

VISIBILITY OF THE BANYUMAS DIALECT IN THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AS A MINORITIZED LANGUAGE: A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Research on minority languages in linguistic landscapes has predominantly focused on languages that are taxonomically distinct from the state language. However, Gorter, Cenoz, and Marten criticize this narrow approach and propose that the concept of "minority" should be expanded to include socially minoritized positions. This study applies this critique to the Banyumas dialect, a variety of Javanese that is sociolinguistically subordinate to the standard Surakarta-Yogyakarta dialect, particularly in educational settings. Using a quantitative survey documentation method, this study analyzes 100 signs in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency, covering 25 elementary schools, 25 junior high schools, 25 senior high schools, and 25 universities. The results show that the Banyumas dialect appears on 24 out of 100 signs (24%), with the highest visibility in senior high schools (36%) and the lowest in universities (12%). Based on six-level visibility continuum of Gorter, the Banyumas dialect in the academic environment is positioned at Level 4 to 5 (limited to neglected). The novelty of this research lies in its application of the minoritized language framework to a dialect—rather than a distinct language—in the Indonesian educational context. This study recommends the integration of the Banyumas dialect into the school curriculum and its strategic revitalization, with special attention to universities which have the lowest visibility.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Banyumas Dialect, Minoritized Language, Visibility Continuum, Academic Environment

VISIBILITAS DIALEK BANYUMAS DI LINGKUNGAN AKADEMIK SEBAGAI BAHASA YANG DIMINORITASKAN: SEBUAH KAJIAN LANSKAP LINGUISTIK

ABSTRAK

Penelitian mengenai bahasa minoritas dalam kajian lanskap linguistik selama ini lebih banyak berfokus pada bahasa-bahasa yang secara taksonomis berbeda dari bahasa negara. Namun, Gorter, Cenoz, dan Marten mengkritik pendekatan yang sempit tersebut dan mengusulkan agar konsep "minoritas" diperluas hingga mencakup posisi sosial yang terminoritakan. Penelitian ini menerapkan perspektif tersebut pada dialek Banyumas, yaitu salah satu variasi bahasa Jawa yang secara sosiolinguistik berada pada posisi subordinat dibandingkan dialek standar Surakarta–Yogyakarta, khususnya dalam lingkungan pendidikan. Dengan menggunakan metode dokumentasi survei kuantitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis 100 papan tanda di lingkungan akademik Kabupaten Banyumas yang mencakup 25 sekolah dasar, 25 sekolah menengah pertama, 25 sekolah menengah atas, dan 25 perguruan tinggi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dialek Banyumas muncul pada 24 dari 100 papan tanda (24%), dengan tingkat visibilitas tertinggi pada sekolah menengah atas (36%) dan terendah pada perguruan tinggi (12%). Berdasarkan kontinum visibilitas enam tingkat, dialek Banyumas di lingkungan akademik berada pada Tingkat 4 hingga 5. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penerapan kerangka bahasa yang diminoritakan terhadap sebuah dialek, bukan bahasa yang berbeda secara mandiri, dalam konteks pendidikan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi dialek Banyumas ke dalam kurikulum sekolah serta revitalisasi

strategis penggunaannya, dengan perhatian khusus pada perguruan tinggi yang menunjukkan tingkat visibilitas paling rendah.

Kata kunci: Lanskap Linguistik, Dialek Banyumas, Bahasa yang Diminoritaskan, Kontinum Visibilitas, Lingkungan Akademik

INTRODUCTION

Public spaces serve as arenas where different languages compete for recognition and visibility (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In the context of a multilingual society like Indonesia, not all languages or language varieties have equal access to representation in public spaces. The state language (Indonesian) tends to dominate, followed by foreign languages (especially English) which hold high prestige and economic value (Block, 2017), and regional languages which receive official or semi-official status. The academic environment (schools and universities) is one of the most important domains in determining which languages are considered "legitimate" and "prestigious" for use (Fishman, 1991; Gorter et al., 2024).

Research on linguistic landscapes has grown rapidly over the past two decades, with various studies focusing on minority languages in public spaces. Landry and Bourhis (1997) defined the linguistic landscape as the "visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region," and their research became the foundation for many subsequent studies. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) compared the visibility of Basque and Frisian in public spaces, demonstrating that minority languages require strong policy support to be significantly visible. Gorter et al. (2024) later criticized the narrow definition of minority languages that is too state-centric, proposing the concept of minoritized language to emphasize the active process of marginalizing a language or language variety.

However, most of these studies focus on languages that are taxonomically distinct from the state language, such as Basque, Frisian, Catalan, or Māori. Very few studies treat dialects as objects of linguistic landscape research, even though from sociolinguistic point of view, dialects can experience similar marginalization (Hadiati, 2018). This raises an

important question: do all dialects of the same language have equal opportunities to appear in public spaces, or are certain dialects marginalized by the standard dialect which is considered more prestigious? This question is highly relevant, especially in a country with linguistic diversity like Indonesia.

This question becomes very relevant when observing the linguistic situation in Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. Taxonomically, the Banyumas dialect is part of Javanese, the language with the largest number of speakers in Indonesia (approximately 68 million speakers). However, as sociolinguistics sees, the position of the Banyumas dialect is very different from the standard Surakarta-Yogyakarta dialect. In formal domains such as education, the "correct" Javanese that is taught and used is the standard Surakarta-Yogyakarta dialect, complete with its speech levels (ngoko, madya, krama). The Banyumas dialect, with its distinctive phonological features (e.g., the pronunciation of final /a/ as /a/, not /ɔ/) and its tendency to use the ngoko speech level without complex variations, is often stigmatized as "coarse," "less refined," or "ngapak-ngapak" (Marten, 2012; Hadiati, 2018).

This phenomenon is what Gorter et al. (2024) call a minoritized language position. This means that a language variety is placed in a subordinate, marginalized, and less prestigious position not because it has few speakers, but because of social, political, and historical factors involving power, cultural dominance, and language policy (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Gorter et al., 2012). The academic environment is the most strategic locus for observing this phenomenon because this is where language policies are formalized, maintained, and transmitted to younger generations (Fishman, 1991; Marten, 2012).

Based on this background, this study poses the following research questions: (1) To what extent is the Banyumas dialect visible on signs in the academic environment of

Banyumas Regency across four educational levels: elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, and universities? (2) At what level does the Banyumas dialect position itself on the six-level visibility continuum proposed by Gorter et al. (2024) in the academic environment? (3) How does the visibility of the Banyumas dialect differ across educational levels, and what are the implications for language revitalization? This study aims to describe the frequency of the Banyumas dialect's appearance on signs, map its position on the visibility continuum, and analyze the differences across educational levels and their implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic Landscape in Academic Environments

The linguistic landscape in academic environments refers to language signs displayed in educational institutions, such as school name boards, announcement boards, vision-mission boards, academic information boards, warning signs, and event banners. Studies on linguistic landscapes in academic settings are important because schools and universities are institutions that systematically shape language policy and ideology (Gorter et al., 2024; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009).

Landry and Bourhis (1997) defined the linguistic landscape generally as the "visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region." In the academic context, this definition can be extended to "visibility and salience of languages on signs within educational institutions." Research has shown that the linguistic landscape can reflect and reinforce language hierarchies in educational settings, often privileging the dominant national or international languages over local or minority languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

Minority Languages and the Concept of Minoritized

One of the main contributions of the chapter that serves as the primary reference for this study (Gorter et al., 2024) is its critique of the narrow, state-centric definition of minority languages:

"The concept of minority in itself is problematic and controversial among academics, policymakers and minority activists. Sometimes, the term minority is seen as inadequate and it should be replaced by minoritized to emphasize the active process involved in making a group into a minority." (Gorter et al., 2024, p. 177)

The definition from the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1998) states that minority languages are those traditionally used in a territory by a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population, different from the official language, and does not include dialects of the official language. This definition is criticized because it makes the state the primary determinant of minority language status, excludes dialects despite as sociolinguistics point of view similar marginalization (Gorter et al., 2012), and fails to accommodate situations where a language has many speakers but remains in a subordinate position.

Therefore, the authors propose a more flexible and contextual approach, noting that:

"What constitutes a minority and a major language in multilingual context differs in space and time, and may involve consideration of historical, political and socioeconomic reasons." (Banda & Jimaima, 2017, as cited in Gorter et al., 2024, p. 178).

The Visibility Continuum of Minority Languages

Gorter et al. (2024) proposed a six-level continuum to measure the visibility of minority languages in public spaces. This continuum connects policy/ideology with the level of language presence on signs. The levels range from Level 1 ("almost always" present) to Level 6 ("minimal or no presence"). The continuum is fluid and can change depending on time, place, and context. This study will map the position of the Banyumas dialect onto this continuum based on empirical data from the academic environment.

The Role of Education in Minority Language Revitalization

Education is one of the most important domains for the maintenance and revitalization

of minority languages (Fishman, 1991; Gorter et al., 2024). Schools play a strategic role as they can transmit the language to younger generations and provide the literacy skills essential for public visibility (Gorter et al., 2024, p. 210):

"Schools are one of the most important domains for minority language maintenance and revitalization, as they can transmit the language to younger generations and provide literacy skills that are essential for public visibility."

However, when the language taught at school differs from the language spoken at home, a disconnect occurs that can accelerate language shift (Marten, 2012, p. 95):

"When the language taught in schools is different from the language spoken at home, it creates a disconnect that can accelerate language shift rather than prevent it."

Successful cases of minority language revitalization show that integrating the minority language into the school curriculum is a key step. In the Basque Country of Spain, using Basque as a medium of instruction in schools has contributed to an increase in the number of speakers and the visibility of the language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Similarly, in Friesland, the Netherlands, teaching Frisian in schools has helped maintain linguistic awareness among younger generations, although visibility in public spaces remains limited (Gorter et al., 2024).

The Banyumas Dialect: Characteristics and Sociolinguistic Position

The Banyumas dialect (also known as basa Ngapak or basa Banyumasan) is one of the Javanese dialects spoken in the southwestern part of Central Java Province, including Banyumas, Cilacap, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, Kebumen, and part of Tegal Regencies. Its distinctive features include: (1) phonological: the final vowel /a/ is pronounced as /a/, not /ɔ/; (2) lexical: distinctive vocabulary such as *nyong* (I), *rika* (you), aged (very), *cablaka* (blunt/honest); and (3) speech levels: it tends not to use the complex speech level system (*ngoko-madya-krama*) typical of the standard dialect (Hadiati, 2018).

From a sociolinguistics perspective, the Banyumas dialect occupies a subordinate

position compared to the standard Surakarta-Yogyakarta dialect. This is reflected in the use of the standard dialect in education, mass media, and government (Marten, 2012). As such, the Banyumas dialect meets the criteria for being a *minoritized language* within the framework of Gorter et al. (2024), especially in the academic environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative method with a survey documentation approach (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). This approach was chosen to objectively measure the frequency of the Banyumas dialect's appearance on signs in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency. The research was conducted in the academic environment (schools and universities) in Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. Banyumas Regency was selected because it has the highest concentration of Banyumas dialect speakers and has diverse educational levels from elementary school to university. Data collection was conducted in February 2026.

The population of the study was all signs displayed in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency, including announcement boards, advisory boards/stickers, prohibition signs, invitation boards, banners, and various other types of information boards. The sample was taken using purposive sampling with attention to educational level representation. The total sample were 100 signs, with 25 signs per educational level: elementary schools (SD/MI), junior high schools (SMP/MTs), senior high schools (SMA/SMK/MA), and universities / colleges (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

Data collection techniques used were photographic documentation and field notes (Gorter et al., 2024; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Each sign was photographed clearly. The researcher also recorded the location, type of sign, and surrounding context. The main instrument was a sign classification table containing columns for: code, educational level, location, type of sign, and presence/absence of the Banyumas dialect. Criteria for "presence of the Banyumas dialect" included: the presence of typical Banyumasan vocabulary (*nyong*, *rika*, *aged*, *cablaka*, etc.), distinctive phonological

features (pronunciation of final /a/), or the use of phrases/sentences in the Banyumas dialect. To ensure validity, the sign classification criteria were developed based on previous studies (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Inter-rater reliability was maintained by having two researchers independently classify 10% of the sample, with an agreement rate of over 90%.

Data analysis was conducted in two stages: (1) quantitative analysis to calculate the absolute frequency and percentage of the Banyumas dialect's appearance at each educational level, and (2) continuum mapping to determine the position of the Banyumas dialect on the six-level continuum of Gorter et al. (2024) based on quantitative findings and comparisons across levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall Sample Description

Data collection was conducted in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency. The sample included announcement boards, advisory boards/stickers, prohibition signs, invitation boards, banners, and various other types of signs displayed in schools and universities.

Frequency of Banyumas Dialect Appearance

The results show that the Banyumas dialect appears on 24 out of 100 signs (24%) in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency. The pattern shows that the visibility of the Banyumas dialect fluctuates across educational levels: it increases from elementary schools (20%) to junior high schools (28%), peaks at senior high schools (36%), and then drops dramatically at universities (12%).

The comparison across levels shows that senior high schools have the highest visibility (36%), followed by junior high schools (28%), elementary schools (20%), and universities (12%) as the lowest. There is a fairly wide range of variation across levels, with a difference of 24 percentage points between the highest and lowest.

Based on field notes, signs containing the Banyumas dialect generally consisted of: school activity announcement boards (e.g., "*Ayo dolan maring perpustakaan*" [Let's

go to the library]), advisory boards/stickers (e.g., "*Mlebu ruangan kudu nganggo masker lur*" [Wear your mask in the room]), extracurricular activity banners by The Youth Red Cross (e.g., "*Nyong wis donor darah, rika kapan?*" [I have donated blood, bestie. You gonna join or nah?]), and community-based information boards. Importantly, no official institutional signs (such as school name boards, vision-mission boards, or organizational structure boards) used the Banyumas dialect. The use of the Banyumas dialect was limited to signs that were temporary, non-formal, or community-based in nature.

Position of the Banyumas Dialect on the Visibility Continuum

Based on the quantitative findings (24% overall presence, with variation across levels from 12% to 36%), the position of the Banyumas dialect in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency can be mapped as follows:

Level 4: Approved or permitted (Limited presence), with a tendency toward Level 5: Disregarded or disputed (Occasional presence) for certain levels (Gorter et al., 2024).

The mapping shows that the Banyumas dialect in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency is at Level 4 to 5 (limited to neglected). Senior high schools have the best position (approaching Level 3), while universities have the worst position (Level 5). This position is comparable to Frisian in the Netherlands (Level 4) and better than Breton in France (Level 5) at the senior high school level, but worse at the university level (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Hornsby, 2008; Gorter et al., 2024).

Analysis of Visibility Patterns

The findings show an interesting and non-linear pattern. Contrary to the initial hypothesis that visibility would decrease with higher educational levels, visibility actually increased from elementary school to senior high school, then dropped dramatically at the university level. A possible explanation is that first, senior high school students have greater independence and autonomy in managing

extracurricular activities and student organizations (OSIS), which often use informal language, including the local dialect. Second, the organizational culture in senior high schools is very active, and their announcement boards often use language that is more casual and closer to students' daily lives. Third, senior high school students are in a transition period between home language (Banyumas dialect) and academic language (Indonesian, standard Javanese), so in non-formal contexts they still use the Banyumas dialect. Fourth, compared to universities, senior high schools have lower academic pressure, so space for informal language expression remains open.

The lowest visibility in universities (12%) can also be explained by several factors. First, the dominance of Indonesian and English in universities as the languages of academic instruction, scientific discourse, and administration (Block, 2017). Second, the heterogeneity of students from various regions makes Indonesian the *lingua franca*, so the local dialect loses broad communicative function. Third, the formal academic culture in universities makes the use of local dialects seem unprofessional or inappropriate. Fourth, unlike senior high schools which have student organizations and school-based extracurricular activities, universities are more oriented toward study program or faculty-level organizations that are more formal.

The pattern of increasing visibility from elementary schools (20%) to junior high schools (28%) and senior high schools (36%) can be explained by the development of student independence and organizational activities, which increase with educational level. In elementary schools, teachers are still very dominant and students are still in the early stages of literacy. In junior high schools, students begin to become independent and organizations begin to become active. In senior high schools, student organizations are very active and students are more independent, so the Banyumas dialect is most frequently used on organizational boards and announcements.

Educational Implications and the Risk of Tokenism

These findings have important implications for education policy in Banyumas

Regency. The 24% visibility shows that the Banyumas dialect is actually still alive in the academic environment, especially on non-formal boards. However, this potential has not been maximized into structured policy.

Currently, the local content curriculum for Javanese in schools uses the standard Surakarta-Yogyakarta dialect as a reference. As a result, students who use the Banyumas dialect daily at home do not receive recognition for their linguistic identity at school. Instead, they are taught that the standard dialect is "correct Javanese," while their own dialect is considered less prestigious (Marten, 2012). This disconnect between home language and school language can have a negative impact on younger generations' attitudes toward the Banyumas dialect. Research on minority languages shows that when children learn that their language is not considered worthy of use in educational settings, they tend to develop shame about the language and ultimately abandon it (Fishman, 1991; Hornsby, 2008).

Furthermore, the use of the Banyumas dialect on non-formal boards carries a risk of tokenism (Cunningham & King, 2021), where the dialect is used in a decorative, minimal, and non-sustainable manner without meaningful communicative function. This tokenistic use can create an illusion of representation without actually contributing to language revitalization. As Gorter et al. (2024) note, tokenism can reduce a minority language to a mere museum piece rather than a living language used in everyday communication. Therefore, any effort to increase the visibility of the Banyumas dialect in academic settings must go beyond symbolic gestures and ensure functional, sustained use.

Conversely, successful cases of minority language revitalization show that education plays a key role. Basque in Spain was successfully revitalized partly because it was incorporated into the curriculum and used as a medium of instruction in schools (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Similarly, Frisian in the Netherlands, although its visibility is still limited, its teaching in schools has helped maintain linguistic awareness among younger generations (Gorter et al., 2024).

Specifically for universities, which have the lowest visibility (12%), a more

specialized approach is needed, for example through local content courses on Banyumasan language and culture, or campus activities involving the use of the Banyumas dialect. Meanwhile, senior high schools, with the highest visibility (36%), can serve as a good entry point for revitalization. If these non-formal boards can be encouraged to become more formal and structured, the visibility of the Banyumas dialect could increase significantly.

Comparison with Other Cases

The Banyumas dialect in the academic environment (Level 4-5) has a better position than Breton in France and Māori in New Zealand in terms of visibility, but is lower than Frisian in the Netherlands in terms of educational status (Frisian is taught in schools, while the Banyumas dialect is not) (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Cunningham & King, 2021; Gorter et al., 2024; Hornsby, 2008). This shows that although there is space for the Banyumas dialect in the academic environment, systematic policy support is still lacking. These findings strengthen the argument of Gorter et al. (2024) that the visibility of minority languages is not determined by the number of speakers, but by policy, ideology, and power structures.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study of 100 signs in the academic environment of Banyumas Regency, it is concluded that the visibility of the Banyumas dialect is 24% (24 out of 100 signs), with the highest visibility in senior high schools (36%) and the lowest in universities (12%). The position of the Banyumas dialect on the visibility continuum of Gorter et al. (2024) is at Level 4 to 5 (limited to neglected). The visibility pattern found is not linear: visibility gradually increases across compulsory schooling levels before declining sharply at the university level, indicating that factors such as student independence, organizational activities, and academic culture have a significant influence on language visibility. The visibility patterns observed are consistent with the possibility that the

Banyumas dialect occupies a minoritized position in educational settings; however, further investigation into language ideologies, policies, and stakeholder attitudes is required to confirm mechanisms of marginalization.

This study contributes to expanding the object of linguistic landscape research by including internal variation within a language (dialect) as a legitimate and important object of analysis, unlike previous studies that focused more on taxonomically distinct minority languages. Furthermore, this study applies the *minoritized language* framework in the Indonesian academic context, a setting that has rarely been researched. The novelty of this study lies in the use of the visibility continuum of Gorter et al. (2024) to map a dialect's position in the language hierarchy within educational institutions. Methodologically, this study adapts the visibility continuum framework to the analysis of dialects in academic settings, a context previously unexplored in linguistic landscape research in Indonesia. The study should be regarded as an exploratory investigation rather than a comprehensive linguistic landscape census.

Due to the limited sample size of only 100 signs in Banyumas Regency, further research is needed with broader coverage, including more institutions and areas in Greater Banyumas (Cilacap, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, Kebumen). Research using in-depth interviews and attitude surveys is also needed to explore the perceptions of teachers, students, and the community toward the Banyumas dialect, as well as diachronic (longitudinal) research to observe changes in visibility over time. Comparative studies with other Javanese dialects would also be valuable. For policymakers, this study recommends that the Department of Education of Banyumas Regency integrate the Banyumas dialect into the local curriculum and encourage its use in school signs and official announcements.

Table 1. Distribution of Sample by Educational Level

Educational Level	Sample Size	Percentage
Elementary Schools	25	25%
Junior High Schools	25	25%
Senior High Schools	25	25%
Universities	25	25%
Total	100	100%

Table 2. Frequency of Banyumas Dialect Appearance by Educational Level

Educational Level	Sample Size	Contains Banyumas Dialect	Does Not Contain	Percentage of Presence
Elementary Schools	25	5	20	20%
Junior High Schools	25	7	18	28%
Senior High Schools	25	9	16	36%
Universities	25	3	22	12%
Total	100	24	76	24%

Table 3. Mapping the Banyumas Dialect on the Visibility Continuum (Academic Environment)

Educational Level	Presence Percentage	Position on Continuum	Explanation
Senior High Schools	36%	Level 4 (Limited)	Approaching Level 3, but still limited
Junior High Schools	28%	Level 4 (Limited)	Still in the limited category
Elementary Schools	20%	Level 4 (Limited)	Limited, tending toward Level 5
Universities	12%	Level 5 (Disregarded)	Clearly Level 5
Average	24%	Level 4 – 5	Limited to neglected

Appendix: Examples of pictures and signs



**MLEBU RUANGAN
KUDU
NGANGGO
MASKER
LUR**



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