


Linguistic landscape of selected Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan, Indonesia

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Abstract

In Medan, Indonesia, there has been a noticeable increase in small- and medium-sized culinary enterprises themed around Japanese culture. The symbols and linguistic units used to indicate Japanese culture in these businesses, however, are only minimally effective at creating consumer interest. This study aims to identify and classify the Japanese linguistic landscape found across various small, medium, and large businesses in Medan. Additionally, it compares this linguistic landscape with that in Japan to produce a practical guide for designing businesses with a Japanese cultural theme. This research is a linguistic landscape study employing a qualitative method using Neuman's (2006) ethnographic approach. The data for this study includes visual images of the Japanese-themed business linguistic landscape in Medan and interviews with key informants. Study conclusions reveal that the forms of language in the Japanese culinary business linguistic landscape in Medan consist of micro-linguistic units (e.g., words, phrases, clauses), while at the macro-linguistic level, multiple languages (i.e., English, Indonesian, Japanese) are used in the forms of letter transliterations, acronyms, and code-switching. Non-linguistic aspects include using Japanese-themed decorations and equipment along with contrasting text colors and backgrounds similar to those seen in large-scale Japanese culinary businesses. The function of language in the Japanese culinary businesses' linguistic landscape in Medan includes attracting consumer interest, creating exclusivity for the business, and evoking a distinctive Japanese atmosphere. Comparisons of linguistic landscapes in

Japanese-themed culinary businesses show differences in the forms of linguistic and non-linguistic units used between large- and small-to-medium-scale businesses. This research is expected to impact the development of small and medium enterprises in Medan and contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth as well as productive and comprehensive job opportunities.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, Japanese language, Japanese culture, culinary business

1. Introduction

Japan is a developed country with a significant cultural appeal to the global community, encompassing both its traditional and popular cultures. This appeal is evident in Indonesia, where Japanese culture has become a distinct theme in the business world across small, medium, and large enterprises such as restaurants, cafes, and various types of stores. Such businesses are often accompanied by the installation of publicly viewable Japanese linguistic units (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) as well as semiotic symbols.

The increasing popularity of Japanese culture in Indonesia has led many culinary businesses to adopt Japanese themes in an effort to create an appealing atmosphere for consumers seeking an exotic cultural experience. However, the use of Japanese symbols and language in these businesses is often not optimal. Many culinary ventures adopt Japanese elements in a way that is inconsistent or less representative, thereby diminishing the authentic impression they aim to convey. This inauthenticity negatively impacts the interests of consumers, who may feel that the cultural experience offered does not meet their expectations or is even confusing. By understanding how ineffective uses of Japanese symbols and language affects consumer attraction and perception, this study aims to provide better guidelines to enhance the effectiveness of cultural communication and improve the appeal of Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan.

The study of language use in public spaces is known as linguistic landscape (LL). According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), LL encompasses publicly viewable language use such as that on road signs, government building signs, billboards, street names, place names, and commercial store fronts, which are located both inside and outside of buildings (Olmedo & Juan-Garau 2015). LL can also include language used on posters and in graffiti (Cenoz & Gorter 2006; Gorter & Cenoz 2014). Observations of the LL involve issues of language use, syntax, and semantics (Grishaeva 2015). The study of LL is considered a new field in multilingualism research, particularly focusing on the observation of signs in public areas containing written information (Gorter 2018). Furthermore, Landry and Bourhis (1997) report a relationship between the LL and language attitudes in multilingual environments (Gorter & Cenoz 2014).

Although LL can be categorized as a subfield of sociolinguistics, it intersects with many other related fields: linguistics, demography, sociology, cultural geography, and statistics. Each of these disciplines has offered different perspectives that contribute to the understanding of the studies conducted.

The intention behind the installation of Japanese-themed LLs in public spaces is recognized to affect the store atmosphere and thus create consumer interest in those attracted to Japanese

culture (Pambudi & Maddinsyah 2022). Therefore, the presentation of Japanese symbols and linguistic units in public spaces should be taken into account by those involved in entrepreneurship.

This research explores the impact of business practices on concepts such as authenticity, globalization, and localization. By examining how Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan employ linguistic and cultural elements, the study reveals how these enterprises navigate the tension between maintaining cultural authenticity and adapting to local tastes. The use of Japanese symbols and language in these businesses reflects broader trends of globalization, where cultural elements are incorporated into diverse settings. However, the effectiveness of this integration is contingent on how well these businesses localize their offerings to resonate with Medan's consumer base while preserving the essence of Japanese culture. This research thus highlights the dynamic interplay between global cultural influences and local adaptation, illustrating how businesses can both capitalize on and challenge notions of authenticity in a globalized market.

Recently, various businesses such as stores, restaurants, cafes, and outlets themed around Japanese culture have emerged in Medan, spanning small, medium, and large scales. In the large-scale enterprises, the distinctly Japanese cultural environment is well-conceived and clearly presented. Thus, the Japanese LL effectively creates an appeal for the people of Medan who wish to experience a typical Japanese environment. Figure 1 illustrates an example of a large Japanese restaurant in Medan showcasing a distinctive LL, including the use of Japanese calligraphy, colors, and the traditional fabric dividers (*noren*) characteristic of Japan.



Figure 1. Large Japanese-themed restaurant.

Comparatively, the quality of Japanese representation is often lacking in the LL of small- and medium-sized businesses (e.g., shops, restaurants, cafes), thus diminishing their appeal and interest to consumers. Figure 2 shows two such Japanese-themed businesses with colors, images, font design, and linguistic elements that fail to create a visually attractive impression.

Given the phenomenon occurring, a specific study of the Japanese-themed LL of culinary businesses in Medan is needed. Identifying and comparing the large-scale with the small- and medium-sized enterprises can reveal how those engaged in Japanese-themed small- and medium-sized enterprises misuse or underutilize Japanese symbols and linguistic units. The

analysis in this study will uncover various shortcomings in the use of symbols and linguistic units that signify Japanese culture, which is closely related to the identity and consumer appeal of the business.



Figure 2. Small- and medium-sized enterprises with a Japanese cultural theme.

This study is conducted to understand the role of linguistic usage in the business world and serve as a reference for small- and medium-sized business owners in Indonesia, particularly in Medan, to improve their business practices and operations.

The topic of this research is considered highly relevant and interesting, as it focuses on the linguistic landscape (LL) of Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan, aligning with current trends and discussions in the fields of culture, linguistics, and economics. The growing popularity of Japanese culture in Indonesia, particularly in the culinary industry, has drawn the attention of many, including academics and business practitioners. This study offers valuable insights into the linguistic and cultural elements that shape authentic culinary experiences and contributes to the existing literature while also opening avenues for further discussion on the role of language in economic and cultural development.

2. Study objectives

This study is being conducted to achieve the following two objectives:

1. Identify the LL basis of the symbols and language used in small-, medium-, and large-scale Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan City.
2. Determine how Japanese LLs compare between small-, medium-, and large-scale Japanese-themed businesses in Medan City.

3. Literature review

This literature review establishes the theoretical basis for analyzing the linguistic landscape of Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan. It first introduces the concept of Linguistic Landscape (LL), outlining its scope, functions, and relevance as a sociolinguistic tool, with a focus on bottom-up signs. The discussion then turns to names as public signs, highlighting their semiotic power, ideological links, and role in geosemiotics. The framework for analysis is drawn from Landry and Bourhis (1997), followed by an examination of key features of the Japanese language that signal authenticity. To deepen the interpretation, perspectives from Cultural Studies and Postcolonialism are integrated, offering insights into cultural

commercialization, authenticity, and power dynamics when Japanese linguistic and cultural symbols are adapted to the Indonesian context. Overall, this layered approach moves from linguistic description to socio-cultural interpretation.

3.1 Linguistic landscape

LL refers to the presence of language within spaces and places. Puzey (2016) describes LL as an interdisciplinary study of the presence of various language issues interacting with other languages in public spaces. Through the interaction of languages in public spaces, we can trace the symbolic construction of a space and the use of language in mediating social and political relationships. This is supported by the statement that LL refers to linguistic objects that mark the public space (Jenjekwa 2022; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael & Barni 2010). LL studies are considered a branch of sociolinguistics because they examine language phenomena and social phenomena in multi-ethnic communities (Ardhian & Soemarlum 2024: 173; Yusuf, Syaie, A'la & Alomoush 2022). Sociolinguistics, as noted by Fathoni (2011: 18), is the study of language characteristics, language variation, language functions, language use in interaction, and the role of language in society, which is closely related to LL. Landry and Bourhis (1997) propose that LL has two functions: informational and symbolic (Gapur, Taulia & Wardana 2024). In the informational function, the meaning of signs differentiates the geographical areas of residents by providing the language for the place names. In the symbolic function, the presence or absence of a group's language on street signs impacts the sense of belonging to that group.

LL provides information related to sociolinguistic behaviors and compares language use at official and unofficial spatial levels. In the official level (official sign), texts are produced by the government, introducing the concept of top-down; in the unofficial level (nonofficial sign), texts are produced by private entities or individuals, introducing the concept of bottom-up (Blommaert 2013; Erikha 2018; Fakhroh & Rohmah 2018; Shohamy et al. 2010). Besides examining language use in public spaces, LL also studies the use of these texts in specific areas, namely multilingual areas (Blommaert & Maly 2015).

This approach is very useful for explaining how texts are presented and how these texts are distributed (spread) within specific populations and communities. LL also explains texts' relationships or interaction patterns where communities participate in certain spaces, thus allowing an investigation into power relations within a region (Blommaert & Maly 2015). In this study, the focus on Japanese culinary LL is limited to the bottom-up variety, as all texts are created by individuals or private entities.

This research offers a new perspective in understanding the relationship between language, culture, and economics, particularly in the context of Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan. While many previous studies have discussed cultural and linguistic aspects in broader contexts (Abdullah & Wulung 2023; Fitria & Mulyono 2023; Widiyanto, Emzir & Muliastuti 2021), few have deeply examined how Japanese linguistic and cultural elements are translated and adapted into culinary businesses outside of Japan (Devina, Khasanah & Sugiharyanti 2023; Meilantari, Aritonang & Dwikarmawan Sudipa 2023; Pujiono & Barus 2023; Matwick & Matwick 2019). Therefore, this manuscript is considered a step forward in enriching the existing literature, opening new insights, and providing a more holistic understanding of the cultural and linguistic dynamics that influence the global culinary industry.

3.2 Names as signs in public spaces

Various signs in public spaces reflect and regulate the order of the space where they operate. The sociological, cultural, sociolinguistic, and political features of the space determine how the signs appear and function, and signs will also play a role in organizing and regulating space by identifying the recipients of these signs. Signs in public spaces can compel audiences to adhere to their rules, with a set of limitations and shared normative guidelines (Blommaert 2013). Such signs are certainly not created without reason. Signs carry messages and are never neutral; they are connected to social structures, hierarchies, and power (Stroud & Mpendukana 2010) because public space serves as both an area and an instrument for regulating and controlling power. A public space is fundamentally different from a private space, such as a living room in our home. Unlike private spaces, public spaces are shared by individuals or groups and may be desired by authorities (e.g., the government). Typically, the owner of an object has the right to regulate its use (Blommaert 2013).

Signboards convey messages that involve communication between the message creator and the recipient. Blommaert (2013) mentions that communication in public spaces is inseparable from power-related and sociolinguistic communication. For example, in street names, the names of heroes such as "Jalan Jenderal Ahmad Yani" (commonly abbreviated as Jalan Ahmad Yani) are commonly used as the names of main streets in various regions of Indonesia. These names were popular during the New Order regime (the presidency of Soeharto), and when this regime ended in 1998, the street names underwent changes; as Blommaert (2013: 40) questions, "how does space organize semiotic regimes of language?" Of course, all signs expressed through street signs carry out discursive practices attributing to an ideology (Blackwood & Tufi 2015).

When discussing signs, one cannot ignore semiotic issues. Street signs (in the landscape) are markers of a space. A classic theory by Ogden and Richards (1923) addresses how a concept (reference) representing an object (referent) is represented by a symbol (language symbol) (see also, Constable 2014; Gari, Zulkifli, Putri & Hasanah 2020). This relates to the role of street signs. For example, "Jalan Jenderal Sudirman" (in Jakarta) as a toponym is a language symbol for the street extending from *Bundaran Hotel Indonesia* to the marker at *Patung Pemuda Membangun* (also known as *Patung Bundaran Senayan*). For the people of Jakarta, this street encompasses a highly varied concept in their minds, whether as the capital city's main road, a bustling thoroughfare, or a street lined with skyscrapers.

This concept illustrates how semiotics plays a role in the LL and attempts to capture language as a mediator between space and place. The existence of street names can also be examined from the perspective of discourse analysis, which is referred to as geosemiotics. Geosemiotics is the study of the social meaning of the placement of material signs, their discursive content, and our attitudes toward the material world. This concept originated from earlier discussions of physical space as merely a backdrop, but it has since been re-evaluated to become part of the text itself (Scollon & Scollon 2003).

3.3 Linguistic landscape analysis

The analysis of LL follows the framework proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997). This framework is divided into six levels: (1) micro-linguistic analysis, (2) analysis of language code types, (3) analysis of language behavior, (4) psychological analysis, (5) socio-psychological

Said (1978) describes how the East, including Japan, is often romanticized and exoticized by the West. In Indonesia, particularly in cities like Medan, Japanese themes have become popular commodities, raising questions about the authenticity of Japanese elements and whether they are exploited for commercial gain. Although Japan was not a traditional colonial power in Indonesia, its influence as an economic and cultural force is evident in various aspects of daily life, including culinary businesses. After World War II, Japan experienced an economic resurgence and projected its culture globally through entertainment, technology, and cuisine. For instance, the penetration of Japanese foods like sushi, ramen, and bento boxes into Indonesian popular culture exemplifies a global trend known as modern *Japonisme*, showing how Japan exports its culture post-colonially and becomes a symbol of modernity in Indonesia. This influence reflects how Japanese language and cultural symbols are integrated into the global economy and appeal to local consumers. However, this integration may also simplify or alter authentic elements of Japanese culture to fit local markets.

In postcolonialism, English is considered the ‘imperial language’ dominating global communication. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (1989) demonstrate that English serves as a tool of colonial dominance but is also adapted by former colonies. In Medan, English is frequently used in branding culinary businesses, especially those with Japanese themes. For example, many Japanese-themed restaurants use English in their menus for food descriptions (e.g., authentic Japanese ramen, fresh sushi), which enhances the restaurants’ global appeal and positions them in a broader cultural context. However, the prevalence of English can subordinate local languages as well as original Japanese elements, potentially diminishing the authenticity of Japanese culture the business is attempting to present. In the LL of Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan, we observe a phenomenon of hybridity as described by Bhabha (1994). Hybridity occurs when two or more cultures meet, interact, and create something new. Restaurants that blend Japanese names with English menu descriptions illustrate linguistic hybridity, reflecting globalization. Names like Tokyo Sushi House with English descriptions show how these languages coexist to create an international impression. This hybridity results in an intriguing LL but may also create tensions between Japanese cultural authenticity and global market pressures while highlighting the dominance of English, which can overshadow both local and original Japanese elements.

4. Method

In general, LL studies involve qualitative research methods primarily achieved through documenting LL objects using a digital camera. Methodologically, LL analysis relies on photography and visual analysis. Data collection focuses on photographic engagement that visualizes texts seen on signs in public spaces. The scope of this study includes places of businesses such as culinary shops and restaurants with a Japanese cultural theme.

4.1 Research design

The qualitative research employed uses an ethnographic approach based on that proposed by Neuman (2006) and depicted in Figure 4.

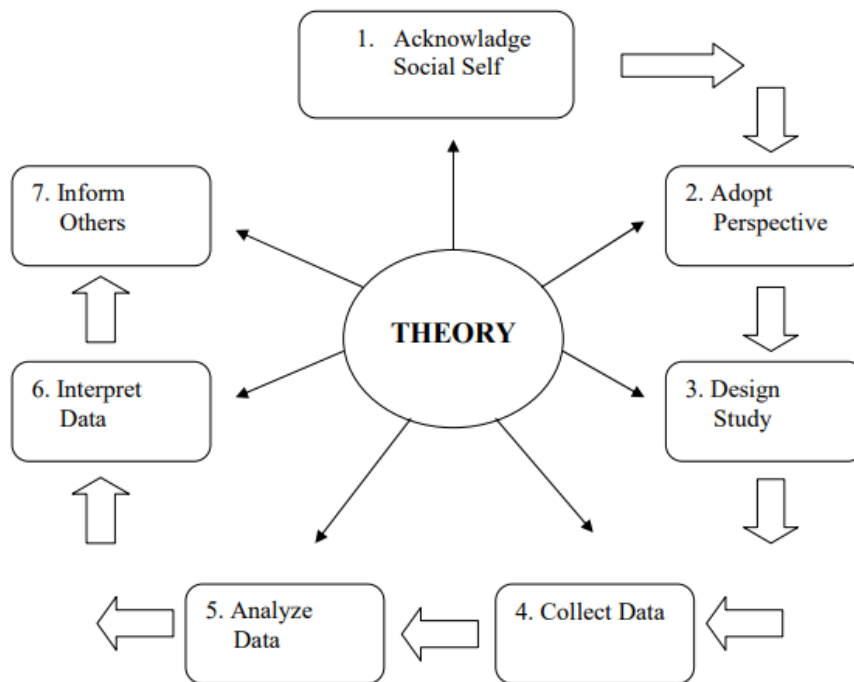


Figure 4. The qualitative research process (Neuman 2006).

According to Neuman (2006: 15), there are seven steps that must be followed in the process of qualitative research. First, identify the core issue. In this study, the core issue is the form and function of shop and office nameplates in Medan. Second, adopt a research perspective. This research adopts a Critical Social Science (CSS) approach. Third, design the research. Fourth, collect research data. Fifth, analyze the research data. Sixth, interpret the research data. Seventh, communicate the findings of the research to others.

The CSS approach focuses on a deep analysis of social structures and power dynamics with the aim of critiquing injustices and promoting social change. An essential component of CSS is postcolonial theory, which explores the impacts of colonialism and how historical power structures influence intercultural relations and identities.

In the context of the study, a postcolonial approach aids in understanding how Japanese cultural representations in culinary businesses in Medan might reflect or challenge global and local power dynamics. This research can reveal how Japanese cultural elements are integrated and perceived within the context of cultural colonialism and globalization and how these influences affect cultural authenticity and local adaptation. Therefore, CSS and postcolonial perspectives provide a framework for evaluating how Japanese-themed culinary businesses operate within a complex social structure and how they contribute to the understanding of power and cultural identity in Medan.

Medan was chosen as the research location because it is the fourth-largest city in Indonesia and the largest economic and trading hub in Sumatra with a diverse population and a high level of urbanization. Medan has become a fertile ground for various culinary ventures, including those with a Japanese cultural theme. The city has a large and dynamic market with a growing demand for international culinary experiences. Japanese culture has thrived in Medan due to factors such as globalization, increasing interest in foreign cultures, and the presence of an active

Japanese community in the city. Additionally, the appeal of Japanese culture, including its food, interior design, and unique ambiance, resonates with the tastes of Medan's residents who are seeking new and different experiences. With its advanced and diverse urban context, Medan provides an ideal environment to examine the application of Japanese culture to the LL of the culinary business.

This qualitative research is used to investigate objects by narrating and interpreting existing data and implementing it through the collection, organization, analysis, and interpretation of data studied at the present time (Pujiono, Gapur, Taulia & Azzali 2025). This type of research is considered highly relevant as it depicts the current state of the objects qualitatively based on data obtained from the research. Qualitative research aims to provide a clear and factual description and explanation of the form and function of language on shop signs and decorations in Japanese culinary businesses in Medan.

To address the research questions in data analysis, domain analysis and taxonomy analysis are employed. Firstly, domain analysis examines the general overview of language forms. Next, taxonomy analysis delves deeper into the internal elements of language forms identified in the domain analysis. The final part involves discussing and describing the language forms used in the signage and decorations of Japanese culinary businesses in Medan across large, medium, and small scales.


4.2 Data and data sources

The data consists of words, phrases, clauses, and symbols found in photographed images taken on the premises of Japanese-themed businesses (Landry & Bourhis 1997; Shohamy & Gorter 2008; Yusuf et al. 2022). To further understand the function of the language used in these establishments, open interviews were conducted with 50 individuals: 10 business owners and 40 customers. The data was then analysed to determine the form and function of the language. This analysis is comprised of three components: micro-linguistic units, macro-linguistic units, and non-linguistic units.


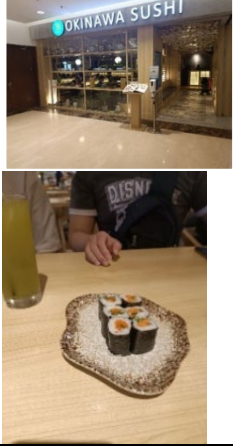


4.3 Presentation of the data

Before presenting the results of the data analysis, the data obtained from the field is first presented. The data is displayed in the Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Data from large-scale culinary businesses.


No.	Picture	Address of Location	Language Form			Non-linguistic Spatial Design
			Micro-linguistic Units	Macro-linguistic Units	Non-linguistic Units	
1.		Kintan Buffet Jalan Uskup Agung No. 12, Madras Hulu, Medan Polonia District, Medan City, North Sumatra	Phrase Word Clause	Bilingual trans-literation Acronym Use of Japanese characters (kana and kanji).	White text with a red logo.	The size of the words in the name is larger; dense with information and filled with linguistic units.

2.		<p>Sushi Mentai Jl. DR. Cipto No.2, Anggrung, Medan Polonia, Medan City, North Sumatra 20152</p> <p>- Food type: Sushi - Place name: Sushi Mentai</p>	Phrase	<p>Bilingual trans- literation Use of Japanese characters (kana and kanji).</p>	<p>Bright white text on a yellow background.</p>	<p>Larger font size used for Latin alphabet characters compared to Japanese characters.</p>
3.		<p>Jigo Ramen Mall Center Point Medan Jl. Jawa No.8 Gg. Buntu, Medan Timur District, Medan City</p> <p>- Food Type: Ramen - Venue Name: Jigo Ramen</p>	Phrase	<p>Bilingual trans- literation Use of Japanese characters (kana and kanji).</p>	<p>White text with a red logo.</p>	<p>Larger font size used for Latin alphabet characters.</p>
4.		<p>Ramen So Joy Jl. Setia Budi No.55 C, Tj. Rejo, Medan Sunggal District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20122</p> <p>- Food Type: Ramen - Venue Name: Ramen So Joy</p>	Phrase	<p>Bilingual (Japanese, English) with only Roman alphabet.</p>	<p>White text on red background.</p>	<p>Larger font size used for the name with ample empty space.</p>
5.		<p>Gokana Ramen Teppan Sun Plaza, Jl. KH. Zainul Arifin No.53, Madras Hulu, Medan Polonia, Medan City, North Sumatra 20151</p>	Word	<p>Mono- lingual, using only Roman alphabet.</p>	<p>White text on red background.</p>	<p>Larger font size used for name with ample empty space.</p>

6.		<p>MARUGAME UDON Sun Plaza Mall Medan Jl. Muara Takus No.25, Petisah Tengah, Kec. Medan Petisah, Medan City, North Sumatra 20152</p>	Phrase Word	Mono-lingual, transliteration; uses Japanese characters (kanji).	White text with logo on red background.	Larger font size used for name. Dense with information and filled with linguistic units.
7.		<p>OKINAWA SUSHI 37A, Sun Plaza Mall Medan L3 - C, Madras Hulu, Kec. Medan Polonia, Medan City, North Sumatra</p>	Phrase	Mono-lingual (Japanese) using only Roman alphabet characters.	White text with logo on green background.	Larger font size used for the name with ample empty space.
8.		<p>MIRAI Jl. Karya Wisata No.22 D, Pangkalan Masyhur, Kec. Medan Johor, Medan City, North Sumatra 20146</p>	Phrase Word Clause	Bilingual (Japanese, English); transliteration and use of Japanese characters (kanji).	White text with red logo.	Larger font size used for the name; dense with information and filled with linguistic units.
9.		<p>KAGAYAKU Jl. Setia Budi No.74, Kec. Medan Selayang, Medan City, North Sumatra 20122</p>	Phrase Word Clause	Bilingual use of Japanese characters (kana and kanji).	White text with red and blue background.	Larger font size used for the name; dense with information and filled with linguistic units.

10.		<p>Tomo Sushi Sun Plaza Jl. KH. Zainul Arifin No.7, Madras Hulu, Kec. Medan Polonia, Medan City, North Sumatra</p>	Phrase	<p>Mono- lingual (Japanese) with trans- literation of kanji to alphabet letters.</p>	White text.	Lots of empty space.
11.		<p>Kimukatsu Jl. Putri Hijau No.1, Kesawan, Kec. Medan Barat, Medan City, North Sumatra</p>	Word	<p>Mono- lingual with trans- literation using Japanese characters (kana).</p>	Bright white text.	Lots of empty space.
12.		<p>Sushitei Jl. KH. Zainul Arifin No.7, Madras Hulu, Kec. Medan Polonia, Medan City, North Sumatra</p>	Phrase	<p>Mono- lingual (Japanese) with Roman characters and kanji.</p>	White text.	Lots of empty space.

Table 2. Data from small- and medium-sized culinary businesses.

No.	Picture	Location Address & Type of Food	Language Form			
			Micro- linguistic unit	Macro- linguistic unit	Non- linguistic unit	Non-linguistic unit of spatial design
1.		<p>Jl. Abdullah Lubis No. 103, Merdeka, Kec. Medan Baru, Medan City, North Sumatra 20153</p> <p>Type of Food: Takoyaki Name of Place: Takoyaki Kansai</p>	Word Phrase	<p>Multi- lingual (Japanese, English, Indonesian) using only Roman alphabet characters.</p>	<p>White text on red back- ground; images of food and typical Japanese scenery.</p>	<p>Compact linguistic units and images with little empty space.</p>

2.		<p>OISHII TAKOYAKI Jl. Bromo</p>	Phrase	<p>Bilingual (Japanese, Indonesian) with Roman alphabet characters.</p>	<p>Black text on red back- ground with images of food.</p>	<p>Compact linguistic units and images with little empty space.</p>
3.		<p>GEROBAK SUSHI K5 Jl. Mistar ujung</p>	Phrase Word	<p>Multi- lingual (Japanese, English, Indonesian) with only Latin alphabet characters.</p>	<p>White text on orange back- ground with images of food.</p>	<p>Compact linguistic units and images with minimal empty space.</p>
4.		<p>Jl. Marindal No. 23, Mekar Sari, Medan City, North Sumatra</p>	Phrase Word Clause	<p>Multi- lingual (Japanese, English, Indonesian) using only Roman alphabet characters.</p>	<p>White text on red back- ground with food images.</p>	<p>Compact linguistic units and images with minimal empty space.</p>
5.		<p>Jl. Bunga Kenanga No.2, Padang Bulan Selayang II, Medan Selayang District, Medan City, North Sumatra</p>	Phrase Word	<p>Multi- lingual (Japanese, English, Indonesian) using only Roman alphabet.</p>	<p>Red text on orange back- ground with food images.</p>	<p>Compact linguistic units and images with minimal empty space.</p>

6.		Jl. Gatot Subroto No. 30, Sekip, Medan Petisah District, Medan City, North Sumatra	Phrase	Multi- lingual (Japanese, English, Indonesian) using only Roman alphabet.	White text on red back- ground with logo and food images.	Compact linguistic units and images with minimal empty space.
7.		Jl. Dr. Mansyur No. 155, Sei Sikambing B, Medan Sunggal District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20153	Phrase Word	Bilingual (Japanese, Indonesian) using only Latin alphabet.	Yellow text on black back- ground with food images.	Compact linguistic units and images with minimal empty space.
8.		Tako Takoyaki Polonia Sky Park Jl. Imam Bonjol No. 56, Suka Damai, Medan Polonia District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20159	Phrase Word	Bilingual (Japanese, English) using Roman alphabet, kana, and kanji.	Red, white, and black text on orange and black back- ground.	Compact linguistic units and images with minimal empty space.

5. Results of the research

This study addresses the objectives by examining the forms of symbols and language used in small, medium, and large Japanese-themed businesses in Medan, as illustrated in Tables 1 and 2, based on LL studies, the functions of language used in these businesses, and a comparison of the Japanese LL used between the small, medium, and large businesses. The forms of symbols and language used in businesses themed around Japanese culture were analysed based on domain analysis, outlined in Tables 3 and 4, and taxonomy, presented in Figure 5.

Table 3. Domain analysis of large-scale Japanese culinary business.

No.	Domain Details	Semantic Relationship	Domain
1.	Use of Roman letters / alphabet and kana	Type	- Micro/macro linguistic forms - Visual and spatial forms
2.	- Signboard - Decorations - Menus	Space	Places where LL (linguistic landscapes) are displayed in public spaces.
3.	Traditional Japanese cultural display	Cause and effect	- Business operators' mindset - Communication methods to create an impression
4.	Unique objects and attractions	Rationale or reason	Creation of LL in Japanese, English, and Indonesian

5.	Japanese dining utensils, typical menu	Location for doing something	Location of Japanese culinary LL
6.	Monolingual Japanese	Directions to destination	Segmentation of Japanese consumer interest
7.	- Salience - Use of foreign languages (Japanese, English)	Function	Informational and symbolic function of business presence
8.	- Mono/bi/multilingual situation - Translation / transliteration / code-mixing / lexical blends	Sequence	Presentation of LL in culinary businesses
9.	- Dominance of word forms and phrases - Use of Japanese, Indonesian, and English	Attribute	General description of Japanese culinary LL

Table 4. Domain analysis of small- and medium-scale Japanese culinary business.

No.	Domain Details	Semantic Relationship	Domain
1.	- Use of Roman letters - Transliteration	Type	- Micro/macro linguistic form - Visual and spatial form
2.	- Banners/signboards - Decorations - Menus	Space	Locations where LL is displayed in public spaces
3.	Food imagery	Cause and effect	- Business operators' mindset - Communication methods to create an impression
4.	- Font styles - Non-standard language forms - Code-mixing	Rationale or reason	Objects and attractions for better understanding
5.	Japanese dining utensils, typical menu	Location for doing something	Location of Japanese culinary LL facilities
6.	Bi/multilingual languages	Directions to destination	Consumer segmentation for general public interest
7.	- Salience - Use of foreign languages (Japanese, English)	Function	Informational and symbolic function of business presence
8.	- Mono/ bi/ multilingual situation - Translation/ transliteration/ code mixing/ lexical blends	Sequence	Presentation of LL in culinary businesses
9.	- Dominance of word forms and phrases - Use of Japanese, Indonesian, and English	Attribute	General description of Japanese culinary LL

The taxonomic analysis results are presented in Figure 5.

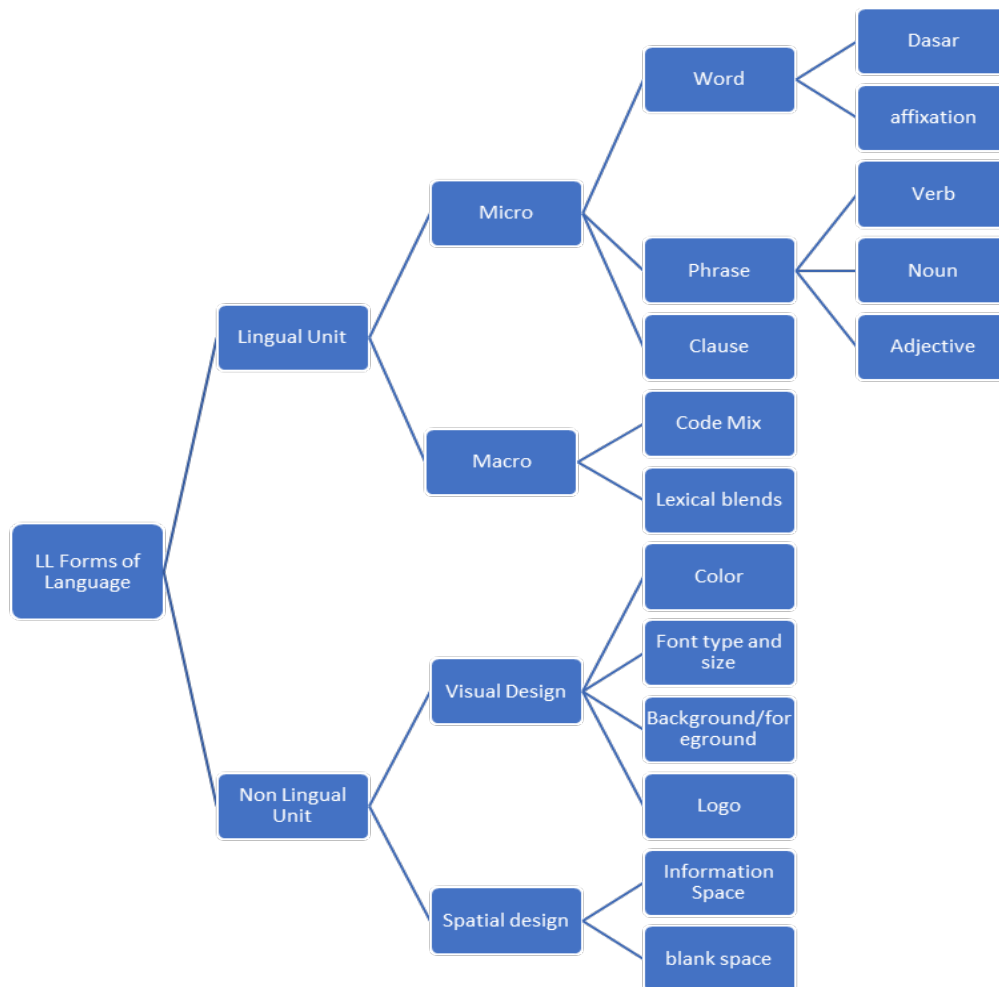


Figure 5. Taxonomic analysis results.

In addition, the discussion on the function of the language used in the LL of Japanese culinary businesses in Medan is based on the results of interviews with business operators and consumers. The findings reveal that out of 50 informants/respondents (40 consumers and 10 business operators) interviewed about Japanese culinary businesses in Medan, almost all (93%) stated that the distinctive Japanese LL was a major factor in their interest in Japanese culinary establishments. Therefore, the function of Japanese LL in culinary businesses includes attracting consumer interest. The distinctive Japanese LL also reflects the exclusivity of the business, distinguishing it from other culinary establishments. Additionally, these LLs function to create impressions of Japanese inspired atmospheres that can be experienced by consumers. Finally, in the comparison of the LL of Japanese-themed culinary businesses on a large scale versus those of small and medium sizes, differences are evident in the forms of linguistic and non-linguistic units used, such as the use of letters, language choice, images, background design, and font size. This comparison is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Comparisons of the LL of large-scale Japanese culinary businesses with small- and medium-sized ones.

No.	Differentiating domains	Large-scale Japanese culinary business	Small- and medium-scale Japanese culinary business
1.	Linguistic form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use Japanese characters (kana and kanji). - Use English and Japanese on the menu. - Business signs predominantly feature phrases and words. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often use only the Roman alphabet. - Use Japanese and Indonesian on the menu. - Business signs predominantly feature phrases and clauses that describe the products sold.
2.	Non-linguistic form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feature traditional Japanese decorations such as calligraphy paintings (<i>shodo</i>), images of Japanese landscapes, <i>noren</i>, and so on. - Include a distinctive logo. - Use traditional Japanese dining utensils and packaging such as <i>chawan</i> (tea bowls), chopsticks, etc. - Have ample empty space on the business nameplate. - Utilize clear colour contrast in their design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rarely include traditional Japanese decorations. - Often lack a distinctive logo. - Use Japanese chopsticks but have standard-looking packaging. - Provide dense information on the business nameplate and tend to feature images of food. - Have less pronounced colour contrast.

6. Discussion

In this section, the research findings are discussed and described in greater detail to provide a comprehensive understanding of the form, function, and comparison of the LL of Japanese-themed culinary businesses in Medan. Several images from the LL data are included to support the presented description.

6.1 Form of symbols and language used

Linguistic forms

The symbols and language used in Japanese-themed culinary businesses are analyzed based on domain and taxonomy analysis. Domain analysis examines the forms of language found on name signs, decorations, and menus. The written languages created by business operators serve as markers of a business theme and act as a bridge between the business products and the needs of consumers in Medan.

The micro-level linguistic units, based on domain and taxonomy analysis, include words, phrases, and clauses. Morphologically, words can be categorized into base words, derived

words, and compound words. Phrases are classified according to the types of words that follow them. Clauses are divided into independent and dependent clauses. Sentences are distinguished as simple sentences and compound sentences.



Figure 6. LL of large-scale Japanese culinary business.

The LL in Figure 6 shows one of the culinary businesses in Medan. All the linguistic units in the image are at the level of base words. The following LL content analysis examines the forms of base words. There are twelve forms of base words in Figure 6:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| (a) しゃぶ里 (<i>shaburi</i>) | (d) shaburi | (g) All | (j) Eat |
| (b) Japanese | (e) Kintan | (h) You | (k) Japanese |
| (c) Shabu-shabu | (f) Bufeet | (i) Can | (l) BBQ |

The combination of base words in the LL of Figure 6 forms several phrases. All of these phrases are in monolingual Indonesian. The analysis of the phrase forms is as follows:

- (m) *Japanese Shabu-shabu* = nominal phrase (NP)
 (n) *Kintan Bufeet* = nominal phrase (NP)

There are also English clauses used to describe the products and sales scheme of the culinary business:

- (o) All you can eat Japanese BBQ

From a macro-linguistic perspective, Japanese-themed large-scale culinary businesses in Medan predominantly use English and Japanese languages, which are combined in the LL for place names, menus, and decorations. This type of signage is present in most Japanese culinary business LLs in Medan.

In the LL of Figure 6, the use of Japanese characters, such as kanji and kana, is also evident, explaining the business name or its transliteration. Additionally, there is one acronym, BBQ, which stands for barbecue and refers to grilled meat, a product sold by the business. However, there are also businesses that use only the Roman alphabet for their place names, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. LL of place names using only the Roman alphabet.

The signage in Figure 7 uses only a few base word forms:

- (a) Gokana
- (b) Ramen
- (c) Teppan

The culinary establishment uses only Roman letters in its signage, yet the naming employed indicates a distinct Japanese flavor. This is enhanced by non-linguistic elements such as a background featuring a red temple gate, which is uniquely Japanese.

Based on field observations, LL containing basic word forms and phrases tend to be found in culinary enterprises managed on a large scale, such as restaurants located in permanent settings like commercial buildings, malls, or standalone structures.

In contrast, the LL of small-to-medium-scale culinary enterprises often includes phrases and clauses that serve as communication tools to entice consumers to purchase the culinary products offered. An example is shown in Figure 8:



Figure 8. An example of a small-to-medium-scale Japanese-themed culinary enterprise.

In Figure 8, there are three clauses written as follows:

- (a) MAKANAN JEPANG CITARASA INDONESIA
- (b) MENU BARU TAKOYAKI TA
- (c) WAJIB COBA GUYS

In small-to-medium-scale Japanese culinary enterprises, besides words and phrases, clauses are also predominant. These clauses often contain information introducing the products for sale or invitations to make a purchase. Furthermore, from a macro-linguistic perspective, small- and medium-scale culinary enterprises use Indonesian, Japanese, and English. These three languages are manifested in code-switching such as seen in Example 7c where the Indonesian phrase '*wajib coba*' (meaning 'must try') is combined with the English word 'guys.'

Non-linguistic forms

Non-linguistic forms include visual and spatial design. Visual design focuses on the color scheme and decoration on signs, equipment, and menus, while spatial design concerns the size and distance of objects in each non-linguistic unit within the business.

Observations indicate that large-scale Japanese culinary enterprises tend to use contrasting and clear visual colors along with decorations and ornaments characteristic of Japanese culture. These may include natural Japanese landscapes or objects that symbolize Japanese culture, such as *chōchin* (paper lanterns), traditional eating utensils like *chawan* (bowls), chopsticks, and *shōyu sara* (soy sauce dishes), among others.



Figure 9. Decorations in a culinary establishment featuring *chōchin* and a background image of Japanese nature.

There are even establishments that use *Torii* (a traditional Shinto gate) decorations, as shown in Figure 7, and employ *noren* (traditional Japanese fabric curtains) in their culinary venues as shown in Figure 10.



Figure 10. A culinary establishment in Medan uses *noren* (traditional Japanese curtains).

From a spatial aspect, large-scale Japanese culinary establishments often incorporate empty spaces within their visual designs, relying on widely recognized Japanese symbols that are conveyed through distinct visual decorations.

In contrast, small-to-medium-sized culinary enterprises exhibit visual designs that tend to use muted colors that lack contrast between the background and presented images and letters, making the signage less eye-catching. The visual designs often feature images of the food products sold without incorporating distinct Japanese visual elements (exemplified in Figure 10), such as Japanese characters, natural landscapes, or other cultural products such as that shown in Figure 9.



Figure 11. Visual appearance of small-to-medium-scale Japanese culinary enterprises.

6.2 Function of symbols and language used

To understand the function of symbols and language used in the LL of Japanese culinary enterprises in Medan, open interviews were conducted with business owners and consumers of Japanese culinary products in the city. Among the 50 interviewed informants, 90% indicated that both linguistic and non-linguistic factors, such as the design of the venue and the products sold, are highly valued. This is because consumers who visit Japanese culinary establishments are not merely interested in the taste of the products but also wish to experience authentic Japanese food and the atmosphere they imagine through the media's representations of Japan's uniqueness and beauty. Additionally, there is a sense of exclusivity that consumers feel when purchasing Japanese culinary products.

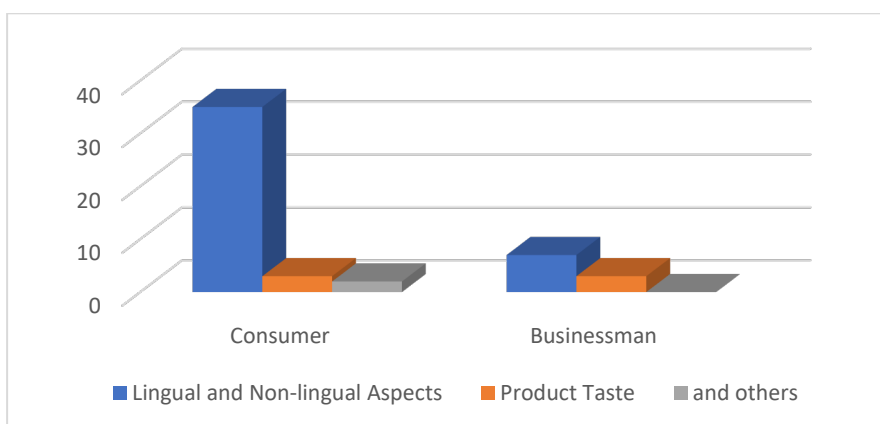


Figure 12. Factors influencing interest in Japanese culinary establishments.

Therefore, it can be said that the symbols and language used in Japanese culinary businesses in Medan serve to attract consumer interest, reflect the exclusivity of the business location, and create a Japanese impression and ambiance.

6.3 Comparison of Japanese linguistic landscape usage between small, medium, and large businesses

The comparison of Japanese LL usage between large-scale and small-to-medium-sized culinary businesses can be seen in both linguistic and non-linguistic forms. In large-scale businesses, Japanese characters (kana and kanji) are frequently used. The kana and kanji characters used in large businesses are generally transliterations of the business names. These kana and kanji writings are also often decorated in a calligraphic style (*shodo*). On the other hand, in small- and medium-sized businesses, it is known that culinary practitioners have less knowledge about Japanese characters, which was determined through interviews with culinary business operators.



Figure 13. Differences in character usage in the LL of large-scale versus small- and medium-scale culinary businesses.

On the menu available at culinary establishments, there are also differences in terms of language usage. In large culinary businesses, the menu is predominantly in English and Japanese, while in small- and medium-sized businesses, the menu is primarily displayed in Indonesian.

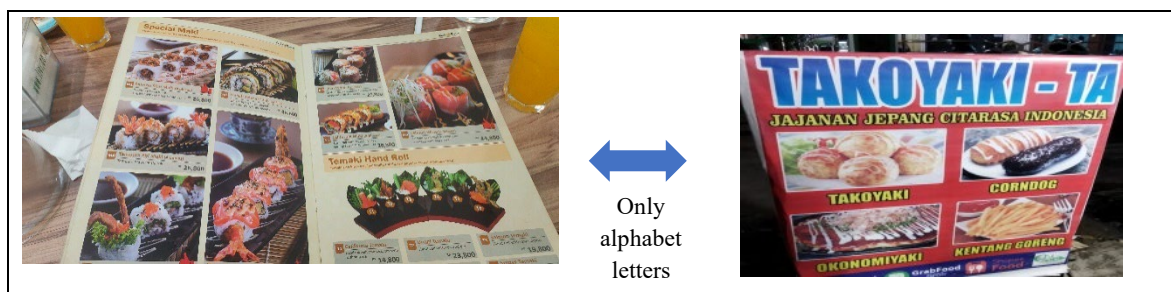


Figure 14. Differences in language displayed on the menu.

In large-scale Japanese culinary businesses, business signage is predominantly characterized by phrases and words, whereas small businesses often use clauses that describe the taste and

encourage customers to purchase the products. Images of Japanese landscapes, such as Mount Fuji, cherry blossom trees, and *momiji* (trees with leaves that wilt in spring), are frequently used as thematic decorations in large-scale Japanese culinary businesses (see example in Figure 9).

Typical decorative markers such as *noren*, *chouchin*, and *torii* are also widely used. Japanese dining utensils and packaging, like *chawan* and chopsticks, are commonly seen in large-scale Japanese culinary businesses. In contrast, small- and medium-sized businesses rarely use these kinds of items.

Regarding the use of space and color in the LL, large-scale culinary businesses often feature empty space on their signage and clear color contrasts. Conversely, smaller businesses tend to have signage that is densely packed with information and has less effective color contrast.

7. Conclusion

The conclusions of this study are drawn from the analysis of both linguistic and non-linguistic forms, based on domain and taxonomy analyses of linguistic forms. These analyses focus on micro- and macro-linguistic aspects displayed in the LL of Japanese culinary businesses in Medan. The linguistic forms in the LL of Japanese culinary businesses in Medan consist of microunits such as words, phrases, and clauses. At the macro level, multiple languages are used, including English, Indonesian, and Japanese, in the form of transliterated characters, acronyms, and code-switching. In terms of non-linguistic aspects, color contrast in text and backgrounds is prominently used in large-scale Japanese culinary businesses, along with the use of Japanese-themed decorations and utensils.

The discussion on the function of language in the LL of Japanese culinary businesses in Medan reveals that it aims to attract consumer interest. The distinctive Japanese LL also reflects the exclusivity of the business, differentiating it from other culinary enterprises. Additionally, the LL serves to create a unique Japanese ambiance that consumers can experience.

Finally, the comparison of LL in large-scale and small-to-medium-scale Japanese-themed culinary businesses shows various differences in both linguistic and non-linguistic forms used. This disparity can influence consumer attraction to Japanese culinary ventures.

This study can serve as a foundation for research into LL design, particularly the dynamics of business and commercial landscapes. Such studies could reveal how language use impacts economic aspects, how national languages compete with foreign languages, and how dominant languages interact with minority languages. LL research can also help government authorities map social group hegemony and potential conflicts. Furthermore, additional research exploring the dynamics of public perception and attitudes towards the LL they encounter would provide valuable data.

A valuable suggestion for further research emphasizes the importance of exploring the relationship between language use in Japanese-themed culinary contexts and its impact on local consumers' cultural perceptions. It is recommended to expand the scope of this research to other regions or cities in Indonesia with diverse cultures and languages to see if the patterns found in Medan also apply elsewhere. Additionally, it is proposed that future studies consider the digitalization aspects in the marketing of Japanese cuisine, such as the use of social media or

food delivery apps, which are increasingly influencing the LL of the culinary business. Based on these insights, potential studies that could build upon this work include analyses of the role of technology in shaping the authentic culinary experience or cross-cultural comparative studies on language adaptation in the context of international culinary businesses. These studies would further enrich our understanding of the dynamics of language and culture within the realm of global business.

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