THE REUSE OF ARABIC-MALAY SCRIPT IN RIAU PUBLIC SPHERES

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Abstract
The Arabic-Malay script was a writing system used by the Malay society in the Indonesia archipelago starting from the 13th century. Since the arrival of European colonization in the 17th century until the 20th century, the Arabic-Malay script began to be abandoned because colonialism introduced a new education system that required the use of Latin script. Recently, the phenomenon of reusing Arabic-Malay script has become widespread in Riau, especially in public spheres. This research discusses the reuse of Arabic-Malay script in Riau public spheres from Linguistic Landscape (LL) perspective which refers to the concept of public signs and personal signs. This research was designed using qualitative descriptive methods. The research procedures carried out include an empirical survey of language signs in public sphere, classification of language signs, and analysis of motives for reusing Arabic-Malay script in public spheres. The results of this research conclude: first, the language used in public sign which written in Arabic-Malay script is Bahasa Indonesia; second, the classification type of signs in LL is public sign which is top-down by the local government; and third, the motive for reusing Arabic-Malay script is to reshape the Malay ethnic space in Riau's public space. In other words, the preference of Arabic-Malay script used on public signs shows that the identity of the place is indeed a symbolic marker of Malay ethnicity.
Key words: Arabic-Malay, Linguistic Landscape, Public Sign, Riau

Abstrak
Aksara Arab-Melayu merupakan sistem tulisan yang digunakan masyarakat Melayu di kepulauan Indonesia mulai abad ke-13. Sejak datangnya penjajahan Eropa pada abad ke-17 hingga abad ke-20, aksara Arab-Melayu mulai ditinggalkan karena kolonialisme memperkenalkan sistem pendidikan baru yang mengharuskan penggunaan aksara Latin. Belakangan ini fenomena penggunaan kembali aksara Arab-Melayu marak terjadi di Riau, khususnya di ruang publik. Penelitian ini membahas tentang penggunaan kembali aksara Arab-Melayu di ruang publik Riau dalam perspektif Linguistic Landscape (LL) yang mengacu pada konsep tanda publik dan tanda personal. Penelitian ini dirancang dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Prosedur penelitian yang dilakukan meliputi survei empiris terhadap tanda-tanda bahasa di ruang publik, klasifikasi tanda-tanda bahasa, dan analisis motif penggunaan kembali aksara Arab-Melayu di ruang publik. Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan: pertama, bahasa yang digunakan dalam tanda umum yang ditulis dengan aksara Arab-Melayu adalah Bahasa Indonesia; kedua, jenis klasifikasi rambu di LL adalah rambu umum yang bersifat top-down oleh pemerintah daerah; dan ketiga, motif penggunaan kembali aksara Arab-Melayu adalah untuk membentuk kembali ruang etnis Melayu di ruang publik Riau. Dengan kata lain, preferensi penggunaan aksara Arab-Melayu pada

papan tanda publik menunjukkan bahwa identitas tempat tersebut memang menjadi penanda simbolik etnis Melayu.
Kata Kunci: *Arab-Melayu, Lanskap Linguistik, Tanda Publik, Riau*

INTRODUCTION

The 13th century was the era of Islamic glory in the archipelago (today known as Indonesia). This era was also marked by the emergence of the Arabic-Malay script. The Arabic-Malay script is a writing system created by the Malays who adopted the Arabic script system with several modifications and adjustments. The Arabic-Malay script consists of twenty-nine Arabic letters and five letters created by the Malays themselves.

According to Ikram (1977) not all Arabic letters can be used correctly to write Malay because the phonological system of Malay is not the same as the phonological system of Arabic. For this reason, several Arabic letters are modified by adding dots which function as differentiating sounds that do not exist in Arabic without changing the shape of the original letters, thus forming new characters. The five additional characters are {ca}, {nga}, {pa}, {ga}, and {nya}. According to Roza (2017), the main motive for developing the Arabic-Malay script was as a medium for spreading Islam in the archipelago. Because local people cannot speak Arabic, the preachers try to combine the local language (Malay) with Arabic in their writing. It was through Arabic-Malay script that the preachers spread Islam in the archipelago. At the same time, the use of Arabic-Malay script was not only for the spread of Islam, but was also used for other purposes such as in the fields of education, government and trade.

In the 17th century, European such as Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, England, and France began to arrive in the archipelago. From then until the 20th century they were in various regions in the archipelago. During the period, Latin script began to develop rapidly, at the same time the role of Arabic-Malay script continued to slowly decline in the life of Malay society. The peak occurred during the Dutch colonial period. At that time the Dutch authorities enforced the use of Latin letters through the modern educational institutions they built (Al-Attas, 1990). Since then, the Arabic-Malay script have begun to be forgotten by the Malay community.

The existence of Arabic-Malay worsened when a language congress was held in Singapore in the 1950s which strengthened the position of Latin and Roman script. After that, almost all newspaper, magazine and book publishers were forced to replace Arabic-Malay script with Latin script. Nasrullah (2017) said that in the period 1948-1956 the Arabic-Malay script disappeared completely.

Recently, the phenomenon of using Arabic-Malay script has begun to reappear in Indonesia, especially on public signs in Riau public sphere. This article discusses the reuse of Arabic-Malay script in Riau public spheres from a Linguistic Landscape (LL) perspective which refers to the concept of language use in public space by Landry & Bourhis (1997). More specifically, this article explores how Arabic-Malay script reshapes Malay ethnic space in Riau public sphere through LL, which called as 'ethnoscape' (Appadurai, 1990) or "ethnic (re)modeling of space" (Amos, 2016).

This kind of LL field of study usually arises in situations where language use in public spaces seems to be involved in social conflict (Shohamy, 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that many studies on LL have referred to language policy in various forms, either by conceptualizing LL as a mechanism through which policy influence can be achieved (Shohamy, 2015) or by examining how signs can express dissent from official policy (Rubdy & Ben Said, 2015).

Several LL studies of this kind have been carried out by several researchers. Much of this work explores the modeling of (re)ethnic space

undertaken by various actors, with a focus on individual contributions to shared discourses on ethnic identity. Among them are Leeman & Modan (2009) who report the commodification of Chinese characters as decoration for commercial success. They concluded that public space has been separated from its original ethnic identity. Elsewhere, Lou (2010) explores marginalized presentations of linguistic identities, including how these identities are used among majority language groups.

More recently, Lanza & Woldemariam (2015) considered ethnolinguistic identities in the space known as 'little Ethiopia' in Washington, DC, offering a series of observations about language contact and the coexistence of ethnolinguistic groups. In Indonesia, similar research was also conducted by Artawa, Setyawati, Purnawati & Yendra (2021) which discussed the use of Balinese language and script in public spaces, related to Balinese language policy.

These earlier studies contribute to LL's broader work on diasporic languages and minority groups featuring specific reference to ethnically defined zones (see also Barni & Vedovelli, 2012; Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2012; Malinowski, 2009; Vandenbroucke, 2015). Many of the spaces examined in these works are characterized by what Christiansen, Petito, & Tonra (2000) call 'fuzzy' boundaries.

However, others have established lines of inquiry into the dynamics of authenticity and representation in a variety of scientific fields, including political sociology (Collins, 2010), psychology (Phinney & Ong, 2007), and anthropology (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). Overall, these previous studies provide a framework for assessing areas of ethnic language use with a view to delimiting the contextual and geographic boundaries of ethnic spaces.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

This research was designed using qualitative descriptive method that refers to what has been done by Leeman & Modan (2009), Lou (2010), Amos (2016), Lanza & Woldemariam (2015), and Artawa, Satyawati, Purnawati & Yendra (2021). The procedures carried out include: First, empirical survey of language signs in public sphere. Second, classification of language signs. Third, analysis of motives for reusing Arabic-Malay script in public spheres.

In the first procedure, language signs in Riau public sphere was captured by using photography techniques and saved in digital image format. Then, images samples that are relevant and match with the analysis target be displayed in the data analysis. The reference makes photography a data collection technique because one of the distinguishing characteristics of LL studies is the use of photos as material for analyzing language signs in public spaces; and this photography has become a technique that characterizes much of LL's research (Aronin & O Laoire, 2012; Gorter, 2013; Yendra & Artawa, 2020). Moreover, empirical survey was carried out not to calculate the amount of data in quantity but only to see a general picture of the data, then capture the details of the super-diversification of language signs in LL. In this empirical survey, the activities carried out are recording data in a series of systems to classify types of language signs, discourse material, authorship, types of places where language signs are found (Amos, 2016; Gorter, 2018).

In the second procedure, data was classified into two, include: (1) outdoor official language signs (public signs) made by the government such as in government buildings, airports, ports, terminals and other public facilities; and (2) informal outdoor signs (private signs/private signs) made by individuals or non-government groups such as signs on shops, hotels, restaurants and other commercial signs. This refers to research conducted by Backhaus (2007).

This classification of signs is carried out with the aim of finding out who made the signs, so that it will be known which group uses the Arabic-Malay script, the government or certain individuals and groups.

In the third step, data analysis is carried out to see language sign preferences, then evaluate the comparison of several data. Thus, the varying complexity of the language signs that make up LL, the relationships between languages across the space of their comparative distribution, their varying uses in different contexts, and their concentration in particular places or types of places can be explored qualitatively. The items analyzed were adapted from the system for classifying signs by Amos (2016) which is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. System for analysis of signs in public spaces

System	Description	Gradient Example
Language	The language in the sign	Bahasa Indonesia, English, Japanese, Spain, France, Chinese, etc
Multilingual	Content relationship of multilingual signs	Replication (same content), non-relational (different content), inter-relational (complementary content)
Script	Types of letter are used	Latin, Arabic, Japanese, Arabic-Malay, etc
Type of sign	Who actor made the sign	Top-down and Bottom-up
Communicative Function	The purpose and objectives of signs	Signboards, information, announcements, advertisements, slogans, etc
Point/locus	Spots where signs are presented	On walls, windows, banners, billboards, doors, arches, other places, etc
Material	Types of materials for making signs	Permanent paint, printed, graffiti, etc
Sign Context	Types of sign spots	Shops, restaurants, hotels, houses, buildings, sites, temples, etc

DISCUSSION
Geographical, Demographic, Language and Religion in Riau Province

Geographically, Riau is a province in Indonesia which is located on the east coast of the central part of Sumatra Island. The coastal area borders the Malacca Strait and the Riau Islands, a group of small islands located between eastern Sumatra and southern Singapore. The capital of Riau Province is Pekanbaru, and another big city after Pekanbaru is the city of Dumai. See Figure 4 for the following map of Riau Province.

Figure 1. Map of Riau Province

Demographically, based on a survey by the Riau Central Statistics Agency (2022), the population of Riau Province is 6,493,603 people, with a population density of 75 people/km². The population of Riau Province consists of various tribes. The Malay tribe is the largest community in Riau with a percentage of 33.35% of the entire population of Riau. The Malay tribe generally comes from coastal areas in Rokan Hilir, Dumai, Bengkalis, Meranti Islands, Indragiri Hilir, to

the mainland areas of Pelalawan, Siak, Pekanbaru and Indragiri Hulu.

In some case, there are also native Riau Malay people who are Minangkabau Malays such as the Petalangan Malay community in parts of Pelalawan, Rokan Hulu, Kampar and Kuantan Singingi. They have a close relationship with Minangkabau because these areas are close to each other and even directly border West Sumatra; and there is also a Mandailing Batak community in Rokan Hulu who often claim to be Malay rather than Batak or Minangkabau. Furthermore, other ethnic groups that make up the Riau community are Javanese (29.20%), Batak (12.55%), Minangkabau (12.29%), Banjar (4.13%), Bugis (1.95%), Chinese (1.85%), Sundanese (1.44%), Nias (1.30%), and other ethnic groups 1.94% spread throughout Riau Province.

Linguistically, Riau is a province with a diverse population background, so there are many languages spoken in the society. According to the survey, 40.05% of Riau residents aged 5 years and over speak Bahasa Indonesia, while 58.68% use regional languages (Malay, Javanese, Minangkabau, Batak and Banjar), and the remaining 1.27% use foreign languages. Malay or known as Riau Malay is a language spoken widely by Malays ethnic who are native residents of Riau, especially in coastal areas such as Rokan Hilir, Bengkalis, Dumai, Meranti Islands, Indragiri Hilir; to mainland areas, such as Pelalawan, Pekanbaru, Siak, Indragiri Hulu, Kampar, Kuantan Singingi, and Rokan Hulu (Sugono, 2017).

Apart from Malay, Minangkabau is also widely used as a business language in urban areas such as Pekanbaru and in parts of western Riau which borders West Sumatra. Minangkabau is not only used by the Minang community but is also used by other communities as an everyday language in markets and trading places. Minangkabau is

the lingua frangca of the Riau community. This is because many Minang people migrate to trade and work in Riau until they settle and become Riau citizens. However, native Malay speakers do not call their language Minangkabau, but rather as a separate language called Malay dialect (Dahlan, Syair, Manan & Sabrin, 1985; Wirianto & Arfinal, 2011).

Apart from Malay and Minangkabau, other languages used in Riau were Batak, Banjar and Javanese. The Batak used in Riau consists of two dialects, namely Toba Batak and Angkola Batak. The Toba Batak is spoken by the Toba Batak community who live around the urban areas such as Pekanbaru, Dumai, and other areas of Riau in several districts. Angkola Batak or also known as Mandailing dialect spoken by the Angkola Batak and Mandailing Batak communities in the Rokan Hulu district which borders North Sumatra (Danardana, 2010).

The Banjar spoken by Banjar communities in Indragiri Hilir Regency. There are four scattered dialects of Banjar in Riau, namely the Pekan Kamis dialect, the Simpang Gaung dialect, the Sungai Raya-Sungai or Piring dialect, and the Teluk Jira dialect. According to dialectrometry calculations, the Banjar dialects in Riau have quite significant differences from their area of origin in South Kalimantan. The Banjar language in Riau has been mixed and influenced several languages, one of which is Malay.

On a fairly large scale, Javanese speakers are also found to be used by the descendants of Javanese immigrants who have lived in Riau since the colonial period, as well as by transmigrants from the island of Java in the post-independence period (Dahlan, Syair, Manan & Sabrin, 1985; Danardana, 2010).

In terms of beliefs, the religions adhered to by the people of Riau province are very diverse, including Islam, Christianity,

Catholicism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism and Traditional Religion.

Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Home Affairs (2023), the majority of Riau residents adhere to Islam at 87.04%. Adherents of Islam are generally Malay, Javanese, Minangkabau, Banjar, Bugis, Sundanese, and some Batak (generally Mandailing and some Angkola).

Christians are 9.81% and Catholics are 1.08%. Most Christians and Catholics come from the Batak ethnic group (especially Toba Batak, Simalungun, Pakpak, Nias, Karo), a small number belong to Javanese, Chinese, and ethnic groups from Eastern Indonesia (ethnic groups from NTT, Minahasa and Ambon).

Adherents of Buddhism are 2.01% and Confucians are 0.03%. Adherents of Buddhism and Confucianism generally come from ethnic Chinese and a small number are ethnic Javanese. Hinduism is 0.01%, adhered to by Balinese tribal people and some people of Indian-Tamil-Indonesian descent. Finally, there are 0.01% adherents of traditional religions, which are generally adhered to by several isolated communities in the interior of Riau.

The Sign Classification, Language Use and Motive of Reuse Arabic-Malay Script in Riau Public Spheres

One of the main questions of this research concerns how to classify the use of Arabic-Malay script in Riau public spaces from a Linguistic Landscape (LL) perspective. There are two classifications of signs in LL, namely public signs and personal signs. Public signs are a specific type of semiotic sign that functions as an edict, news, notification and announcement that is presented (display) in the public space (public sphere), which provides information or instructions in text and symbolic form (Backhaus, 2007) . A personal sign in the Linguistic Landscape (LL) is a symbol or a sign of an object; something that contains (quality); or an activity (event) whose occurrence is likely to give rise to someone's intention regarding a desire, or an event (occurrence); or other things related to a concept desired by the creator (Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2006).

Both type of signs, personal signs and public signs, are signs that function as informational and symbolic markers that are top down or bottom up. From top to bottom, it means that it relates to the language policy implemented within a territory within a region (local government regulations) which regulate the use of language in public spaces. Meanwhile, from bottom to top means related to the existence of the use of language as a discourse that wants to create knowledge or power by an individual or certain group in achieving certain aims and objectives. In the case of the use of Arabic-Malay script in Riau public spaces, the classification of signs found is only top-down public signs, such as several examples in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2. Example of using Arabic-Malay script on a government building nameplate

Figure 3. Example of using Arabic-Malay script on a street nameplate

Figure 4. Example of using Arabic-Malay script on information signs

From the examples in Figures 2, 3 and 4, it can be seen that the form of use of the Arabic-Malay script in LL is a form of script arrangement, where the writing of the Arabic-Malay script is arranged after the writing of the Latin script. The language used in the three public signs is Bahasa Indonesia written using Arabic-Malay script and Latin script. In this case, the use of the Arabic-Malay script after the Latin script is only limited to technical writing. Both are Indonesian transcriptions that are replication in nature.

In Figure 2, the content presented is the naming of the government building *"Kantor Gubenur Riau, Jl Jendral Sudirman No. 460 Pekanbaru"* "Riau Governor's Office, Jl Jendral Sudirman No. 460 Pekanbaru". In Figure 3, the content conveyed is the name of the street *"Jl Mulyorejo"* "Mulyorejo Street". In Figure 4, the content conveyed is a warning sign *"dilarang merokok"* "no smoking". It is very likely that this happened due to the influence of the National Language Policy which regulates and requires the use of Indonesian in all regions (Presidential Regulation Number 63 of 2019).

Conceptually, placing Arabic-Malay script alongside Latin letters as a transcription of the Indonesian National Language on public signs represents a form of Riau regional government diaspora, where special preference is used for ethnically defined zones (see. Barni & Vedovelli, 2012 ; Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2012; Malinowski, 2009; Vandenbroucke, 2015). This means that Arabic-Malay script is used as a symbol of affirming Malay ethnicity in public spaces. This is what Leeman & Modan (2009) call the commodification of ethnicity to become a decoration for success that cannot be separated from the original ethnic identity. Apart from that, from the examples in Figures 2, 3 and 4, it can be seen that Arabic-Malay script is used on government building signs, street names, and top-down information boards. This means that public signs that use Arabic-Malay script are made by the Riau government authorities for a specific purpose.

CONCLUTION

Linguistic Landscape is the center of ethnic identity construction which forms at least one dimension for mapping ethnic space (ethnoscape). Therefore, using Arabic-Malay script by presenting language preferences on the Linguistic Landscape in the form of

public signs clearly shows the aim of ethnic demarcation by the Riau Provincial government. In form, the use of Arabic-Malay script alongside Latin script as a medium for conveying information is a form of Riau local government diaspora, where special preferences are used for ethnically defined zones. In other words, the preference of Arabic-Malay script used on public signs shows that the identity of the place is indeed a symbolic marker of Malay ethnicity.

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