

## Public signs in Purwokerto parks: a linguistic landscape study

Riana Herawati

English Literature Dept., Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 29 Jul 2025

Revised 21 Sep 2025

Accepted 24 Sep 2025

#### Keywords:

bilingual, monolingual, public sign

#### Corresponding Author

Riana Herawati

Japanese Dept., Universitas Ngudi Waluyo, Indonesia

Email:

[rianahera789@gmail.com](mailto:rianahera789@gmail.com)

Address: FIBK, UMP, Jl. KH A. Dahlan, Kembaran, Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia.

### ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at describing public signage in two major city parks in Purwokerto, including Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang, focusing on types, functions, and language use. Applying qualitative approach, this study surveyed the spots and corners in these two parks, and collected data in the form of language use there. It only took the words and phrases as part of the public signs, and did not consider other elements within. The collected data were then categorized based on their types, function, and language. Based on the analysis, 24 signs collected can be categorized into six types: Signs of Place Name (12.5%), Signs of Information (20.83%), Signs of Map (4.17%), Signs of Warning (12.5%), Signs of Don't (29.17%), and Signs of Appeal (20.83%). These signs serve three primary functions: informational, behavioral, and regulatory. In terms of language, monolingual Indonesian signs dominate (8 signs), followed by bilingual Indonesian-English signs (5 signs) and Javanese-origin names (2 signs). The use of Javanese names such as Andhang Pangrenan and Mas Kemambang carries deep cultural meanings that reflect local identity and regional pride. This finding suggests that the linguistic landscape of Purwokerto not only serves communicative and regulatory purposes but also represents cultural preservation through language. The study underscores the importance of top-down signage in guiding, informing, and regulating visitor behavior while highlighting the role of local language in constructing cultural identity.

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.*



### INTRODUCTION

Public signs in parks serve as vital components of the urban landscape, reflecting not only functional aspects such as directions and regulations but also the cultural and linguistic identity of the community. Linguistic Landscape (LL), the study of written language in public spaces, offers valuable insights into how language operates within these spaces to shape social dynamics and reflect the cultural fabric of the surrounding area (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In recent years, LL studies have gained significant attention, with researchers investigating the role of language in public signage as a key element in understanding social, cultural, and linguistic phenomena in urban environments. Public signs, particularly in parks, are crucial as they often serve as interfaces between the local community, government, and tourists.

The use of public signs in parks is a rich area of exploration, as it provides a window into the linguistic diversity and sociocultural characteristics of a region. According to Shohamy (2015), linguistic landscapes contribute to the construction of collective memory and identity, revealing the ways in which communities negotiate their existence and sense of belonging. In Purwokerto, a city in Central Java, the signs in its parks may reflect the dynamic interplay between local culture and broader sociolinguistic influences. As such, understanding the types, functions, and language used in these signs is essential to comprehending the broader social and cultural identity of Purwokerto.

Studies in Linguistic Landscapes (LL) have been widely conducted across various regions, providing insights into the types of signs, their functions, and the languages used. Supriatnoko et al. (2020)

explored Landscape Linguistics in Depok City Village Park, identifying that Indonesian and English dominated the public signs, with most signs serving informative and regulatory functions. This study highlighted how the use of two languages facilitated communication with both local residents and international visitors. Similarly, Supriatnoko (2022) analyzed the Linguistic Landscapes of Depok City Square Park, noting the prevalence of monolingual and bilingual signs in Indonesian and English. This bilingualism reflected both the cultural identity of the area and its sociolinguistic diversity. Moreover, Jem et al. (2022) examined public signs in Komodo National Park, Flores-NTT, categorizing the signs into informational, directional, and regulatory types. The study emphasized the prominent use of bilingual signs in Indonesian and English, illustrating how public signs reflect cultural heritage while also catering to the needs of international tourists.

These studies illustrate the significant role that public signs play in shaping communication, cultural identity, and the uniqueness of a region through their types, functions, and linguistic characteristics. In the context of Purwokerto, this research aims to explore the public signs in its parks, focusing on three aspects: types, functions, and languages appeared in the public signs in two parks in Purwokerto. By investigating them, the study seeks to understand how public signs in Purwokerto contribute to the construction of the city's cultural and social identity, as well as the broader dynamics of communication in public spaces.

## METHOD

This study was conducted using a qualitative research method. The data used for this study consisted of 24 pictures of public signs found in two parks in Purwokerto; Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang. The data were collected through a direct observation method, utilizing the photo-documentation technique. All signs were documented by taking photographs using an Iphone XR smartphone in October 2024. The collected data were analyzed qualitatively, focusing on the subjective interpretation of the signs. The analysis involved categorizing the signs into various types and examining their linguistic features. The categorization was based on the framework proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997), which identifies the informational, behavior, and regulatory functions of linguistic landscapes. This was further supported by Shohamy's (2015) perspective on the dynamic and ideological nature of language use in public spaces. Through this analysis, the study explored the roles of language in conveying messages and shaping the sociolinguistic landscape of the parks.

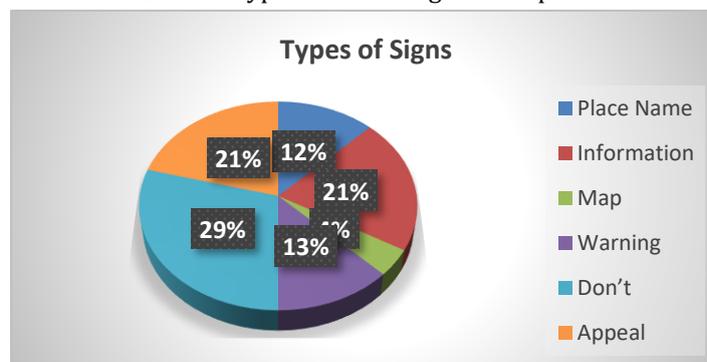
## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section covers three main points: 1) the types of public signs found in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang, 2) the functions of these public signs, and 3) the languages used in the public signs found in these parks.

### Types of public signs in park

There are twenty-four (24) public signs found in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang. These signs are categorized as top-down or official signs since they are all installed by local government authorities (Gorter, 2006; Backhaus, 2007). The categorization is illustrated in Chart 1.

**Chart 1** Types of Public Signs in the parks



Based on Chart 1, public signs in Purwokerto's Park are divided into six types. Among those types, the Sign of Don't is the most frequently found, with a total of seven signs (29.17%). It is followed by Signs of Information and Signs of Appeal, each consisting of five signs (20.83%). Next are Signs of Place Name and Signs of Warning, each totaling three signs (12.5%). Finally, Signs of Map are the least found, with only one sign (4.17%). One clear example confirming that signs in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang are top-down signs is illustrated in the Sign of Place Name.

The signs "MAS KEMAMBANG" and "TAMAN ANDHANG PANGRENAN POERWAKERTA" are prominent examples that indicate the formal designation of these parks. These signs confirm that the parks are officially managed by the Purwokerto Municipal Government. The use of such signage reflects a deliberate effort to establish the identity of these public spaces while promoting their accessibility to visitors. The placement and design of these signs adhere to local government standards, serving both as markers of location and as symbols of public service responsibility in maintaining these recreational areas.

### Functions of public signs in the parks

Based on the data, public signs in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang serve three primary functions: informational, behavioral, and regulatory functions (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, supported by Shohamy, 2015). The informational function is reflected in Signs of Information and Signs of Map, which help visitors navigate the parks and understand the available facilities. The behavioral function is evident in Signs of Place Name, which provide important information about the identity and location of the park. Meanwhile, the regulatory function is conveyed through Signs of Warning, Signs of Don't, and Signs of Appeal, which guide visitor behavior and ensure safety and order in the parks.

The informational function focuses on providing details about a place's name, geographical area, and general information (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Public signs primarily aim to deliver important information to the public. This includes offering directions, instructions, warnings, or general details about a location, event, or object. For example, road signs that indicate speed limits, exit routes, or distances to destinations are part of this function. The informational function plays a crucial role in helping individuals navigate and engage with their surroundings efficiently.

Picture 2 is included in the informational function. The informational function of this sign specifically provides the operating hours of Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Maskemambang. For Taman Andhang Pangrenan, the sign informs visitors that the park is open every day from 07:15 to 21:00 WIB. Meanwhile, Taman Maskemambang operates from 08:00 AM to 09:00 PM, open all day, every week. This sign ensures that visitors are aware of the park's accessibility, allowing them to plan their visit accordingly. Additionally, the sign serves as a practical guide for those unfamiliar with the park's opening schedule. Another aspect of the informational function present in the park is the geographical representation of the park's territory.



Picture 2 Sign of Information



Picture 3. Sign of Map

In Picture 3, the map sign helps visitors understand the layout of the park. The map shows important places within the park, such as toilets, gazebos, *musholla* (prayer rooms), cafes, and other facilities. Visitors can use the map to easily find their way to these locations. Whether they want to relax at a gazebo, grab a bite at the cafe, or use the toilet, the map makes it easier to navigate the park. It also helps visitors plan their routes for activities like walking or exploring, as they can see where to go for short, medium, or long tracks. This map serves as a helpful guide to ensure a smooth and enjoyable visit to the park.

The next is the regulatory function, which is reflected in three types of signs: Signs of Warning, Signs of Don't, and Signs of Appeal. Signs of Warning provide alerts about potential dangers or safety hazards in the park, ensuring that visitors are aware of any risks. Signs of Don't are used to prohibit certain behaviors or actions guiding visitors on what is not allowed in the park. Signs of Appeal, on the other hand, encourage positive behavior. These signs help maintain order and ensure the safety and comfort



Picture 4. Sign of Warning

of all visitors.

Picture 4 is categorized as a Sign of Warning. It provides important safety information, with the message "HATI HATI JALAN LICIN" (Caution, Slippery Road). This sign serves to alert visitors to potential hazards, ensuring they are aware of the risk of slipping in certain areas of the park. The regulatory function of this sign helps to guide visitor behavior by promoting safety and preventing accidents, especially during wet or rainy conditions. The second sign, "LEAVE THE TOWER, AVOID THUNDER" (Tinggalkan Menara Saat Hujan/Petir), advises visitors to leave the observation tower during thunderstorms to avoid the risk of lightning strikes. These warning signs are crucial for ensuring the safety of visitors by alerting them to potential hazards and guiding them on how to protect themselves.



Picture 5. Sign of Prohibition



Picture 6 Sign of Appeal

Picture 5 is categorized as a Sign of Prohibition. It contains the message "TIDAK BOLEH MEMANCING IKAN" (No Fishing), which prohibits visitors from fishing in the park. This sign serves to regulate visitor behavior by clearly instructing what is not allowed in the area. The regulatory function of this sign helps protect the park's environment and its biodiversity, ensuring that activities like fishing, which could harm the ecosystem, are avoided. Such signs are essential for maintaining the park's natural balance and promoting responsible behavior among visitors.

This sign is a Sign of Appeal, providing important information for visitors in case of an emergency. The sign displays the words "Assembly Point" (Titik Kumpul), indicating the designated area where people should gather if needed. It is written in both English and Indonesian, ensuring that both local and international visitors can understand the message clearly. The use of both languages reflects an effort to make the information accessible to a wider audience. The function of this sign is to guide visitor behavior in an emergency situation, making it clear where individuals should go. It encourages people to follow a common action heading to the assembly point. This is important for ensuring safety and organizing the visitors effectively during critical situations, such as evacuation. The sign not only provides the necessary information but also promotes a sense of order, as visitors are directed to the same location for gathering.

The behavioral function of public signs focuses on guiding visitors' actions and interactions within a particular area. This function is reflected in signs that assist people in navigating their surroundings or provide direction on how to engage with the environment. In Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang, the Sign of Place Name (figure 1) serves this behavioral function. This sign helps visitors identify the location they are in, providing a clear indication of the park's identity and assisting them in orienting themselves within the space. By displaying the park's name, it influences visitors' actions, guiding them to understand where they are and how to proceed within the park.

### Languages in public signs of the parks

There exist two distinct language models employed in the creation of public signs within Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang. These models include monolingual signs featuring the Indonesian language exclusively and bilingual signs incorporating both Indonesian and English. These specific language models are detailed in the accompanying description for reference.

Tabel 2 Languages used in the signs

No	Languages	n
1	Monolingual Indonesia	8
2	Bilingual Indonesia-English	5
3	Monolingual Javanese	2
	Total	15

Based on the data in Table 2, monolingual Indonesian signs are the most prevalent in the Linguistic Landscape (LL), with a total of 8 signs. This is followed by bilingual Indonesian-English signs, which account for 5 signs. The term "monolingual" in the context of LL refers to signs that use only one language, specifically Indonesian. These monolingual signs are designed to communicate effectively with local

visitors, reflecting and reinforcing the use of the national language. Meanwhile, bilingual signs, which combine Indonesian and English, aim to provide information to both local and international visitors, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment.



Picture 7. Monolingual sign



Picture 8. Bilingual sign



Picture 9. Name signs

Picture 7 represents a monolingual sign in Indonesian. It is classified as monolingual because the sign solely uses the Indonesian language. The choice of Indonesian highlights the local setting and aims to communicate directly with visitors who speak the language. In contrast, Picture 8 showcases a bilingual sign that includes both Indonesian and English. This is considered bilingual in the context of Linguistic Landscape (LL) as it features two languages. The combination of Indonesian and English helps ensure that the information is accessible to both local and international visitors, facilitating clearer communication for a wider range of audiences.

In addition to these two language models, several public signs also use Javanese-origin names, as shown in Picture 9. In addition to Indonesian and English, some public signs use Javanese-origin names, such as Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Mas Kemambang. These names carry deep cultural meanings in the Javanese language. The term Andhang Pangrenan refers to a place for rest and joyful gathering, while Mas Kemambang can be interpreted as floating gold or graceful beauty that floats. The use of Javanese in these place names reflects the local cultural identity of Purwokerto, serving as a marker of regional pride and heritage. Unlike many public places or brands that adopt English names to signify modernity or global appeal, these Javanese names emphasize the authenticity and cultural rootedness of the community, showing that the linguistic landscape functions not only for communication but also for cultural preservation and identity representation.

The public signage in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang showcases a range of linguistic forms, including monolingual, bilingual, and Javanese-origin name signs. These signs are categorized into six types: signs of place name, information, map, warning, don't, and appeal. They serve three primary functions: informational, behavioral, and regulatory. The informational function is evident in signs such as those providing details about the park, maps, and general information. The behavioral function is reflected in the signs of place name, particularly those with Javanese-origin names, which establish the park's identity and express the cultural roots of the local community. Meanwhile, the

---

regulatory function is demonstrated by signs such as warnings and appeals, which ensure visitor safety and regulate behavior within the park.

### Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the public signage in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang, like other public signs, can be classified as top-down or official signs, as they are installed and maintained by local government authorities (Gorter, 2006; Backhaus, 2007). These signs aim to provide essential information, regulate visitor behavior, and ensure safety within the parks. Unlike bottom-up signs, which often reflect private sector or advertising messages, the signs in this study are focused on public service and the facilitation of visitor needs.

The categorization of public signs into types such as signs of place name, information, map, warning, don't, and appeal supports the notion that these signs are designed to communicate vital messages. The predominance of signs related to behavior regulation, such as the Signs of Don't (29.17%), illustrates the importance of maintaining order within these public spaces. This finding is consistent with the notion that public signs play a role in ensuring that visitors adhere to park rules and regulations, which contributes to a more enjoyable and safer environment.

Interestingly, the study found a higher prevalence of informational signs (20.83%) and appeal signs (20.83%) compared to regulatory signs. This suggests that in addition to ensuring safety, the park authorities are also focused on providing visitors with practical and relevant information, such as operating hours and emergency procedures. In contrast, the lower frequency of map signs (4.17%) indicates that while maps are helpful, they are not as essential as other informational signs in guiding visitors through the parks.

Furthermore, the three primary functions of public signs informational, behavioral, and regulatory are consistent with the framework proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and Shohamy (2015). The informational function is emphasized through signs such as those displaying operating hours and providing park layouts. These signs are key to helping visitors navigate and understand the facilities available. The behavioral function, represented by the Sign of Place Name, plays a crucial role in guiding visitors and allowing them to orient themselves within the park. Meanwhile, the regulatory function, represented by warning, don't, and appeal signs, is vital in promoting safety and ensuring proper conduct within the park.

Regarding the language used in public signs, this study reveals a preference for monolingual Indonesian signs (8 out of 13), followed by bilingual Indonesian-English signs (5 out of 13). The dominance of monolingual Indonesian signs indicates that the primary audience for these signs is local visitors who are familiar with the Indonesian language. The bilingual signs, incorporating both Indonesian and English, reflect an effort to make the parks accessible to international visitors as well. However, this bilingual approach is limited, and it could be argued that a wider range of languages might be necessary to cater to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of international visitors.

In addition to Indonesian and English, the presence of Javanese-origin names such as Andhang Pangrenan and Mas Kemambang also plays an important role in shaping the linguistic identity of Purwokerto's parks. These names embody local values and cultural meanings in the Javanese language. Andhang Pangrenan meaning "a place for joyful rest" and Mas Kemambang meaning "floating gold" or "graceful beauty." Their use in official signage reflects an effort to preserve local heritage and strengthen a sense of regional pride. This indicates that the linguistic landscape of Purwokerto does not only serve communicative purposes but also functions as a medium of cultural expression and identity representation.

### CONCLUSION

This study on the public signage in Taman Andhang Pangrenan and Taman Apung Maskemambang reveals that the park authorities prioritize clear communication through well-designed top-down signs. The findings show a diverse array of sign types, including Signs of Place Name, Information, Map, Warning, Don't, and Appeal, each serving distinct functions: informational, behavioral, and regulatory. The predominance of behavioral and informational signs highlights the emphasis on guiding visitors' actions and ensuring they have the necessary information to navigate and enjoy the parks safely.

The regulatory function is well-represented by Signs of Warning, Don't, and Appeal, ensuring visitor

safety and compliance with park rules. Additionally, the study demonstrates that the majority of the signs are in monolingual Indonesian, catering to local visitors, while bilingual Indonesian-English signs aim to include international audiences. However, given the increasing global nature of park visitation, expanding the bilingual approach could further enhance accessibility for non-Indonesian speakers.

Overall, the public signs in the parks fulfill their primary roles of guiding, informing, and regulating visitors' behavior while contributing to a safe and organized environment. This study underscores the importance of strategic signage in public spaces for fostering effective communication and maintaining order in recreational areas. Furthermore, the inclusion of Javanese-origin names such as Anhang Pangrenan and Mas Kemambang highlights the significance of local language in constructing cultural identity within public spaces. These names act as symbolic representations of Purwokerto's heritage, showing that linguistic landscape not only guides and informs but also preserves and promotes local culture.

## REFERENCES

- Ben-Rafael, E., et al. (2006). *Linguistic Landscape in the City: A Multilingual Perspective*. In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*. Routledge.
- Fahriaty, V., & Niswa, K. (2024). Linguistic landscape in Medan shopping mall. *INNOVATIVE: Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(3), 5842-5856.
- Faiz, M. S., Saidi, A. I., & Rudiyanto, G. (2020). Kajian Semiotika Konotasi Ornamen Betawi Gigi Balang. *Jurnal Seni dan Reka Rancang: Jurnal Ilmiah Magister Desain*, 3(1), 79-86.
- Fakhriroh, Z., & Rohmah, Z. (2018). *Linguistic landscape of Sidoarjo City*. *Journal of Literature and Language Teaching*, 9(2), 96-116.
- Gorter, D. (2018). Linguistic landscapes and trends in the study of schoolsapes. *Linguistics and Education*, 44, 80-85.
- Gorter, D. (2006). *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*. In *Linguistic Landscape in the City*. Routledge.
- Hult, F. M. (2010). *Language and the Linguistic Landscape: The Role of Language in Space and Time*. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 7(1), 1-15.
- Hult, F. M. (2010). Analysis of language policy discourses across the scales of space and time. *International journal of the sociology of language*, 2010(202).
- Jem, Y. H., Beda, R., Utami, N. M. V., & Rafael, A. M. (2023). Public Signs In Komodo National Park, Flores-NTT: A Linguistic Landscape Study. *SPHOTA: Jurnal Linguistik Dan Sastra*, 15(2), 95-109.
- Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of language and social psychology*, 16(1), 23-49.
- Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of language and social psychology*, 16(1), 23-49.
- Monica Barni, K. K. (2019). *Linguistic Landscape Theory in Language Learning. The Future of Education*, (pp. 1-4). Florence
- Spolsky, B., & Cooper, R. L. (1994). The Languages of Jerusalem. In *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* (Issue 1). Clarendon Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jlin.1994.4.1.107>
- Shohamy, E. (2015). LL research as expanding language and language policy. *Linguistic Landscape*, 1(1-2), 152-171.
- Supriatnoko. (2024). Exploring linguistic landscapes in Depok City Square Park. *Interdisciplinary Social Studies*, 3(3), April-June 2024.
- Supriatnoko, A. Mustofa, M. Onida, & N. M. W. Sugianingsih. (2023). Landscape linguistics in Depok City Village Park. *Interdisciplinary Social Studies*, 3(1), October-December 2023.
- Widiyanto, G. (2019). *Lanskap Linguistik di Museum Radya Pustaka Surakarta*. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik Dan Sastra, Kajian Linguistik pada Karya Sastra