LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE ON GUIDE SIGNS IN PUBLIC SPACES OF EXPO 2020 DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE ON GUIDE SIGNS
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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the linguistic landscape on the guide signs in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates, attended by 192 countries worldwide from October 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022. Dubai, UAE's position as the organizer of *Expo 2020 Dubai* influences language policy in creating a linguistic landscape situation in a location filled with visitors from various national, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. This study aims to find out how and what is the background of LL in terms of language in the instructions in public spaces at Expo 2020 Dubai using qualitative methods. The researcher uses Landry and Bourhis's (1997) Linguistic Landscape theory. The results of this study indicate that the LL at Expo 2020 Dubai is filled with Arabic and English, which have informational and symbolic functions. The UAE uses Arabic to show its national identity to the international sphere at *Expo 2020 Dubai,* which communicates in English. This article can be helpful as a new reference or library for readers to increase their knowledge of linguistic landscape studies in Arab countries, especially Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

KEYWORDS: language, Expo 2020 Dubai, linguistic landscape, public spaces

INTRODUCTION

The study of linguistic landscapes has appeal in bilingual and multilingual contexts. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997:25), the study of linguistic landscapes (LL) focuses on the language used in road signs, billboards, street names, area names, shop names, and public signs in government and private buildings. In addition to being part of sociolinguistics, LL also intersects with several other fields in linguistics, such as multilingualism, language planning, literacy, semiotics, cultural geography, education, and social psychology (Guy Puzey, 2016). The presence of bilingual and multilingual aspects tends to create competition between the dominant languages used in the linguistic sphere of a region's landscape.

Expo 2020 Dubai is an international agenda, while Dubai, United Arab Emirates, is a multilingual country. The world expo is an international exhibition to present the achievements and promotional events of countries in the world every five years. Expo 2020, this time, was held

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in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Reporting from the www.expo2020dubai.com page, *Expo 2020 Dubai* recorded 24,102,967 million visits from various countries worldwide for 182 days from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022. About 30.3% of visitors are from outside the United Arab Emirates. A total of 192 countries were participants in the exhibition at *Expo 2020 Dubai.* Based on the researcher's observations, each country is accustomed to communicating with its respective national languages, such as English, Mandarin, French, Russian, Hindi, Spanish, Arabic, and others. However, while at the Expo, all participating countries gathered and communicated with each other using the most widely spoken international language.

According to the UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre from the official statistics page of the fcsc.gov.ae government, the total number of UAE nationals and expatriate residents in 2020 was 9,282,410. Based on data from the UAE government's u.ae website, about 200 foreign nationalities live and work in the UAE. Meanwhile, the population of Dubai in 2021 reached 3,478,300, consisting of locals (Emarati) and expatriates (non-Emarati) based on population estimate data presented by the Dubai government through the Dubai Statistics Center. The number of expatriates in Dubai in 2021 exceeded the UAE citizen population. In percentage terms, expatriate residents reach 91.99% and local citizens only 8.01%. A large city with multi-ethnic domination can be a place for collective and individual identities to express themselves because there is a more open space for creativity, transformation and relations between social groups, and language is also more dynamic (Bagna & Barni, 2006; Barni, 2008).

Based on information from the UAE government's official website, u.ae, Arabic is the official language in the UAE. Another five official languages spoken in court are Chinese, English, French, Hindi, and Russian. Although the official report/data are not available, an estimated 100 languages are spoken in the UAE by 200 nationalities and 150 ethnic groups (The National, 22nd March 2009) in Randall and Samimi (2010:43). Commonly, all guide signs in UEA are written in Arabic and English. Other languages widely spoken in the UAE include Bengali, Persian, Malayalam, Turkish, and Urdu. The governments of Dubai and the UAE hold the decision in determining the use of language in the *Expo 2020 Dubai* region. The determination of language use in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai* can be seen from the writings listed on the existing guide signs.

In the LL study, markers/signage stood as actual, literal text that could be read, photographed, and traced. The signage can be analyzed culturally and linguistically to outline aspects of culture, language, power, and politics (Nash, 2016, p. 1). Of the many linguistic landscape objects at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, researchers chose guide signs because they were judged to be the most functional, frequently passed by, and seen by participants. In addition, the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* are intriguing because they describe the concept and type of language used on the spot in general terms. The LL object can also be further analyzed in the study of linguistic landscapes.

Arabic is the official language of the UAE. Although it is not an official language, English is spoken in conjunction with Arabic in most business and government spheres (Dorsey, 2018). The average expatriate in Dubai, UAE, communicates in English daily even before the *holding of Expo 2020 Dubai.* UAE expatriates, dominated by Indian, Pakistani, Filipino, and other nationalities, tend to use their respective country's languages. To communicate at work, UAE expatriates are more familiar with English. The multilingual phenomenon in the UAE, especially Dubai, is of particular interest in the study of linguistic landscapes.

From the presentation above, researchers are interested in discussing the linguistic landscape in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai* with guide signs as the research object. This topic becomes intriguing to be associated with the Expo conditions, which are filled with various languages and cultural backgrounds from abroad. The language chosen on the *Expo 2020*

Dubai guide signs is essential to highlight how the LL scope is depicted in the region. The study of the linguistic landscape in the United Arab Emirates as a country with expatriate dominance, as well as hosting exhibitions from all countries in the world, makes the scope of this research complex and necessary. Due to those background reasons, this LL research was conducted.

Based on the background explanation above, the formulation of the problem obtained is what is the linguistic landscape on the guide signs in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates and what is the background of the language selection on the guide signs in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates?

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this study is to explain the condition of the linguistic landscape on the guide signs in the public spaces *of Expo 2020 Dubai* and the background of language selection on the signs of guides in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates. On the other hand, based on references that the authors have read, research on the topic of linguistic landscapes at *Expo 2020 Dubai* has never been conducted before. The benefit of this research is to enrich the study of linguistic landscapes that are still not widely studied, especially regarding multilingualism and the state's national identity. This paper also provides preliminary documentation and research for Expo 2020 Dubai, where LL on the public spaces this agenda can reflect other World Expo agendas. This paper also seeks to explain and prove that the linguistic landscape has a vital role in delivering information and symbol functions. Furthermore, this research also paves the way for further research on the linguistic landscape, especially research that examines deeper the linguistic structure of LL object descriptions in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*. Therefore, it is hoped that this article will be helpful as a reference or new literature for readers to increase knowledge about the study of linguistic landscapes, especially in Arab countries, especially Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

RESEARCH METHODS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research was conducted using qualitative-descriptive methods. Berg (2012) suggests that the characteristics of qualitative research are based on three main elements: research design, data collection process, and data analysis. The data source that the researchers used as the primary data was 42 portraits of Guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates, written in Arabic and English. Data collection in the form of photo documentation of guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* was carried out directly or through observations in the field by researchers from 1st February 2022 to 30th March 2022. Data collection was carried out in the environment *of Expo 2020 Dubai*. *Expo 2020 Dubai* takes place from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022. The data collected amounted to 42 photos of Guide signs with four classifications, namely: 1.) the guide signs in the path of four-wheeled vehicles counted ten pieces; 2.) the location guide signs within *Dubai's Expo 2020* district counted 26 pieces; 3.) the public facilities guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* totaled eight pieces, and 4.) *the Expo 2020 Dubai* information collection guide signs counted eight pieces.

Data analysis was carried out by researchers in several stages, namely: (1) looking back at data in the form of photos of guide signs that had been collected to select several signs with different shapes, types, and locations of taking; (2) identifying how the writing on the signage is encoded in ownership, field, language choice, and language prominence based on the theory of Ben-rafael et al. (2006) more specifically towards aspects of the cultural identity of language speakers; (3) analyzing guide signs by analyzing data based on the linguistic landscape theory (LL) proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997); (4) explain and conclude the results of the analysis of the linguistic landscape at *Expo 2020 Dubai*.

Researchers use linguistic landscape theory from Landry and Bourhis (1997). The study of linguistic landscapes (LL) focuses on the language used in road signs, billboards, street names, shop names, regional names, and public signs in government and private buildings, according to Landry and Bourhis (1997:25). The limitations of the term, definition, and function of LL that refer to the opinion make the object of observation in this study a physical LL in the physical public sphere. Landry and Bourhis also distinguish markers into two types: official government-owned and privately owned signage.

The linguistic landscape has two functions: information and symbolism (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The informative function of *signage* in different languages reflects the language used in communication in the region and indicates the relative strength of language differences. The use of different languages in the linguistic landscape also has a symbolic function, especially when language is a prominent dimension of the linguistic group. According to Bourhis (1997:27), the use of certain languages can 'contribute most directly to the positive social identity of ethnolinguistic groups' (Cenoz and Gorter (2006:78)). The symbolic function of the linguistic landscape is likely to stand out in areas where language has emerged as the most crucial dimension of ethnic identity (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1990). Within the sphere, the presence of language in groups on the linguistic landscape can contribute most directly to the positive social identity of the ethnolinguistic group.

Public signs can be present in unilingual, bilingual, or multilingual forms, thus reflecting the diversity of language groups that exist in a particular region. The dominance of one language on public markers over another can reflect the strength and status of competing language groups (Bourhis, (1992) in Landry and Borhuis, (1997:26)). In such situations, it can be found that most of the public markers are written in the language of the dominant language group, while only a few can be found outside the public signage. Weaker languages can coexist with the dominant language on signifiers within the state and private buildings.

The linguistic landscape not only discusses the use of language in public spaces but also relates the reflection and status of the language of a particular region as well as the social and cultural conditions of the people (Cenoz and Gorter, 2006:67-68 and Ben-Rafael et al., 2006:7). In addition to Landry's LL theory, researchers also used the theory of Ben-Rafael et al. which suggested that language in the linguistic landscape is encoded in *ownership*, *field*, *language choice,* and language *saliency*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In structuring the frame of mind, researchers conduct studies from previous studies. There are three articles that the researcher reads before starting the research. First, researchers studied a scientific paper by Frans Asisi Datang et al. in 2022 entitled "*Signage in Public Spaces: Impact of Tourism on the Linguistic Landscape of Labuan Bajo.*" The article contains the impact of tourism on the linguistic landscape of guide signs in the public spaces of Labuan Bajo. The results of this study explained that on the nameplates of tourist accommodations in Labuan Bajo, there is a foreign identity that is so widespread in the use of language. At the end of the article, Datang et al. (2022) also suggested that the government strengthen the use of national and regional languages, referring to existing language policies so that local identities do not look inferior to foreign identities.

Second, an article written by Fajar Erikha in 2018 entitled *The Concept of Linguistic Landscape on the Royal Street Nameplate (Rājamārga): A Case Study of Yogyakarta City.* This article uses the linguistic landscape theory of Ben-Rafael (2006). This concept covers several topics, such as cultural, social, economic, and political. Using the LL concept, Erikha examined

the names of highways (Râjamârga) in the Yogyakarta Palace environment based on their function as place names identifiers (information functions) and as certain messengers (symbolic functions). Erikha uses a qualitative approach to analyze visual data (photos) of street nameplates. The results of this study reveal two functions of the linguistic landscape formed by road nameplates. First, the informational function refers to the Javanese's geographical places and social spaces as one ethnic group. At the same time, the orthographic use of hanacaraka affirms the limits of language. Second, symbolic function, namely in conveying meanings (based on the Paraning Dumadi philosophy), describing Java as an ethnic group, appointing Javanese as the native language of local residents, showing a strong relationship between the government and society, practices and powers naming places, to economic goals by increasing Yogyakarta tourism.

Third, the article "*Multilingualism and the role of English in the United Arab Emirates*" was written by Peter Siemund et al. in 2020. This article discusses the dominance of English in the UAE, which has Arabic as the country's official language. Siemund attributed the influence of the majority expatriate population to the use of everyday language in the UAE's linguistic landscape. The results of this study show that there is competition between English and Arabic, the prominence of English, the increasing use of English as the primary language, and the emergence of a new type of English, namely Gulf English, based on a survey of 692 students.

Based on the three studies presented, researchers found several differences and similarities with this study. The same aspect as the previous research is that they both discuss landscape linguistics (LL) studies which refer to the theory of Landry and Bourhis (1997) as the leading theory and Ben-Rafael's LL theory (2006) as support. The data used profoundly differs from the previous studies and the data. The study used guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates, where the exhibition of all countries worldwide was held for six months. This article discusses the linguistic landscape at *Expo 2020 Dubai*.

This article has some detailed differences from previous articles. Coverage of the article courtesy of Datang et al. (2022) is a local tourist attraction, namely Labuan Bajo in Indonesia, which is still considering the influence of local communities regarding the naming of privately owned signposts. Meanwhile, this article examines the public signs that are proprietarily coming from the non-private government sector, so there will be a different regulatory discussion. The article belongs to Datang et al. (2022) and this paper; both have research coverage in one area with international language exposure. In terms of research location, Datang et al. (2022) researched LL in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, and Erikha (2018) researched LL in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Meanwhile, this article examines LL at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, UAE, where the research site was visited/attended by 192 countries from around the world. Unlike Siemund's paper which used the survey method of 692 students, this article uses data collection techniques directly on-site and is further associated with reading material for deeper analysis.

DISCUSSION

Linguistic Landscapes on Signposts at The *Public Spaces Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates

The linguistic landscape objects studied in this article are the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*. This object is outdoors in the *expo 2020* environment of Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Researchers analyzed guide signs as part of the linguistic landscape of *Expo 2020 Dubai* using Landry and Bourhis theory (1997) definitions and coded with the theory of Ben-Rafael et al. (2006). Researchers found four groups of Guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* that have been sorted by shape, color, and shooting location. The guide signs in the *Expo 2020 Dubai* environment are

explained in the following discussion:

Guide signs in four-wheeled vehicles path

Figure 1.
Directions signs on four-wheeled vehicle path (Photo: Afifah Fadhillah, taken on February 1, 2022)

The script on the guide signs on

Figure 1:

No.	Arabic Writings	Arabic Transliteration	English Writings
1.	قرية اكسبو	/qaryat iksbū/	Expo Village
2.	دبي اكسبو مول	/dubai iksbū mūl/	Dubai Expo Mall
3.	مركز دبي للمعارض	/markaz dubai lilma'arid/	Dubai Exhibition Centre
4.	إكسبو 2020 دبي	/iksbū 2020 dubai/	Expo 2020 Dubai
5.	مواقف التنقل	/mawāqifu at-tanaqqul/	Mobility Parking
6.	إكسبو 2020 دبي	/'iksbū 2020 dubai/	Expo 2020 Dubai
7.	مواقف الدانة	/mawāqifu al-dānah/	Al Dana Parking
8.	إكسبو 2020 دبي	/'iksbū 2020 dubai/	Expo 2020 Dubai
9.	مواقف التنقّل	/mawāqifu at-tanaqul	Mobility Parking
10.	مخرج	/makhraj/	Exit

Guide signs above are written in two languages, Arabic and English. Arabic is in the first line, followed by an English translation below the first line. The signs appear with white letters and brown background. In addition to the Arabic and English writings, there is an image that describes the content. The image of the signs is the alternative option for *visitors to Expo 2020 Dubai* who need help using Arabic or English. However, the images of such guides do not go into the area of research that will be analyzed in this LL article.

The photo on the right is a guide sign similar to the left one. The sign appears in black letters, with the *Expo 2020 Dubai* logo on the left side and a yellow background directing the driver to the right. The languages used and the order in which they are written per language are displayed and arranged together. Through the above data, the color difference does not represent the prominence/primacy of any of the languages because the difference was found only to categorize the destination area of the guide sign where it is outside the scope of linguistic landscape

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research.

1) Location guide signs inside *Dubai's Expo 2020* district

Figure 2.
Location signs inside the Expo district (Photo: Afifah Fadhillah, taken on 21st February 2022)

The script on the guide signs on

Figure 2:

No.	Arabic Writings	Arabic Transliteration	English Writings
1.	حافلات النقل الداخلية	*/ḥāfilāt al-Naqli al-Dākhiliyah/*	People Mover
2.	مركز الشرطة الذكي	*/markaz asy-Syurṭah al-Żakī/*	Smart Police Station
3.	بوابة الفرص	*/bawābah al-Furaṣ/*	Opportunity Gate
4.	ساحة الوصل	*/sāḥah al-Waṣl/*	Al Wasl Plaza

There are also types of location signs located within *Dubai's Expo 2020* district. Signs inside Dubai's *Expo 2020* district are read by pedestrians from abroad who are touring the pavilions of participating countries. The location signs within Dubai's *Expo 2020* district also consist of two languages: Arabic on the first line and English on the second line as translations.

2) Public facilities guide sign at *Expo 2020 Dubai*

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Figure 3.
Public facilities guide signs at Expo 2020 Dubai (Photo: Afifah Fadhillah, taken on 14 March 2022)

The script on the guide signs on

Figure 3:

No.	Arabic Writings	Arabic Transliteration	English Writings
1.	حافلات النقل الداخلية	/ḥāfilāt al-Naqli al-Dākhiliyah/	People Mover
2.	تذوّق في إكسبو	/taẑawwuqun fī 'iksbū/	Eat at Expo
3.	بوابة إكسبو 2020	/bawābah 'iksbū 2020/	Expo 2020 Gate
4.	مركز دبي للمعارض	/markaz dubay lilma'ārid/	Dubai Exhibition Centre

Similar to the concept of two other forms of guide signs from the previous, the public facilities guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* begin with a picture of the description of the type of public facilities, followed by an Arabic caption, then below it is a translation of the writing in English. In general, there are no notable visual differences between the two languages used, such as differences in the use of colors or letter styles. It is just that there is a pattern of writing sequences that are always the same based on the type of language.

3) *Expo 2020 Dubai* information collection signs

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Figure 4.
Public facilities guide signs at Expo 2020 Dubai (Photo: Afifah Fadhillah, taken on 30 March 2022)

The script on the guide signs on

Figure 4:

No.	Arabic Writings	Arabic Transliteration	English Writings
1.	الاستعلامات	/al-ista'lāmātu/	Information
2.	مصلّى	/muṣallā/	Prayer Room
3.	دورات مياه	/dawrat miyāh/	Toilets
4.	الإسعافات الأولية	/al'is'āfāt al'awalīyatu/	First Aid
5.	خدمات الكراسي المتحركة وعربات الأطفال	/khadamāt alkarāsī almutaḥarikah wa 'arabātu al'atfāl/	Accessibility Services
6.	غرفة العناية بالأطفال	/ghurfat al'ināyat bial'atfāl/	Baby Care
7.	صرّاف آلي	/ṣarrāfun ālī/	ATM
8.	متجر بقالة	/matjarun biqālata/	Convenience Store
9.	المفقودات	/almafqūdātu/	Lost and Found
10.	جيبوتي	/jībūtī/	Djibouti
11.	السلفادور	/alsalfādūr/	El Salvador
12.	كيريباتي	/kīrībātī/	Kiribati
13.	ميكرونيسيا	/mīkrūnīsiyā/	Micronesia
14.	منصة البحر	/minashotu al-baḥri/	Sea Stage
15.	مساكن (1-4)	/masākin/	Residence 1-4

The guide signs data containing the Expo 2020 Dubai information set has the same written version as the rest of the data. However, the Arabic script does not appear above the English writing on the photo of the leftmost guide sign. The writing is in one line but differs in position between right and left. Arabic is written on the right (like the typical Arabic writing format from the right), and English is written from the left (like the Latin letter writing format that starts from the left). On the rightmost guide sign, the writing numbers are written with Latin numerals instead of Arabic numerals.

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Official data of the portrait of the guide signs recorded by Expo 2020 Dubai, UAE organizers can be accessed via the virtualexpodubai.com page. However, not many signages are accessible from the page as Expo 2020 Dubai is more focused on documenting every content of the pavilions of 192 countries. The image below shows a portrait of a guide sign that is in the Neighborhood of Al-Wasl Plaza.
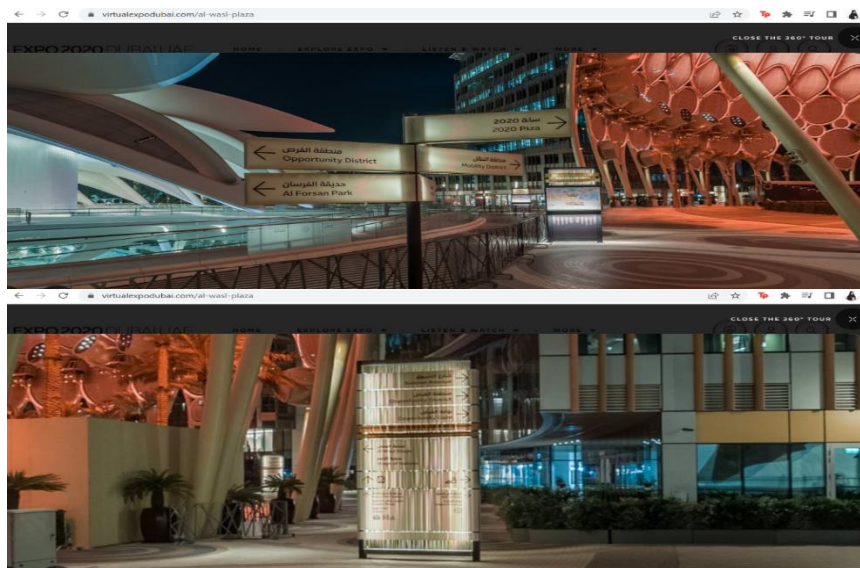

Figure 5.
A guide sign portrait of a hint from Dubai's Virtual Expo 2020 feature
(source: virtualexpodubai.com page, accessed 19 July 2022)

From data on guide signs at different points at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, researchers looked at the similarities and consistency of Arabic and English usage. Researchers need to identify data by coding languages in linguistic landscape studies based on existing data to find out and analyze further. Language coding can be done by *ownership*, realm (*field*), language choice (*language choice*), and language *saliency* based on theory (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006).

In terms of *ownership, the* signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, UAE, are owned by the government sector and regulated by the government. Landry and Bourhis also distinguish signage into two types, namely official government-owned and privately owned signage. The government referred to in the Expo *2020 Dubai* agenda is the government of Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The selection of the use of language in such activities is the government's decision. Although the Expo is an international agenda that the whole world participates in, only the host country can set the overall concept of the activity.

Regarding *the field*, the signs cover a multicultural international realm because the *Expo 2020 Dubai* agenda is visited by 192 countries. The entire country has its exhibition area adjacent between countries. Based on the observations of researchers, all staff and visitors of each country often pass/see guide signs in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*. This shows that the expo *2020 Dubai* guide signs are used by international visitors/staff.
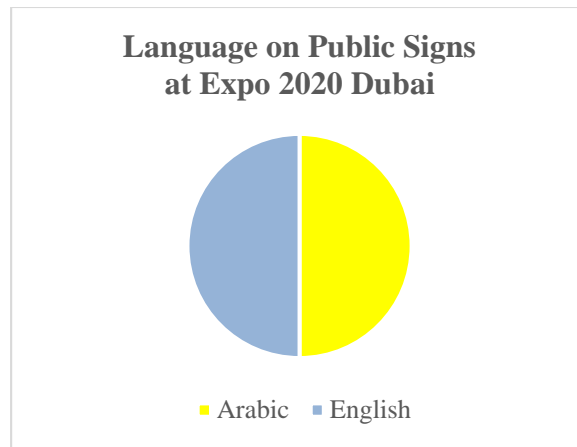
Diagram 1.
The proportion of Arabic and English usage on guide signs at Expo 2020 Dubai

Regarding *language selection*, all the guide signs are always written in two languages, namely, Arabic and English. Researchers have compared three types of guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* that differ in shape and gained similarities in the concepts of language use and selection. The linguistic landscape not only discusses the application of language in public spaces but also involves/relates the reflection and status of language from a particular region as well as the social and cultural conditions of the community (Cenoz and Gorter, 2006:67-68 and Ben-Rafael et al., 2006:7). Arabic is in the first line and English is present as an Arabic translation. This reflects the existence of an Arabic speaker group and an English-speaking group. The English-speaking group is, in this case, a global group (192 participating countries) that can generally be connected with English communication. On the other hand, Arabic is also a world-recognized international language, although there are fewer speakers than in English. The frequency of Arabic and English appearances on each guide sign is found to be the same/balanced.

In terms of *language saliency*, researchers found that the two languages are balanced regarding the frequency of appearance and letter size. The differences found to determine what language is more prominent, researchers see through the order in which the language is written. Although there is no difference in the size and color of the letters that makes any of the languages stand out more, in this case, Arabic is slightly more prominent than English because the reader will notice the presence of Arabic first in the first line. The use of particular language on signs contains interpretations of meaning to indicate that the language has the prestige and power to stand alone (Barni & Bagna, 2009). Among other languages worldwide, Arabic and English hold prestige on the expo *2020 Dubai* agenda.

Background to language selection on signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates

Arabic and English were selected for the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai,* held from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022. The background of the language selection on the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates, is not only due to communication reasons for the participating countries. According to Landry & Bourhis (1997), the linguistic landscape has an informational and symbolic function, its function as a place name identifier (informative function), and as a specific messenger (symbolic role). In addition to the function of conveying information, the language selection of the signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* is due to the reason of symbolic function.

The informational function of *signage* in different languages indicates the usefulness of the language in communication in the region and, in particular, the recognition/marking of place

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names. Based on these definitions, the presence of English and Arabic both have an informational function at *Expo 2020 Dubai*. English, in this case, aims to make it easier for non-Arabic-speaking participating countries to study guide signs. Arabic is spoken by local citizens and foreign nationals speaking Arabic who usually come from the Middle East and North Africa.

The motive for the use of English in the linguistic landscape of the global sphere is the presence of English as an international language. English plays a role in bringing together global/international communication. Arabic translations written in English, such as (تذوّق في إكسبو – /taẑawwuqun fī 'iksbū/– *Eat at Expo*), describe the existence of English to make it easier for the global community to communicate. Non-Arabic speakers will see the words "*Eat at Expo*" to access and understand the information on the guide signs. Not only global citizens who come from *Expo 2020 Dubai* but visitors who are foreign nationals who live in Arabia also use the English-language writing section to access the information on the guide signs when visiting the Expo. Previously, researchers had also explained that Dubai, UAE, is an LL area filled with multilingual factors where the population does not speak only one language.

On the other hand, the use of Arabic with Arabic letters/scripts is also a means of conveying good function of information, especially for Arabic speakers. An example of the use of Arabic letters is found on a sign that reads قرية اكسبو /qaryatu iksbū/, which directs to the Expo *Village* or Expo Settlement area. There is also a sign that reads بوابة الفرص /bawābah al-Furaṣ/, indicating the way to the *Opportunity Gate*. The use of Arabic letters on these signs is left without transliteration, so non-Arabic speakers tend not to be able to obtain information or even know how to read it. Regarding information function, non-Arabic speakers will only get information about what kind of language they see; in other words, be aware/assume that writing with Arabic letters is a foreign language known as Arabic.

Based on the observations of researchers, Arabic writing is beneficial for participating countries from Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates itself. Although the average participant attending *Expo 2020 Dubai* can communicate in English, Arabic writing is the primary option for accessing sign information. Apart from Arabic-speaking countries, UAE noble families and communities in the regions/Emirates outside Dubai and Abu Dhabi have also yet to be particularly exposed to the daily use of English. The existence of the Arabic language became a tool for accessing more helpful information.

The use of different languages in the linguistic landscape also has a symbolic function, especially when language is a prominent dimension of the linguistic group. In this discussion, researchers found two main languages in the linguistic landscape of *the Expo 2020 Dubai* guide signs: Arabic and English. Despite the fact that the United Arab Emirates was a multilingual country dominated by the use of everyday English even before the existence of *Expo 2020 Dubai,* Arabic still occupied first place in all official activities. The Arabic words of the *Expo 2020 Dubai* guide signs are used as a sign of the UAE's local identity as the host, even though the participating countries are from abroad. This shows that the presence of the Arabic language in the *Expo 2020 Dubai* region reflects the dominant existence of the Arab community group.

A person processes visual information so that language on *signage* can affect their perception of the status of different languages and even influence their linguistic behavior. According to Bourhis (1997:27), the use of particular languages can contribute most directly to the positive social identity of ethnolinguistic groups (Cenoz and Gorter (2006:78)). Arabic, in this case, became the most prominent language in the linguistic landscape on the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai*. It will be easier for visitors to realize that the Expo is in an Arab country because it is surrounded by visuals of guide signs that are inscribed/in Arabic characters, such as the writing (إكسب – /' iksbū 2020 Dubai/ – *Expo 2020 Dubai*) on one of the guide signs. When looking at the

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words Expo in Arabic letters, people who see it will feel a different symbolic impression when they see the English writing "*Expo 2020 Dubai*".

The UAE government uses Arabic through a language policy to emphasize the exist ence of a UAE identity with Arabic as an official language. Based on information from the UAE government's official website, [u.ae](u.ae), Arabic is the official language in the UAE. Five other official languages are spoken in court: Chinese, English, French, Hindi, and Russian. However, on the *Expo 2020 Dubai* guide signs, the UAE government only presents Arabic as a language originating from its country to show the dominant/highest strength of Arabic among other languages.

Researchers compared if the writing on the signs was only present in Arabic without translation. In this article, for example, ساحة الوصل – /sāḥah al-Waṣl/, which is only written without an English translation, al-Wasl Plaza. This condition is considered to have the potential to invite language conflicts based on difficulties in accessing communication in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*. According to Nelde (2017:289), differences between groups create a feeling of uncertainty about the status that can potentially cause conflict. Sociologists who have dealt with the problem of contact between ethnic groups define *conflict* as a conflict involving fears, interests, and values, in which the objectives of the opposing group must be opposed or at least neutralized to protect one's interests (prestige, work, political power, etc.). In this case, the presence of English is considered a neutralizing tool so that the communication interests of the 192 participating countries can continue to run efficiently.

The country participants are not only Arab countries; they come from Europe, America, China, Korea, Japan, and other countries that are rarely exposed to Arabic. Although, basically Arabic is also one of the official international languages spoken by the UN. In line with the symbolic message to be conveyed, researchers see that the UAE government also puts forward solidarity between countries that can be united through English as the most and most familiar international language spoken in the world. Regardless of the case, according to Ben-Rafael (2006:25), LL is a condition that cannot be reduced spontaneously/directly to a conflictual power relationship.

Viewed through signposts in public spaces, *Expo 2020 Dubai* presents no other language beyond Arabic and English. Researchers observed that this decision was used to show the strength of the two languages in a balanced way. Although Hindi, Urdu, Tagalog, or others, which UAE expatriates also often use in communicating with people, the UAE government specializes that only Arabic can be present along with English. Based on the symbolic theory of the linguistic landscape, this decision reflects that the immigrants/expatriates should master the UAE's national language, not the other way around. By maintaining Arabic in the international sphere, the United Arab Emirates gives the impression/shows the global community that its country is very proud of its national identity. Despite having a minority number of Arabic-speaking locals compared to the number of foreign nationals residing there, the UAE still controls LL in its own country.

English as the second language used on the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* also has its symbolic function. Interethnic power relations or social groups can be known from what dominates those groups in a particular area. In this case, English is a link between countries because it is the most spoken international language globally. The global status of the English language is due to the large number of people who speak it (Crystal, 2003). The presence of English in the linguistic landscape of *Expo 2020 Dubai* is one of the most prominent signages that the event is an international agenda that the whole world is attending.

The existence of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual guide signs/signs in public spaces is a social phenomenon that needs to be considered in terms of the use of language. It can happen because the dominance of language through the objects of the linguistic landscape reflects

the distinction of power in a particular ethnicity or place of business. Through *Expo 2020 Dubai*, the UAE country has shown its nation's identity to the world as number one by loading the Arabic-language writing sequence in the first line on the guide signs in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*. The statement is the result of an interpretation based on the theory that the existence of a language in the public sphere reflects the identity of the group that owns the language.

CONCLUSION

There are several conclusions about the use of language on the guide signs in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates. The conclusion of this study generally answers two sub-languages, namely, the linguistic landscape on the guide signs and the background of language selection on the guide signs at *expo 2020 Dubai*, United Arab Emirates. Regarding writing rules, selection, and language order, the use of language on the guide signs at *Expo 2020 Dubai* was found to be consistent with each other so that it could be concluded more easily. In general, the linguistic landscape at *Expo 2020 Dubai* was filled with the presence of two main languages, namely Arabic and English, which functionally met the needs of the participants language types and symbolically put forward the UAE's identity even though, in this case, the UAE provided international space by not only using Arabic on the signs.

The use of the national language of Dubai, UAE, which is Arabic, is always followed by the presence of an English translation. The use of the UAE national language (Arabic) over the preferred international language (English) in the guide signs was proportionally balanced, 1:1, and conceptually consistent in each object despite the different regions. Researchers found that the order of Arabic writing was always in the first line and the English writing in the second line on the *Expo 2020 Dubai* guide signs. This phenomenon is in line with the policy of the United Arab Emirates government, which strongly prioritizes the use of Arabic on official agendas even though it is visited by foreign nationals.

The background of the language selection on the signs illustrates the UAE government's motives for bringing its national identity into the international sphere through *Expo 2020 Dubai*. The selection of English as the second at *Expo 2020 Dubai* shows that the role of English as the most spoken international language in the world is still influential. In addition, English represents non-Arab-speaking participating countries' interests in communicating efficiently. However, the UAE did not allow the dominance of English to occur in the public spaces of *Expo 2020 Dubai* even though the number of local UAE nationals was not more than expatriates, and there was a presence of 192 countries in the region. The UAE's national identity as an Arab nation is clearly visible through the Arabic-language writing on every signpost at *Expo 2020 Dubai*. There are no road directions at *Expo 2020 Dubai* that do not use Arabic. Despite the role of such national identity, English is used to disseminate information and adhesive to the global community, in this case, the participating countries of the Expo.

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