik is a Javanese cultural area that has merged with Islamic identity. Analysis of the symbolic function shows that the authority that this area is the territory of the blessed Wali. Analysis of meaning shows that communication in public spaces cannot be separated from communication in the realm of power and is sociolinguistic in nature. Gresik shows that sociolinguistically, language develops and is dynamic.

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