






Language Contestation on The Virtual Linguistic Landscape of The Government
Website of Bali, Indonesia

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Language Contestation on The Virtual Linguistic Landscape of The Government Website of Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract

National, local, and international language contestation in Bali has been the government's concern. The national language policy places Indonesian in the most prominent position, and the local regulation allegedly focuses on the Balinese salience. While most linguistic landscape (LL) research in Bali is conducted on physical LL, few have been conducted on the virtual linguistic landscape (VLL) setting. This study shows the language contestation of Indonesian, Balinese, and foreign languages on the official website of the government of Bali province. Furthermore, the analysis was based on the language contestation point of view and Bakhtinian's centripetal and centrifugal forces. The results showed that the Indonesian language is the most dominant. Additionally, the Balinese language functions to convey Bali's identity, and foreign languages play an important role in informational functions for viewers. The Indonesian language represents the centripetal force of centralization, and the existence of Balinese and foreign languages shows the centrifugal force indexes the decentralization efforts.

Keywords: virtual linguistic landscape, language contestation, centripetal force, centrifugal force

1. Introduction

The language contestation in Indonesia's VLL, resembling the physical LL, includes the competition of local, national, and international languages. The contestation between dominant and marginal languages lacks equal positions in the social domain (Lotherington, 2013). Indonesian is considered the standard language, and its existence is legalized in a formal context and used for inter-ethnicity communication (Shohamy, 2006). Local languages tend to be used in a limited context, such as in the family domain, and are rarely found in public spaces (Permanadeli et al., 2016). Furthermore, English is undoubtedly Indonesia's most widely used foreign language, impacting the national and local languages (Foster & Welsh, 2021).

Regarding language policy, the government has regulated the existence of local, national, and foreign languages (Sakhiyya, 2020). The Language Law no. 24/ 2009 article 36 regulates the use of Indonesian in geographical and public facilities names. Local and foreign languages may name geographical and public facilities with historical, cultural, customary, and religious values. The language law is further elaborated in President Regulation no. 63/2019 article 33 on the prominent use of roman scripts over local.

On the other hand, at the provincial level, Bali is one of the provinces in Indonesia; there is also a language law named Governor Regulation no. 80/ 2018, which positions Balinese scripts above roman scripts. The regulation of Balinese script positioning seems contradictory to the higher language regulation at the national level. Viewed from its aims, Governor

Regulation no. 80/2018 is constructed to protect and promote the Balinese language, scripts, and literature. It indicates the serious political efforts to conserve and protect them in the public space of Bali. As a result, after the implementation of governor regulation no. 80/2018, the existence of Balinese scripts gains its existence on public signs in the urban areas of Bali (Mulyawan, 2021). The governor's regulation is considered effective in supporting the existence. Hence, The national, local, and international languages contribute to the tension between centripetal (centralization) and centrifugal (decentralization) force, as coined by Bakhtin (1981).

In the internet era, the role of VLL is as essential as LL following the presence of viewers in different coverage (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009). The Governor Regulation of Bali no.80/2018 does not yet cover language choice in VLL. However, the spirit of conserving and protecting the Balinese language, scripts, and literature should reach the virtual space. The official website of the Bali government is one virtual media for achieving idealism. Based on the preliminary observation on the website, the contestation unavoidably also exists, similar to the physical public space.

The VLL of Bali is still left unexplored, and the contestation of Balinese, Indonesian, English, and other foreign languages has only been investigated in a physical LL setting. This research explores the VLL as one of the most essential media in protecting the Balinese language and scripts amidst the pressure of national language policy and the penetration of English as the global lingua franca. Furthermore, two problems are investigated: first, the contestation of the local, national and foreign languages, and second, the actualization of centripetal and centrifugal force through Indonesian, Balinese, and foreign languages. The study contributes to the local and national policy to harmonize national, local, and foreign language usage.

2. Review of Literature

Studies on VLL have been conducted in various parts of the globe. The well-known research was published by Ivkovic & Lotherington (2009) concerning the concepts of VLL compared to LL. It emphasized that VLL is an essential constructive element of international linguistic ecology which dynamically changes over time. Biró (2019) investigated the linguistic identities of language choice, code-switching, and hybrid practice of Hungarian-Romanian bilingual university students' VLL, especially on Facebook. It was shown that multilingual practices on VLL do not fully relate to language competency. The identity was constructed by utilizing multimodal elements available on the digital platform. Gomaa (2020) analyzed the language policy implementation in the VLL of the Kingdom of Bahrain e-government national e-portal, which is bilingual in Arabic and English. The socio-political power supported the presence of both languages for Arabic and non-Arabic speakers. Keles et al. (2020) investigated the bilingual content of VLL at a Turkey university. Furthermore, technical problems in content access and language issues were revealed in the research. The de jure policy and de facto situations do not align in the VLL.

In the Balinese context, the research on language contestation is limited to physical LL only (Artawa & Sartini, 2019; Mulyawan, 2021; Mulyawan et al., 2022; Purnawati et al., 2022). The research revealed that English and Indonesian languages are dominant in Balinese LL due to the national policy and the massive development of tourism. The Balinese language is

marginalized as it only takes symbolic functions emblemated to tradition, culture, and Balinese Hindu religion. The regulation issued only supports the existence of Balinese scripts on cityscape but not the language (Paramarta, 2022a).

3. Objective and Methodology

The literature review shows that linguists have not researched Bali's VLL yet. The LL investigation has been extensively conducted on the LL of cities and tourist places. First, this study aims to analyze the language contestation of Bali's VLL, which includes local, national, and foreign languages; second, analyzing the tensions between the centralization (centripetal) force, the unifying national language and the decentralization (centrifugal) force with the existence of local and foreign languages (Bakhtin, 1981). The subject is the official Bali government website, which has become the medium for policy publication. It was selected as the subject of the study for three main reasons. First, the website is managed by the government of Bali province, which implements the governor regulation no 80/2018. This contrasts somewhat with the national language policy, which places Indonesian and Roman scripts in the dominant position (Mulyawan, 2021). Second, the website is not confined to Indonesian territory only, hence using foreign languages is unavoidable. Third, the website's contents comprise cultural terms and typical Balinese activities, and the use of Balinese language and script also exists. The website contains eleven main pages, as presented in table 1.

No	Pages of the website	Number of signs	Percentage
1	Login page	6	0.3
2	Home page (news)	1943	96
3	Profile	30	1.5
4	Information and Documentation Management Officer	1	0.05
5	Supporting offices/institutions	36	1.8
6	The potency of Bali Province	2	0.1
7	Complaint service page	1	0.05
8	Webmail	1	0.05
9	Satisfaction index	1	0.05
10	Budget execution documents	3	0.15
11	Regional financial management index	1	0.05
Total		2025	100

Table 1. The pages are elements of the Bali government's official website

The website supplies complete information on Bali province and the government programs, including the news of implementation and government activities, the profiles of the province, officers, the supporting offices and related institutions under the provincial government, the potency of Bali, complaint service page, webmail, satisfaction index page, budget execution documents, and regional financial management index page. One screen presentation is counted as a sign and then calculated in terms of number and percentage. Table 1 shows that the most dominant content of the website is the home page which presents 1943 news. Other pages exist in much fewer amounts, as presented in the table. The data on language contestation is analyzed using the theory of LL proposed by Lotherington (2013), where languages in a social context are not in an equal position, and the tense of the national, local, and foreign language is analyzed using heteroglossia perspective, especially the centripetal and centrifugal forces by Bakhtin (1981).

4. Analysis of the data

The data analysis is presented in two sections under the website’s subheadings of language contestation and centripetal and centrifugal actualization.

The language contestation on the website

Parts of the signs	Monolingual			Bilingual and Multilingual				Transliteration B → R**
				Indonesian is the dominant language.				
	Indo	Eng	Bali	Dupl*	Frag*	Overl*	Comp*	
Institution name	92 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	48 (52.2%)
Institution logo	5 (4.6%)	1 (0.9%)	79 (73.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (4.6%)	7 (6.5%)	11 (10.2%)
Institution slogan	28 (14.8%)	0 (0%)	29 (15.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	62 (32.8%)	0 (0%)	70 (37%)
Description / content	38 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11*** (0.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1893 (97.4%)	0 (0%)
Icon/ menu/ navigation	11 (14.6%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	11*** (14.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	52 (69.3%)	0 (0%)
<p>* Dupl stands for duplication, Frag* for fragmentary, Overl* for overlapping, Comp* for complementary.</p> <p>** B→R means transliteration of Balinese script to Roman script</p> <p>*** Duplication in Arabic: 1 sign; in Chinese: 1; in Dutch:1; in English: 2; in French:1; in German:1; in Italian:1; in Portugese:1; in Russian:1; in Spanish:1 sign</p>								

Table 2 The language contestation on the Bali government’s official website

The language presentation of the signs on the website can be classified into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Bilingual and multilingual presentations are further classified into duplication, fragmentary, overlapping, and complementary (Reh, 2004). In addition, duplication refers to the total translation of the original text into other languages to accommodate readers with various backgrounds. Fragmentary refers to one piece of written text partially translated into an additional language. Overlapping relates to texts partially translated into another language with different pragmatic contents. Complementary multilingual texts are written in more than one language, addressing competent multilingual readers (Reh, 2004).

The dominant language used is Indonesian based on Language Law no. 24/2009, and the President Regulation no. 63/2019, which requires the prominent use of public signs. However, after observing the signs' specific parts, the Indonesian language's existence varied. The institution name, logo, and slogan appear at the heading position of almost all pages. The contestation of Indonesian and Balinese languages was visible in those three parts of the signs. The name is written in the Indonesian language 92 times (100%), and it is undeniable that Bali province is officially under Indonesia. Therefore, the province name should be written in the national language. The touch of Balinese is seen in the transliteration of the names to Roman script 48 times (52.2%). The position of the Balinese script is above the roman, indicating the local script salience as mandated in Governor Regulation no.80/2018. A different situation exists in the language choice, and the logo uses the Balinese language 79 times (73.1%). The logo is the identity of Bali province, where the population dominantly uses the language. The Indonesian and English language is only used in five (4.6%) and one (0.9%) monolingual signs. The logo is also presented in bilingual presentation with an overlapping and complementary of five (4.6%) and seven times (6.5%). Transliteration also exists in logo presentation from Balinese script to Roman in eleven signs (10.2%). The institution slogans are presented in Indonesian and Balinese languages almost equally. No slogan is written in foreign languages since it is still part of the identity presentation on the website and fulfills the symbolic function. The multilingual presentation is all categorized as overlapping texts, which exist 62 times (32.8%) due to the different pragmatic contents delivered. Transliteration from Balinese to Roman script appears in 70 signs (37%).

After the institution name, logo, and slogan, which take the symbolic function of the signs, the instrumental functions appear in the description/content and icon/menu/navigation parts. Indonesian dominates the choice, followed by foreign languages. Balinese language and script do not exist in these parts, and the website's content is dominated by news posted with complementary text types in 1893 signs (97.4%). Indonesian is the main language of those texts, with Balinese and English. The duplication of multilingual texts appears in 11 signs (14.6%) in which Indonesian text is translated fully into Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The duplicated text concerns the law-and-order information in Bali province, which should be clear to people with various language backgrounds.

The language contestation on the website is closely related to the two functions of LL: symbolic and informational (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The Indonesian language plays a vital role in both functions. It appears in the heading parts of the signs containing the institution's name, logo, and slogan. It also becomes the main language used in conveying the website's content. On the other hand, the Balinese language and script tend to play a symbolic role, as the province's identity has to be preserved. English expresses information about global trends, technology, and technical terms related to specific disciplines. Foreign languages also deliver information on sensitive things like law from various linguistic backgrounds.

The centripetal force actualization in the website

Centripetal force refers to the unifying policy of the national language (Foster & Welsh, 2021). Indonesia is well-known for its successful policy in which the Malay language was voted to be the national language named Indonesian (Paauw, 2009). Indonesian is the lingua franca of approximately 700 ethnic languages throughout Indonesia (Sakhiyya, 2020). The national

language policy is also implemented on the website as the actualization of the unifying centripetal force. The data in table 2 shows that Indonesian is the most dominant language used on the website. The general mapping of the language used is presented in figure 1.

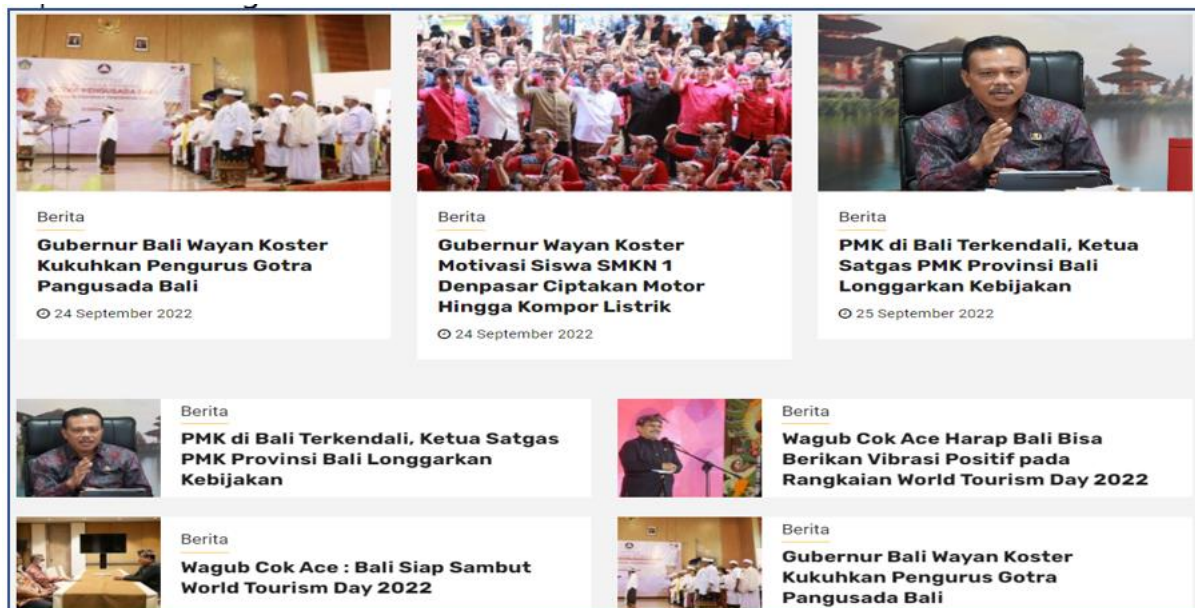


Figure 1 The use of Indonesian in the website (source: <https://www.baliprov.go.id/web/>)

As mandated by the latest national language regulation, the President Regulation number 63-year 2019 (PR 63) on the Use of the Indonesian Language should be used dominantly in various aspects of written and verbal communication. Concerning the language choice in the website, it is related to Part 15th on Mass Media Information, article 41, which states:

- “1. Indonesian language should be used in the information published through mass media.
 2. As paragraph (1) mentioned, mass media includes printed and electronic media.
 3. In delivering information on specific purposes or targets regarding the peculiarities of regional traditions, the mass media may convey the information in regional languages.
 4. In delivering information for specific international purposes or targets, the mass media may convey the information in foreign languages”.
- (President Regulation of Indonesian Republic No. 63 the Year 2019, 2019).

The government of Bali obeys the policy by using the Indonesian language in most of the website content. Figure 1 is captured on the website’s home page, which contains 1,943 pieces of news written in Indonesian. Seven pieces of news are presented as examples of the home page’s content. Similar language choice also exists on other pages of the website. Implementing the national language regulation symbolizes the nationalist spirit of the Bali government placed above the regionality spirit. In addition, the long historical development and promotion of Indonesian from 1928 to the present through various policy implementations make the language the most dominant for Indonesian people, especially the

young generation (Artawa & Sartini, 2019). Indonesian is the most effective language to convey information on the website. In this case, it takes the symbolic and instrumental functions, but the massive use of Indonesian put aside the Balinese language's position, which has been marginalized in its homeland. This finding is in line with the physical LL of the Bali cityscape, where the Balinese language rarely exists on the physical public signs (Permanadeli et al., 2016).

The centrifugal force manifestation on the website

Centrifugal force is the decentralization of languages (Foster & Welsh, 2021). Despite the strong position of Indonesian on the website, the Balinese language and script struggle for their existence. The Balinese language is used in limited parts of the website, in the logo, slogan, and certain parts of the website content as code-switching. Meanwhile, the script also exists in specific parts of the website.



Figure 2 The logo of Bali Province (source: <https://www.nusabali.com/berita/17939/pemprov-gelar-malam-penganugerahan-bali-mandara-parama-nugraha-tahun-2017>)

Figure 2 presents the logo of Bali province with some multimodal elements, including writing in the Balinese language, "*BALI DWIPA JAYA*" (equivalent to "the glorious Bali Island"). The logo is officially regulated in Regional Regulation No.5/DPR-GR/1966. The year of the regulation issuance is far before President Regulation no. 63/2019, hence the language choice used is only Balinese. The Balinese language in the logo may be classified as a part of the typical identity of the province. Therefore, it is not considered to dominate the position of Indonesian. The Balinese language in the logo represents the centrifugal force on the website and does not follow centralization, shown by the massive use of Indonesian in most parts of the website.

The centrifugal force is also seen from the code-switching in the Indonesian texts, as presented in the two sentences taken from one of the news.

i. *Termasuk panel diskusi dengan beragam pemangku kepentingan berkonsep "Rethinking Tourism as a Key Element on Recovery" dan "The Tourism We Want" yang dipimpin oleh perwakilan dari sektor pariwisata di Bali.* (source: <https://www.baliprov.go.id/web/wagub-cok-ace-bali-siap-sambut-world-tourism-day-2022/>)

[Including discussion panels with various stakeholders with the concepts of "Rethinking Tourism as a Key Element on Recovery" and "The Tourism We Want" led by representatives from the tourism sector in Bali.]

Code-switching in excerpt i is taken from a text written in Indonesian, and the topic is 'tourism.' The news informs the strategies taken by the government of Bali to recover the

tourism sector after the pandemic outbreak. The phrase 'rethinking tourism as a key element on recovery' is in English, often used in the industry. Tourism involves people from several nations; hence, English is the lingua franca that connects individuals with diverse linguistic origins. Code-switching is unavoidable on a website where the main language is Indonesian. The existence of English in the Indonesian text signifies the effort to decentralize the centrifugal force. It also shows that the actor of decentralization is the government, which is the language actor (Foster & Welsh, 2021). The government could not avoid the importance of English as the international language. It is supported by factors that strengthen its position, namely linguistic features, a large number of speakers, large area coverage, the language of politics, global diplomacy, economics, science, technology, and culture, including the use of English by the leading countries (Huda, 2011). The pull and push phenomenon between Indonesian and English on the website is like a love hate-relationship (Lauder, 2008). The country's development cannot be separated from international contact, but the language has to be appreciated as the national identity.

The local Balinese language also appears in the Indonesian texts. The following excerpt is taken from one of the news on the website's home page.

ii. *Gubernur Bali, Wayan Koster mengukuhkan Pengurus **Gotra Pangusada** di Kabupaten/Kota dan Provinsi Bali Periode Tahun 2022-2027 pada, Sabtu (**Saniscara, Pon Ugu**) 24 September 2022 di Aula Rektorat Universitas Hindu Indonesia.* (source: <https://www.baliprov.go.id/web/gubernur-bali-wayan-koster-kukuhkan-pengurus-gotra-pangusada-bali/>)

[The Governor of Bali, Wayan Koster, inaugurated the **Gotra Pangusada** Management in the Regency/City and Province of Bali for the 2022-2027 Period on Saturday (**Saniscara, Pon, Ugu**) September 24, 2022, at the Rectorate Hall of the Hindu University of Indonesia.]

In excerpt ii, the base language of the sentence is Indonesian. There are two parts of the sentences presented, namely "*Gotra Pangusada*" [Balinese Traditional Healers Organization] and "*Saniscara, Pon, Ugu*" [Saturday *Pon, Ugu*]. "*Gotra Pangusada*" is an organization formed by The Governor of Bali to manage traditional healers as an alternative medication. On the other hand, "*Saniscara, Pon, Ugu*" is the traditional way to say a certain day in Balinese. It can be concluded that using the Balinese language in the Indonesian text as code-switching shows cultural identity. Edwards (2009) stated that a certain language is the identity of a speech community. The existence of the Balinese code-switching shows the centrifugal force in the website. As the website administrator, Bali's government has to maintain the local language and culture as the province's identity.



Figure 3 The slogan of Bali Province (source: <https://www.baliprov.go.id/web/>)

The existence of the Balinese language on the website can also be seen in figure 3. It depicts the province's slogan in a salient top-corner position on each website page. Furthermore, Balinese and Indonesian were the two languages used. The Balinese language is placed in the upper position (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006), and the government implemented Bali Governor Regulation No. 80/2018, in which the Balinese script has to be above the Roman.

President Regulation No. 63/2019 mentions that Indonesian should be placed in the top position above regional and international languages. In this situation, the centripetal and centrifugal forces collide. This is relevant to the findings revealed by Mulyawan (2021) and Pastika (2020) on the Balinese language and script positions in the physical public signs in Bali's cityscape.

Another example of centrifugal force is presented in figure 4, which depicts the page of "*Biro Hukum Sekretariat Daerah Provinsi Bali*" [The Legal Bureau of The Regional Secretariat of Bali Province].



Figure 4 The Indonesian text duplication in ten foreign languages (<https://birohukum.baliprov.go.id/>)

The sign of centrifugalism is shown by the language options available on the top right corner of the page. The content is duplicated into ten worldwide languages, namely Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The legal documents presented on the page are considered very important to be known in detail, including the visitors. The centripetal force seems to be a difficult choice because of the urgent information on the page. As the website administrator, the government seems to perceive that Bali as an international tourist destination has to eliminate the language barrier in conveying legal documents to visitors. The use of foreign languages on the page plays an instrumental role. The effort to maintain the dominance of Indonesian is still visible on the website since the page is duplicated into more than two languages. The rest of the pages are written dominantly in Indonesian, indexing the centripetal force implementation.

Another distinct phenomenon happens in writing the name of the government of Bali presented on the heading parts of the website, as presented in figure 5.

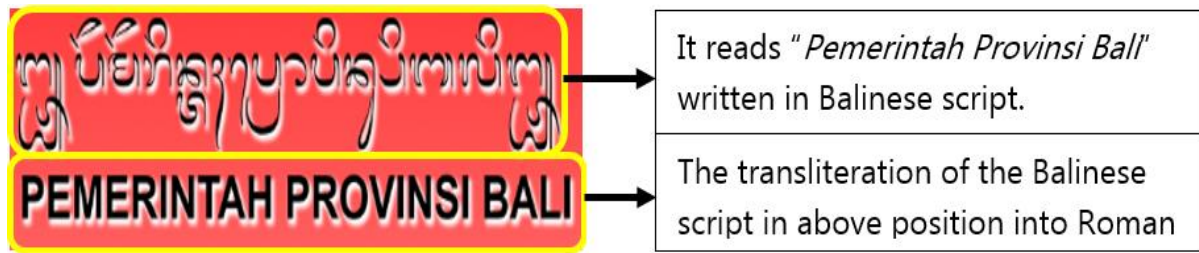


Figure 5 The name presentation of the Government of Bali on the website (source: <https://www.baliprov.go.id/web/>)

The centripetal force is shown by the use of Indonesian for the name. However, the name "PEMERINTAH PROVINSI BALI" [The Government of Bali Province] is written in two lines. The upper and lower line is written in Balinese and Roman script. The choice implements the national language law (President Regulation No. 63/2019), while the script choice implements the regional regulation (Governor Regulation no.80/2018). The national language law requires the Roman script to be written in the upper position since Balinese is considered a subordinate script. This phenomenon indexes the centripetal and centrifugal force interface termed blurring by Foster & Welsh (2021). It is also found in investigating the physical public space in a tourist place in eastern Bali named Candidasa (Paramarta, 2022b).

5. Conclusion

Languages contestation in Bali does not only happens in physical LL but also VLL. The Bali Province owns the official government website under the administrative domain of The Republic of Indonesia, which has to implement all national regulations. Therefore, the Indonesian language is unavoidably present on all website pages and exists for symbolic and informational functions. It symbolizes the national identity, which is embedded in the nationalism spirit. The contestation also involves the local Balinese language and its script, which is used for symbolic function. It symbolizes the regional Balinese identity and culture that has to be preserved. Balinese language and script are mainly used in the institution name, logo, slogan of the province, and some typical codeswitching of the website's content. These parts emphasize more on the symbolic functions of the website. Moreover, English and some other foreign languages exist to index the global contact of the government. Bali, as an international tourist destination, is inseparable from the intense global contact.

The language contestation reflects the tension between centralization and decentralization of language use. Indonesian represents the centripetal force that unites the regional languages. It is supported by legal status as the national language, which should be used publicly, including mass media like the website. The superior existence of the Indonesian language could not stand in this multilingual world. The Balinese language, as the people's mother tongue, struggles for its existence on the website. Its utilitarian value seems to be replaced by the Indonesian language, hence its existence indexes the identity of Balinese culture. The regional language regulation also legalizes the existence of the Balinese and script for language preservation, which allegedly triggers the tense of centripetal and centrifugal force. The existence of English and other foreign languages has an essential role in the centrifugal force. As the symbol of international quality, their presence is highly required. They also take the instrumental position for legal information to serve people from various language backgrounds and avoid linguistic barriers in conveying the website's content. This

phenomenon seems to decrease the triumph of the Indonesian language as the symbol of centripetalism.

Declaration of Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest concerning this research.

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