

THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF NATIONAL SHIPPING VESSELS (PELNI) IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic landscape of the Indonesian National Shipping Company (PELNI) vessels, focusing on signage related to navigation, facilities, safety, and behavioral regulation. Data were collected through systematic documentation of room labels, prohibition signs, facility information, safety instructions, and general notices, and were supplemented by participatory observation and informal interviews with passengers and crew. The analysis reveals that the linguistic landscape is dominated by top-down signage produced by institutional authorities, with Indonesian consistently occupying the primary position, while English appears selectively as a supplementary language. Drawing on Landry and Bourhis's (1997) framework, the study demonstrates that signage on PELNI ships serves both informational and symbolic functions: guiding spatial navigation and ensuring passenger safety, while simultaneously communicating institutional authority and reinforcing national identity. The results indicate that multilingual signage effectively coordinates safety procedures and administrative compliance, establishing the ship as a site of state authority. Ultimately, this research clarifies how the physical arrangement of signs on the Surabaya-Jayapura route manages passenger movement and enforces institutional rules within a confined maritime setting.

Keywords: maritime signage, multilingual communication, maritime governance

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji lanskap linguistik pada kapal-kapal milik Perusahaan Pelayaran Nasional Indonesia (PELNI), dengan fokus pada papan informasi yang terkait dengan navigasi, fasilitas, keselamatan, dan regulasi perilaku. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi sistematis terhadap label ruangan, tanda larangan, informasi fasilitas, instruksi keselamatan, dan pengumuman umum, serta dilengkapi dengan observasi partisipatif dan wawancara informal dengan penumpang dan awak kapal. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa lanskap linguistik didominasi oleh tanda-tanda resmi (top-down) yang diproduksi oleh otoritas institusi, di mana bahasa Indonesia secara konsisten menempati posisi utama, sedangkan bahasa Inggris muncul secara selektif sebagai bahasa pelengkap. Mengacu pada kerangka kerja Landry dan Bourhis (1997), penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa papan informasi di kapal PELNI menjalankan fungsi informasional sekaligus simbolis: memandu navigasi spasial dan memastikan keselamatan penumpang, sembari secara bersamaan mengomunikasikan otoritas institusi dan memperkuat identitas nasional. Hasil penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa papan informasi multibahasa secara efektif mengoordinasikan prosedur keselamatan dan kepatuhan administratif, sekaligus mengukuhkan kapal sebagai wilayah otoritas

negara. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini memperjelas bagaimana pengaturan fisik tanda-tanda pada rute Surabaya-Jayapura berfungsi untuk mengelola pergerakan penumpang dan menegakkan aturan institusi dalam lingkungan maritim yang terbatas.

Kata Kunci: tanda maritim, komunikasi multibahasa, tata kelola maritim

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in shaping communication, safety, and social order in public spaces. In highly regulated environments such as maritime transportation, written language is not merely a neutral medium of information but a strategic resource that reflects authority, institutional control, and symbolic meaning (Bourdieu, 1991; Shohamy, 2006). Within this context, the study of the Linguistic Landscape (henceforth, LL) provides a powerful analytical approach to understanding how languages are displayed, structured, and functioned in public and institutional settings. The concept of LL was first systematically formulated by Landry and Bourhis (1997), who defined it as the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory. Since then, LL has developed into a well-established analytical framework used to examine language use in diverse spaces such as cities, schools, and transportation hubs (Gorter, 2006; Barni & Bagna, 2010). LL refers to the variety of languages, dialects, and speech styles found in a communication environment (Deo, 2005; Iye, 2023). Importantly, research in this field does not merely document written signs but interprets them as socio-semiotic resources that reveal power relations, language policy, and institutional ideologies (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006).

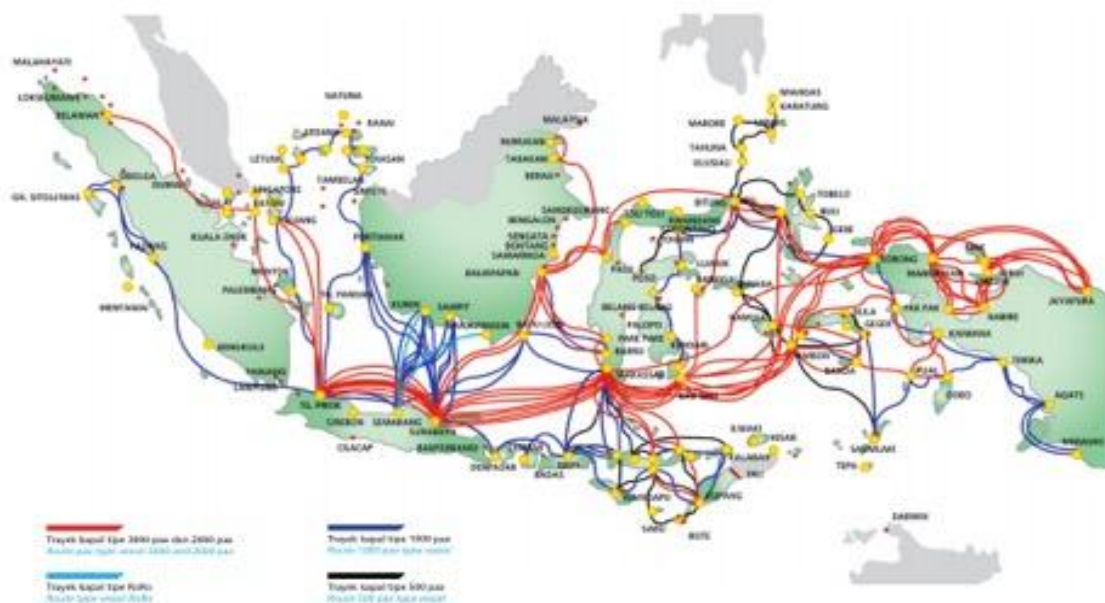
As a state-owned enterprise, the Indonesian National Shipping Company (PELNI) plays a strategic role in connecting the vast Indonesian archipelago (Evans, 2006; Pandemi et al., 2022). The diversity of the vessels operated by the company necessitates a highly organized system of communication to manage operational order.



Picture 1. PELNI Ship in Indonesia (<https://www.pelni.co.id/>)

Within the confined environment of these vessels, communication between passengers and crew is mediated through various channels, including written signage. These signs are intended to ensure safety compliance among a highly mobile and linguistically diverse population. In such maritime settings, communication mismatches stemming from linguistic or semiotic ambiguity may hinder understanding, coordination, and rapid responses, especially in

emergency situations (Ziarati, 2006; Horck, 2006; Pyne & Koester, 2005). Within LL studies, a central analytical distinction is made between top-down signage, produced by official authorities, and bottom-up signage, created by individuals (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Furthermore, scholars emphasize the dual function of public signage: informational functions for practical guidance and symbolic functions for indexing identity and authority (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Despite the growing body of LL research, maritime environments remain significantly underexplored. This gap often arises from the misconception that maritime spaces lack semiotic density because there are "no signs in the open ocean." However, PELNI ships function as "total institutions" or floating public spaces—enclosed environments where written language is the primary medium for navigation and regulation across extensive routes.



Picture 2. PELNI Routes in Indonesia (<https://www.pelni.co.id/>)

In these settings, written signage is not merely incidental; it is a vital tool for institutional representation. The significance of this research lies in the urgency to enhance effective communication between the crew and passengers. By ensuring that safety instructions and signage align with the linguistic background of diverse passengers, the risk of misinterpretation can be minimized (Samovar, 2010). Furthermore, clear communication minimizes errors and confusion, thereby improving operational efficiency and service quality (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Smith, 2005). In a broader sense, understanding the LL on PELNI vessels promotes better cross-cultural cooperation and respects the identities of different community groups in Indonesia's pluralistic society (Adnyana, 2018; Khoiruman et al., 2022).

By gaining deeper insight into the linguistic environment on PELNI vessels, this research seeks to contribute to more inclusive communication practices and bolster the safety of maritime transportation in Indonesia. To achieve this goal, this study aims to address the following explicit research questions:

1. What are the predominant languages and linguistic variations displayed in the top-down signage on PELNI vessels?
2. How do these signs fulfill their informational and symbolic functions according to the canonical LL framework?

3. To what extent does the institutional linguistic landscape on PELNI ships reflect the national language policy in a multicultural maritime context?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine the linguistic landscape on Indonesian National Shipping Company (PELNI) vessels. Instead of providing a general description of qualitative inquiry, this study focuses on the practical impact of language variations on communication dynamics within the interactions among the crew and passengers. The qualitative lens is specifically utilized to explore the social and situational contexts of these interactions, allowing for a deeper understanding of how individuals navigate communication challenges in a confined maritime environment.

The data for this research were gathered through three specific techniques: active observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Active observation was conducted to document the placement and language choice of signage in public areas. In-depth interviews were carried out to capture specific perceptions regarding the clarity of the existing signage. Finally, document analysis was applied to identify how institutional language policies are translated into visual communication. These gathered data were analyzed using the flow model of analysis, consisting of data condensation, data display, and drawing or verifying conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Additionally, for the linguistic landscape analysis, the signs were categorized based on the functional distinction between top-down and bottom-up signage as proposed by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006).

Data Collection

To gain a profound understanding of the communication dynamics and the impact of language variation on PELNI vessels, data were collected through three integrated methods. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 participants (comprising ship officers and passengers) during the long-distance voyage from Surabaya to Jayapura to capture their lived experiences and personal perspectives on linguistic barriers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Simultaneously, participatory observation was carried out by the researcher as an active passenger-observer on board the vessel. This involved systematically documenting communicative interactions and the placement of signage in high-traffic public areas, such as the passenger decks, cafeterias, and information centers, to observe how they influenced passenger behavior across different regional stops (Spradley, 2016). Finally, documentation was gathered by photographing and archiving safety guides, official announcements, and various public signs found on board to ensure that both the visual and textual elements of the linguistic landscape were captured for systematic review (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis

Following the data collection phase, the analysis was performed using a multi-layered qualitative approach. All gathered data were processed through thematic analysis, involving the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes) within the data to elucidate how language choices affected the clarity of instructions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, the findings were interpreted using the flow model of analysis, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This analysis

specifically addressed the factors that hindered or supported effective communication amidst the immense linguistic diversity found on the Surabaya-Jayapura route. Finally, the results were correlated with relevant literature to provide recommendations for a more inclusive and safer communicative environment on Indonesia's trans-national maritime routes.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the Linguistic Landscape research on Indonesian National Shipping Company (PELNI) vessels. The data are organized to directly address the three research questions proposed in this study. First, regarding the predominant languages and linguistic variations (RQ1), the analysis reveals how Indonesian consistently occupies the primary position while English serves as a supplementary code, particularly in safety and facility signage. Second, the findings demonstrate how these signs fulfill both informational and symbolic functions (RQ2); specifically, how safety and prohibition signs not only guide passenger behavior but also project institutional authority and modernity. Third, the data illustrate the extent to which the signage reflects national language policy (RQ3) in maintaining Indonesian identity within a multicultural maritime context. The detailed analysis is categorized into four specific domains: Prohibition Signs, Safety Signs, Facilities, and General Information, as elaborated below.

Prohibition Signs

The findings regarding prohibition signs on the vessel are summarized in Table 1. To provide a deeper socio-semiotic analysis, these signs are categorized based on the LL framework, specifically distinguishing between Top-Down and Bottom-Up signage (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006).

Table 1. Top-Down Prohibition Signs for General Safety and Health

No	Sign Text	Language	LL Category	Function
1	Dilarang Menempatkan Barang di Area Ini	Indonesian	Top-Down	Regulatory (Safety)
2	Kawasan Bebas Asap Rokok	Indonesian	Top-Down	Regulatory (Health)
3	Dilarang Merokok di Ruangan Ini	Indonesian	Top-Down	Regulatory (Health)
4	Hanya untuk Anak Buah Kapal / <i>Crew Only</i>	Indonesian & English	Top-Down	Access Control



Picture 3. Prohibition Signs

The text *Dilarang Menempatkan Barang di Area Ini* (Prohibiting the placement of goods in this area) reflects the use of clear language to restrict the placement of items in specific zones on the vessel. In this message, the Indonesian language is employed as the official medium to convey the prohibition, emphasizing the formal and authoritative nature of the restriction. This phrase strongly and clearly communicates that the action is forbidden, while the spatial marker "di Area Ini" (in this area) emphasizes the specific intended location.

As a top-down sign, the primary purpose of this prohibition is to maintain operational safety and cleanliness, protecting passengers and crew from potential hazards caused by obstructed pathways. The linguistic structure is simple and efficient, allowing the message to be understood immediately without ambiguity. This signage further reflects the institution's effort to enforce official rules and regulations on board, highlighting the importance of compliance for collective safety and comfort. Overall, this message serves as a prime example of how language is strategically used as a socio-semiotic resource to maintain order within the maritime environment.

The data "Kawasan Bebas Asap Rokok" (Smoke-Free Zone) indicates the regulation of specific areas on PELNI ships that are designated as non-smoking zones. In this context, the phrase "Bebas Asap Rokok" (Free from cigarette smoke) emphasizes the smoking ban in those areas. The use of clear language reflects the importance of the safety and health of passengers and crew members, with the goal of protecting them from potentially harmful exposure. As a top-down regulatory sign, this data describes the formal enforcement of health-related rules on board. Effective communication regarding these areas is a crucial step to ensure that passengers comply with the regulations, thus maintaining air quality and comfort during the voyage.

Similarly, the sign "Dilarang Merokok di Ruangan Ini" (Prohibited to smoke in this room) reflects the smoking ban in specific indoor areas on PELNI ships. This message uses explicit language to communicate that smoking is strictly forbidden in designated rooms. The language used is Indonesian, acting as the official national language, which reinforces the formal and authoritative nature of the prohibition. The ban in these rooms reflects an institutional concern for indoor air quality and passenger health. By using firm language, this top-down instruction aims to ensure that the rules are well understood by all passengers to avoid confusion. This message serves as a clear example of how language is used to regulate behavior on PELNI ships, creating a safe and clean environment for all passengers. Such measures are standard in maritime settings to maintain passenger health while providing designated alternatives for those who wish to smoke.

Table 2. Top-Down Prohibition Signs for Operational Security and Cleanliness

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Berbahaya!! Dilarang Duduk di Pagar/ Berada di Luar Pagar	Dangerous!! Prohibited to sit on the railing/stay outside the railing	Indonesian	Top-Down
2	Dilarang Menerima Titipan Barang	Prohibited to accept entrusted goods	Indonesian	Top-Down
3	Pintu Harus Tertutup	Door must remain closed	Indonesian	Top-Down
4	Buanglah sampah di Tempat yang telah kami sediakan	Please dispose of trash in the provided bins	Indonesian	Top-Down
5	Jagalah Kebersihan (Keep The Ship Clean)	Keep the cleanliness (Keep The Ship Clean)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down

Table 3. Mixed Top-Down and Bottom-Up Prohibition Signs in Service Areas

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Perhatian Alas Kaki harap dilepas	Attention: Please remove footwear	Indonesian	Top-Down
2	Perhatian!! Jangan di depan pintu Masjid	Attention!! Do not stay in front of the Mosque door	Indonesian	Bottom-Up
3	Dilarang Kencing disini!	No urinating here!	Indonesian	Bottom-Up
4	Dilarang Buka Pintu Ini!!! Karena Blower dapur Mati Automat	Do not open this door!!! Because the kitchen blower shuts off automatically	Indonesian	Top-Down
5	Selesai ambil air panas harap tutup kran air dengan baik	After taking hot water, please close the faucet tightly	Indonesian	Top-Down
6	Antrian ambil makan. Jaga jarak satu meter	Food queue. Maintain a one-meter distance	Indonesian	Top-Down

Table 4. Environmental and Safety Prohibition Signs on Passenger Decks

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Dilarang Merokok	No Smoking	Indonesian	Top-Down
2	Dilarang Membuang Sampah ke Laut	Do not throw trash into the sea	Indonesian	Top-Down
3	Dilarang Duduk-Duduk dan Keluar Pagar	Prohibited to sit or go outside the railing	Indonesian	Top-Down

Table 5. Top-Down Signs Prohibiting Illegal Activities and Vending

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Penumpang dilarang keras Berjudi	Passengers are strictly forbidden from gambling	Indonesian	Top-Down
2	Mengonsumsi minuman keras	Consuming alcoholic beverages (is prohibited)	Indonesian	Top-Down
3	Berdagang di atas kapal	Trading/Vending on board (is prohibited)	Indonesian	Top-Down
4	Dilarang membawa barang terlarang (Narkoba/Hewan)	Prohibited to carry illegal items (Drugs/Protected animals)	Indonesian	Top-Down
5	Pedagang asongan dilarang berjualan di atas kapal	Street vendors are prohibited from selling on board	Indonesian	Top-Down
6	Dilarang menggunakan plastik lebih tinggi 60 cm	Prohibited to use plastic bags taller than 60 cm	Indonesian	Top-Down

Table 6. Technical Hazard and Access Control Prohibition Signs

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Bahaya Gas Api, semburan api dan larangan merokok	Gas Danger. Fire, jet flames, and no smoking	Indonesian	Top-Down
2	Stop, Hanya untuk Anak Buah Kapal	Stop, Crew Only	Indonesian	Top-Down



Picture 4. Prohibition Signs

The message "Bahaya Gas. Api, semburan api dan larangan merokok" (*Danger: Gas, Fire, Jet flames, and No Smoking*) is a warning conveyed in clear and firm language. This top-down signage informs passengers of the potential dangers of gas and fire on PELNI ships. The use of the word "Bahaya" (*Danger*) and the specific mention of "Semburan api" (*Jet flames*) indicates that the risk of fire must be avoided at all costs. Furthermore, the explicit prohibition "Larangan merokok" (*No smoking*) reinforces the safety protocol. This message reflects PELNI's commitment to passenger safety and the institutional effort to reduce the risk of incidents that could endanger everyone on board.

Similarly, the instruction "Stop, Hanya untuk Anak Buah Kapal" (*Stop, Only for Ship's Crew*) is a strict regulatory sign that halts the movement of passengers into restricted areas. The message clearly identifies the space as exclusive to the "Anak Buah Kapal" (*Crew Members*), who are the only personnel authorized to enter. The language used is very firm, with the word "Stop" emphasizing the importance of immediate compliance. As a top-down access control measure, the purpose of this message is to maintain operational order and the exclusivity of certain areas required for the ship's effective functioning. By enforcing such rules, PELNI exercises its institutional authority to preserve the safety and rights of the ship's crew, ensuring a secure environment for all during the voyage.

Table 7. Miscellaneous Regulatory and Hygiene Prohibition Signs

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Dilarang meludah	No spitting	Indonesian	Bottom-Up
2	Dilarang membuang sampah sembarangan	Do not litter	Indonesian	Top-Down
3	Dilarang menambah sambungan listrik	Prohibited to add unauthorized electrical connections	Indonesian	Top-Down
4	Dilarang menaruh barang di atas kasur	Prohibited to place belongings on the mattress	Indonesian	Top-Down
5	Dilarang memindahkan Kasur	Prohibited to move the mattress	Indonesian	Top-Down
6	Bahaya meledak, dilarang nyalahkan api, dan hindarkan percikan api	Explosion hazard; No open flames; Avoid sparks	Indonesian	Top-Down
7	Dilarang berjualan di atas kapal, belanjalah hanya di toko kapal	No vending on board; Please shop only at the ship's store	Indonesian	Top-Down



Picture 5. Prohibition signs

The text "Dilarang Meludah" (*No Spitting*) is a simple yet crucial regulatory sign that maintains hygiene on board. This bottom-up or informal instruction clearly states the prohibition to ensure passenger comfort. Similarly, the sign "Dilarang membuang sampah sembarangan" (*Do not litter*) highlights the importance of maintaining order and preventing environmental problems such as marine pollution. As a top-down institutional sign, it reflects PELNI's concern for environmental conservation and passenger responsibility. Technical safety is also strictly regulated through signs such as "Dilarang menambah sambungan listrik" (*Prohibited to add unauthorized electrical connections*). This top-down warning is vital to prevent security risks, such as disruptions to the ship's electrical system or fire hazards. The language used is strict, emphasizing the institutional authority in maintaining the integrity of the vessel's infrastructure.

In the passenger sleeping areas, signs such as "Dilarang menaruh barang di atas kasur" (*Prohibited to place belongings on the mattress*) and "Dilarang memindahkan Kasur" (*Prohibited to move the mattress*) serve to maintain cabin organization and safety. These top-down instructions ensure that cabins do not become cluttered and prevent potential injury or damage to ship facilities. By adhering to these regulations, passengers contribute to a cleaner and more orderly environment.

Based on the data, it is found that in the prohibition signs, Indonesian is the dominant and primary language used. This linguistic choice reflects Indonesian's status as the national and official language and reinforces its function as the main medium through which authority and compliance are communicated. The data demonstrate that these signs perform a symbolic function beyond their informational role. Through the consistent use of Indonesian and standardized formats, these top-down signs symbolically convey the presence of state authority and the legitimacy of maritime governance. In this sense, signage operates as a marker of power, defining acceptable actions while reinforcing hierarchical relations between PELNI, as a state institution, and the passengers.

In terms of visibility and placement, these signs are strategically located in high-traffic and functionally significant areas such as corridors, cabins, and safety zones. Positioned at eye level or near relevant objects (e.g., beds, railings), the signs ensure immediate notice. From an LL perspective, this deliberate placement transforms ship spaces into linguistically governed environments, where visibility serves not only to inform but also to regulate and discipline behavior within the maritime setting.

In response to the first research question (RQ1), prohibition signs on PELNI vessels are overwhelmingly monolingual in Indonesian and strictly top-down. This indicates that for regulatory and disciplinary matters, the institution relies solely on the national language to ensure maximum comprehension and compliance. Regarding the second research question (RQ2), while the informational function is to forbid specific behaviors (e.g., smoking, gambling), the symbolic

function is dominant here: these signs serve as markers of state authority, enforcing order within the "floating territory." Finally, addressing the third research question (RQ3), the exclusive use of formal Indonesian in prohibition signs reflects a strict adherence to National Language Policy, positioning Bahasa Indonesia as the sole language of law and order in the maritime public space.

Safety Signs

The first category of the LL analyzed on the vessel consists of safety signs. These signs are critical for emergency preparedness and are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8. PELNI Safety Equipment

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Muster Station	Muster Station	English	Top-Down
2	Tangga Darurat	Emergency Stairs	Indonesian	Top-Down
3	Exit	Exit	English	Top-Down
4	Release Fire	Release Fire	English	Top-Down
5	Pelampung	Lifebuoy / Life Jacket	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
6	Intruksi Keadaan Darurat (Emergency Intrction)	Emergency Instruction	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
7	Gambar Petunjuk Keluar kabin (Cabin Escape Plan)	Cabin Escape Plan	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
8	Cara Memakai baju pelampung (Life Jacket Instruction)	Life Jacket Instruction	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
9	Keluar darurat	Emergency Exit	Indonesian	Top-Down
10	Fire Plan	Fire Plan	English	Top-Down
11	Launcing Intruction	Launching Instruction	English	Top-Down



Picture 6. Safety Signs (By Risman)

Safety signs such as "Pelampung" (*Life Jacket*), "Sekoci" (*Lifeboat*), "Release Fire", "Exit", and "Tangga" (*Stairs*) distributed throughout PELNI vessels are essential elements of the ship's linguistic landscape. In this context, language is not limited to written words but also manifests through graphic symbols that serve as visual guides. The primary advantage of this multimodal communication lies in its ability to convey critical messages during emergencies without relying solely on a specific language proficiency. As top-down signage, images of lifeboats and life jackets provide immediate informational functions regarding the location of safety equipment, while the "Exit" and "Tangga" signs offer vital spatial navigation during emergency evacuations.

Within the LL of PELNI ships, the use of both Indonesian and English reflects the international standards of maritime safety. These signs are designed with international symbols (consistent with IMO regulations) to ensure they are easily understood by passengers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The consistent use of top-down institutional signage comprising both text and symbols transforms the ship into a regulated environment where safety is prioritized. Furthermore, evacuation instructions, including the "Cara Memakai Baju Pelampung" (*Life Jacket Instructions*), are essential for passenger preparedness. This integration of visual and textual elements demonstrates PELNI's institutional authority in managing risk and ensuring a secure environment for all passengers regardless of their native language.

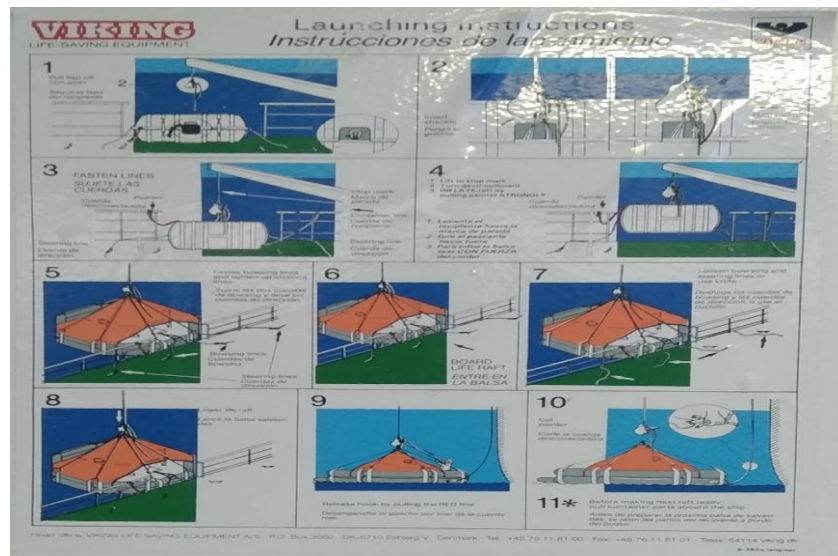


Picture 7. Safety Signs (By Risman)

The data concerning emergency exits, fire safety, and assembly points constitute a vital segment of the top-down linguistic landscape on PELNI vessels. A socio-semiotic analysis of these signs reveals several critical functions:

First, the message "Keluar Darurat" (*Emergency Exit*) utilizes direct and explicit Indonesian to provide critical instructions. As a top-down regulatory sign, its primary informational function is to ensure rapid evacuation during a crisis. Second, the fire extinguisher symbols serves as a universal visual representation. The use of these piktograms aligns with international maritime safety standards, transcending linguistic barriers through universal semiotic resources. Third, the assembly point symbol often labeled as "Titik Kumpul" (*Assembly Station*) or "Muster Station" provides a visual anchor for passengers. While the symbol itself is universal, the presence of bilingual text in these areas assists passengers in identifying these locations more accurately. Lastly, references to "Sekoci" (*Lifeboats*) and "Rakit Penolong" (*Life Rafts*) underscore the institutional priority of maritime life-saving equipment.

In the linguistic landscape of PELNI ships, this visual communication plays a crucial role. The reliance on international symbols provides a symbolic function of global standard alignment, ensuring that instructions are accessible to passengers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By utilizing these top-down visual and textual cues, PELNI exercises its institutional authority to manage risk, creating a safer and more disciplined environment for all travelers on the Surabaya-Jayapura route.

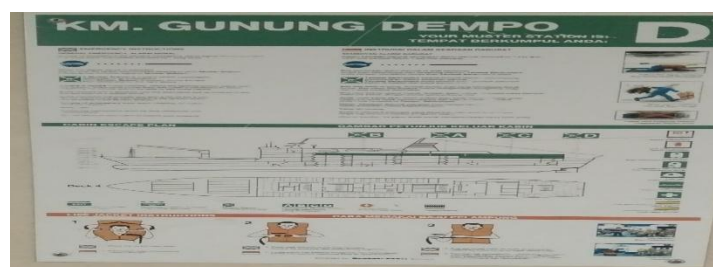


Picture 8. Safety Signs (By Risman)

The instructional data regarding the deployment of life rafts ("Instruksi Peluncuran Rakit Penolong") is an essential element in the top-down linguistic landscape of PELNI ships. Presented through a combination of text and sequential illustrations, this message provides crucial instructions on how to operate maritime life-saving equipment during emergency situations at sea.

This multimodal communication which integrates both visual and textual semiotic resources has the advantage of universality. It allows passengers from various linguistic backgrounds on the Surabaya-Jayapura route to quickly and accurately interpret the steps required for survival. From an LL perspective, these signs fulfill an informational function by providing step-by-step guidance, while simultaneously performing a symbolic function that reflects PELNI's institutional commitment to international maritime safety standards.

By providing clear and concise guidance in these top-down instructions, PELNI exercises its authority to manage passenger readiness. In the linguistic landscape of the ship, such messages play a vital role in transforming the physical space into a linguistically governed environment that prioritizes safety and collective security.



Picture 9. Safety Signs (By Risman)

The safety signage on board PELNI vessels, including "Instruksi Keadaan Darurat" (Emergency Instructions), "Gambar Petunjuk Keluar Kabin" (Cabin Escape Plans), and "Cara Memakai Baju Pelampung" (Life Jacket Instructions), constitutes a highly regulated top-down linguistic landscape. Produced and authorized by institutional actors, these signs ensure

compliance with international maritime safety standards while asserting the ship's operational authority.

From a semiotic perspective, these signs predominantly employ visual resources such as icons, pictograms, and directional arrows. These are often accompanied by Indonesian and English text to enhance intelligibility. Indonesian functions as the primary linguistic code in directive messages such as "Keluar Darurat" (*Emergency Exit*) while English operates as a supplementary language aligned with global maritime conventions. This bilingual configuration ensures that safety protocols remain accessible to the diverse passenger demographic on the Surabaya-Jayapura route without displacing the national language as the primary medium of authority.

In terms of communicative functions, these safety signs perform a dual role as theorized by Landry and Bourhis (1997):

- a) **Informational Function:** They provide immediate, actionable guidance, enabling passengers to locate exits and safety equipment regardless of their linguistic background.
- b) **Symbolic Function:** The standardized design and institutional authorship index state authority and PELNI's alignment with global maritime safety regimes. The visual dominance of symbols over text further reinforces discipline and non-negotiable compliance.

Regarding visibility and placement, safety signs are strategically positioned in high-perception zones such as corridors, stairwells, and cabins. This high visibility transforms the ship into a semiotically governed space where order and obedience are continuously communicated. Overall, the LL of safety signage on PELNI vessels demonstrates that language and symbols function not merely as tools for information delivery, but as a symbolic apparatus of maritime governance, embedding discipline and national responsibility within everyday shipboard communication.

Unlike prohibition signs, the data on safety signage reveals a different pattern regarding the first research question (RQ1): a high prevalence of bilingualism (Indonesian-English) and the extensive use of non-verbal symbols (pictograms). This addresses the need for universal comprehension in emergencies. Regarding the second research question (RQ2), the informational function is prioritized here to save lives, yet the symbolic function is also evident; the use of standardized IMO (International Maritime Organization) symbols projects an image of PELNI as a professional entity aligned with global maritime standards. In terms of the third research question (RQ3), while National Language Policy is maintained by placing Indonesian text first, the inclusion of English acknowledges the international nature of maritime safety regulations, balancing national identity with global compliance.

Facilities

The signage for passenger facilities on PELNI vessels is primarily bilingual, reflecting an effort to enhance passenger navigation and comfort. These signs are summarized in Table 9 below.

Table 9. PELNI Facilities

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Geladak Berjemur (Sun Deck)	Sun Deck	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
2	Musholla (Mosque)	Mosque (Prayer Room)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
3	Tempat Wudhu (Wash Place)	Ablution Area (Wash Place)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
4	Ruang Makan (Dining Room)	Dining Room	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
5	Restorant (Restaurant)	Restaurant	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
6	Ruang Makan (Po Mess)	Petty Officers' Mess (Dining Room)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
7	Ruang Rekreasi (Recreation)	Recreation Room	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
8	Area Hiburan dan Permainan	Entertainment and Gaming Area	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
9	Pelni Mart	Pelni Mart	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
10	Toko DeK 5	Deck 5 Shop	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
11	Kelas Ekonomi (Economy Class)	Economy Class	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
12	Kelas 1 (1 st CLASS)	1st Class	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
13	Klinik (Dispensery)	Clinic (Dispensary)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
14	Pusat Jajanan (Food Cunter)	Food Court (Food Counter)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
15	Toilet pria dan wanita	Men's and Women's Toilet	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
16	Ruang Informasi (Information)	Information Room	Ind & Eng	Top-Down



Picture 10. Pelni Facilities (By Risman)

The facility signage on board PELNI vessels, such as the "Geladak Berjemur" (*Sun Deck*), "Musholla" (*Mosque*), "Tempat Wudhu" (*Wash Place*), and "Area Hiburan dan Permainan" (*Entertainment and Gaming Area*), serves as a crucial navigational resource for passengers. These signs are categorized as top-down signage, as they are officially produced by the institution to organize the ship's internal space and enhance passenger experience.

The presence of the "Sun Deck" sign identifies an open area where passengers can enjoy outdoor views, while the inclusion of the "Musholla" and "Tempat Wudhu" signage reflects a strategic institutional attention to the spiritual and ritual needs of the passengers during the long-distance voyage from Surabaya to Jayapura. By providing these bilingual signs, PELNI demonstrates a commitment to creating a comfortable and inclusive travel environment that caters to a diverse demographic.

From an LL perspective, these facility signs perform a dominant informational function. The consistent use of bilingual text on these signs illustrates PELNI's positioning of the vessel as a modern, public space that is accessible to both domestic and international travelers. Furthermore, the strategic placement of these signs in high-traffic areas ensures that the ship's welfare facilities are easily identifiable, thereby reinforcing PELNI's institutional role in managing passenger well-being and operational hospitality.



Picture 11. Pelni Facilities (By Risman)

The signage regarding commercial services and meal distribution on PELNI vessels—such as "Ruang Makan" (*Dining Room*), "Restoran" (*Restaurant*), "Toko Dek 5" (*Deck 5 Shop*), "Pelni Mart", and "Antrian Ambil Makan" (*Meal Pickup Queue*) represents a critical intersection between hospitality and institutional regulation. These top-down signs are strategically placed to manage passenger flow and communicate the availability of diverse culinary and shopping options during the long-haul Surabaya-Jayapura route.

The bilingual nature of the "Dining Room" and "Restaurant" signs reflects PELNI's effort to standardize service quality, providing a diverse culinary experience for both domestic and international passengers. Meanwhile, commercial signs like "Toko Dek 5" and "Pelni Mart" serve a dual function: they provide essential informational guidance for passengers needing supplies and perform a symbolic function of institutional economic control by centralizing commerce within official shipboard outlets.

A unique finding in this category is the instruction "Antrian Ambil Makan" (*Meal Pickup Queue*), which often includes the directive "Jaga jarak satu meter" (*Maintain a one-meter distance*). As a top-down regulatory sign, this demonstrates the ship's role in maintaining social order and hygiene during high-traffic periods. Furthermore, the presence of informal or semi-official signs like "Gratis jika tanpa struk dari kasir" (*Free if without a receipt from the cashier*) is particularly noteworthy in a Linguistic Landscape study. This sign acts as an institutional "check and balance" mechanism, using language to prevent unauthorized transactions and ensure transparency in the ship's commercial ecosystem.

Overall, the LL of facilities and services on PELNI ships transforms the vessel from a mere mode of transport into a linguistically governed "floating city." These signs effectively regulate behavior, provide essential service information, and reinforce PELNI's institutional authority in managing passenger comfort and organizational transparency.



Picture 12. Pelni Facilities (By Risman)

The signage designating passenger classes such as "Kelas Ekonomi" (*Economy Class*) and "Kelas 1" (*1st Class*) function as a powerful top-down marker of spatial and social stratification within the vessel. These signs are not merely informational; they perform a symbolic function by defining the boundaries of access based on the fare paid by the passengers. On the Surabaya-Jayapura route, the bilingual presentation of these signs ensures that the hierarchy of comfort is clearly communicated to a diverse demographic, ranging from budget-conscious travelers to those seeking premium amenities.

In terms of sanitation facilities, the presence of bilingual signs such as "Toilet Pria" (*Men's Toilet*) and "Toilet Wanita" (*Women's Toilet*) reflects a strategic institutional attention to gender-specific needs and passenger privacy. These top-down signs regulate the use of shared spaces, ensuring that order and social norms are maintained throughout the long-distance voyage. The use of standardized icons (pictograms) alongside the text further enhances the informational function of the signage, making it accessible to passengers with varying levels of literacy or language proficiency.

Overall, the LL of passenger classes and toilets on PELNI ships serves as a mechanism for organizing the "floating community." By providing clear, bilingual, and authoritative signage, PELNI exercises its institutional role in managing social order and passenger comfort. This demonstrates how language is used to navigate the complexities of a multi-class public space, ensuring that every passenger can identify the areas and facilities that align with their specific rights and needs.



Picture 13. Pelni Facilities (By Risman)

The linguistic landscape of essential service facilities on PELNI vessels specifically the "Klinik" (*Clinic/Dispensary*), "Pusat Jajanan" (*Food Counter/Food Court*), and "Ruang Informasi" (*Information Room*) reveals a highly functional and authoritative use of language. These signs are categorized as top-down signage, produced by the institution to ensure that passengers can navigate essential health and informational services during the long-haul Surabaya-Jayapura route.

In the case of "Klinik" (*Clinic*), the signage often includes descriptions of "Pelayanan Medis" (*Medical Services*), which serves a dual role. Informationally, it directs passengers to healthcare professionals in case of illness. Symbolically, it provides "psychological security," giving passengers confidence that PELNI has institutionalized systems to handle emergency health situations at sea.

Furthermore, the "Ruang Informasi" (*Information Room*) acts as the semiotic hub of the vessel. The use of clear, bilingual terminology ensures that the "precision of service" is communicated effectively. By employing Indonesian as the primary code and English as a supplementary one, PELNI reinforces its role as a state-owned entity providing modern, accessible public services.

From an LL perspective, these signs do not merely label a room; they transform the ship's interior into a disciplined and well-managed environment. The clarity of the language used reflects a commitment to passenger welfare, ensuring that essential facilities are easily identifiable, thus reducing ambiguity and enhancing the overall safety and comfort of the maritime journey. The systematic labeling of decks and transit areas is a core component of the ship's navigational LL. These signs ensure that passengers can identify their vertical position within the vessel's multi-level structure.

Table 10. PELNI Room List

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Dek 2 Stairtower Hall	Deck 2 Stairtower Hall	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
2	Dek 3 Stairtower Hall	Deck 3 Stairtower Hall	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
3	Dek 4 Stairtower Hall	Deck 4 Stairtower Hall	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
4	Dek 5 Stairtower Hall	Deck 5 Stairtower Hall	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
5	Dek 6 Stairtower Hall	Deck 6 Stairtower Hall	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
6	Dek 7 Stairtower Hall	Deck 7 Stairtower Hall	Ind & Eng	Top-Down



Picture 14. List of Rooms on Pelni Ship (By Risman)

The LL on PELNI vessels operating the Surabaya-Jayapura route is a complex semiotic space regulated by institutional authority. The findings are categorized into three main types of signage: safety, prohibition, and facilities, all of which demonstrate a strategic use of language to maintain order and maritime governance.

The safety signage on board, such as "Muster Station," "Exit," and "Tangga Darurat" (*Emergency Stairs*), constitutes a highly regulated top-down linguistic landscape. These signs were produced and authorized by institutional actors to ensure compliance with international maritime safety standards. From a semiotic perspective, these signs predominantly employed visual resources such as icons and pictograms, often accompanied by Indonesian and English text. Indonesian functioned as the primary linguistic code in directive messages such as "Keluar Darurat" (*Emergency Exit*) while English operated as a supplementary language. This bilingual configuration ensured that safety protocols remained accessible to the diverse passenger demographic without displacing the national language as the primary medium of authority. Furthermore, detailed instructions like "Cara Memakai Baju Pelampung" (*Life Jacket Instructions*) and "Instruksi Peluncuran Rakit Penolong" (*Life Raft Launching Instructions*) fulfilled a dual role: an informational function by providing step-by-step guidance and a symbolic function reflecting PELNI's alignment with global maritime safety regimes.

In contrast to safety signs, prohibition signage was found to be more linguistically direct and authoritative. Messages such as "Dilarang Menempatkan Barang di Area Ini" (Prohibited to place goods in this area) and "Dilarang Merokok" (No Smoking) emphasized the formal and restrictive nature of the maritime environment. Most of these were top-down signs, although some informal bottom-up signs were also documented, such as "Dilarang Kencing di Sini!" (No urinating here!). The use of the national language in signs like "Penumpang dilarang keras Berjudi" (Passengers are strictly forbidden from gambling) and "Dilarang membawa barang terlarang" (Prohibited to carry illegal items) served as a marker of power, defining acceptable actions while reinforcing the hierarchical relationship between the state-owned institution and the passengers. Strategically positioned at eye level in high-traffic areas like corridors and cabins, these signs transformed the ship into a semiotically governed space where behavior was continuously disciplined through language.

The signage for passenger facilities, including "Geladak Berjemur" (*Sun Deck*), "Musholla" (*Mosque*), and "Pusat Jajanan" (*Food Counter*), demonstrated an effort to enhance passenger navigation and comfort. These top-down signs were primarily bilingual, illustrating PELNI's positioning of the vessel as a modern and inclusive public space. The inclusion of "Kelas Ekonomi" (*Economy Class*) and "Kelas 1" (*1st Class*) labels functioned as markers of spatial and social stratification, defining boundaries of access based on institutional categories. Additionally, navigational listings such as "Dek 1–Dek 7 Stairtower Hall" utilized numerical sequencing and English terminology to align with professional maritime norms. This hierarchical bilingualism, where Indonesian consistently occupied the primary position, symbolically prioritized national identity while accommodating international mobility.

Overall, the linguistic landscape on PELNI vessels serves as a symbolic apparatus of maritime governance. The visibility and placement of these signs in transitional spaces such as stairwells and information rooms ensure that institutional authority is omnipresent. Through the integration of visual and textual semiotic resources, PELNI effectively regulates movement, enforces discipline, and constructs the ship as a governed national space. This analysis confirms that LL on these vessels is not merely a tool for orientation but a mechanism for maintaining

social order, institutional legitimacy, and national responsibility within a confined maritime setting.

The findings in facility signage provide a unique perspective on the research questions. Regarding RQ1, there is a deliberate use of bilingual signs (Indonesian top, English bottom) to label amenities (e.g., *Musholla/Mosque*, *Restoran/Restaurant*). Addressing RQ2, these signs perform a dual function: informationally, they assist navigation in a complex spatial environment; symbolically, they construct the ship as a modern, service-oriented public space that welcomes diverse passengers, including potential foreign tourists. Finally, concerning RQ3, the consistent placement of Indonesian above English reinforces the National Language Policy hierarchy, asserting that while the service is global-friendly, the primary identity of the vessel remains firmly Indonesian.

General Information

General information signs in public and restricted areas of the vessel serve to guide passengers and identify technical zones. These signs are summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Information in Public Areas on PELNI Ships

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
1	Welcome To KM Gunung Dempo	Welcome To KM Gunung Dempo	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
2	Pastikan Tiket Sesuai Identitas, Untuk Asuransi Anda	Ensure Tickets Match Your Identity for Insurance Purposes	Indonesian	Top-Down
3	Pembelian Konvensional/ Cara Memesan Tiket	Conventional Purchase/ How to Book Tickets	Indonesian	Top-Down
4	Non Seat Hall B	Non-Seat Hall B	English	Top-Down
5	Kepada Para Penumpang... Menempati Seat Sesuai yang tertera di tiket	To Our Honored Passengers... Please Occupy the Seat Indicated on Your Ticket	Indonesian	Top-Down
6	ST-07-4-002 Saluran AC (AC Room)	AC Ducting (AC Room)	Indonesian	Top-Down
7	FSD-07-3-17 Ruang Ventilator (Ventilator Room)	Ventilator Room	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
8	FSD-07-3-15 Ruang Karbid/ Astlin (C2H2)	Carbide/Acetylene Room (C2H2 Room)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
9	FSD-07-3-13 Ruang O2 (O2 Room)	Oxygen Room (O2 Room)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
10	FSD-07-3-10 Tempat Persediaan (Preparation)	Storage/Preparation Area	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
11	ST-07-3-001 Ruang Aki (Battery Room)	Battery Room	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
12	FSD-07-3-03 Gudang (Store)	Storage (Store)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
13	Kontrol Hidrolik Pintu Kedap Air	Water-Tight Door Hydraulic Control (Remote Control)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
14	FSD-07-4-04 Dapur (Galley)	Kitchen (Galley)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down

No	Signage Text (Original)	English Translation	Language	LL Category
15	Stasiun Bunker Kanan (Bunker Station)	Starboard Bunker Station	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
16	Selubung Mesin (Engine Casing)	Engine Casing	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
17	B-04-3-001 Koridor (Corridor)	Corridor	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
18	Gudang Alat Potong (Cutlery Store)	Cutlery Store	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
19	FSD-03-3-19 Gudang (Store)	Storage (Store)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
20	3402 Pembakar Sampah (Incinerator Plant)	Waste Burner (Incinerator Plant)	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
21	Pengontrol HIDR. Got Dan Balas	Bilge and Ballast Hydraulic Control Room	Ind & Eng	Top-Down
22	5701 Informasi (Information)	Information Center	Ind & Eng	Top-Down



Picture 15. General Information Signs on Pelni Ship (By Risman)

The message "Welcome To KM Gunung Dempo" serves as a strategic welcoming greeting that reflects elements of hospitality and friendliness within the ship's linguistic landscape. As a top-down institutional sign, it is presented in a bilingual format combining Indonesian and English to warmly receive passengers as they board the vessel. Although the English phrase is dominant in this specific greeting, its use signifies PELNI's positioning as a globally-oriented maritime service, ensuring that the message is understood by passengers from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds on the Surabaya-Jayapura route.

Welcoming messages of this nature are essential in constructing a positive and inclusive travel experience. From an LL perspective, this sign performs a symbolic function by projecting an image of professionalism and excellent service. It indicates that PELNI ships strive to create a welcoming atmosphere from the very beginning of the journey. By placing this sign at the primary entrance point, the institution effectively uses language to transition the passenger from the external environment into a linguistically governed space characterized by maritime hospitality and institutional order.



Picture 16. General Information Signs on Pelni Ship (By Risman)

The analysis of general information and technical areas such as the "Saluran AC" (*AC Room*), "Ruang Ventilator" (*Ventilator Room*), "Dapur" (*Galley*), and "Gudang" (*Store*) reveals a highly regulated maritime environment. These rooms depict the operational complexity of the vessel, where the use of technical codes like "FSD-07-3-17" and "ST-07-4-002" aids the crew in maintaining efficiency and safety. From an authorship perspective, all signs in this category are clearly top-down, produced by official state authorities to ensure centralized control over the ship's spatial management.

In terms of language choice and hierarchy, Indonesian overwhelmingly occupies the primary position. This is particularly evident in instructions related to passenger regulation and administrative compliance, such as "Pastikan Tiket Sesuai Identitas" (*Ensure tickets match identity*) and "Menempati seat sesuai tiket" (*Occupy seat according to ticket*). English appears systematically as a secondary language in technical labels like "Battery Room" and "Engine Casing", functioning as an auxiliary code to align with international maritime conventions without challenging Indonesian's authority as the national language.

Following Landry and Bourhis (1997), these signs perform both informational and symbolic functions. Informationally, they provide precise guidance for navigation and operational management. Symbolically, the dominance of Indonesian, combined with bureaucratic coding systems, indexes state authority and national identity. Strategically located in corridors and restricted zones, these signs discipline spatial behavior and transform the ship into a semiotically governed space. Thus, the general information signage demonstrates that the LL on PELNI vessels operates as an institutional mechanism that organizes space and symbolically represents state control within maritime transportation.

The general information signs conclude the findings by reinforcing the patterns observed. Addressing RQ1, technical and administrative signs (e.g., ticketing, engine rooms) are dominated by Indonesian, with English appearing only in specific technical terminology (*Engine Casing*, *Battery Room*). Regarding RQ2, the informational function is critical for operational efficiency, while the symbolic function highlights the bureaucratic nature of the institution. The technical codes (e.g., *FSD-07*) symbolize a highly regulated, "top-down" managed environment. Lastly, in response to RQ3, the linguistic landscape of general information confirms that the ship operates as a sovereign national space where Bahasa Indonesia serves as the operational language of the state, governing both the passengers and the technical crew.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the linguistic landscape aboard PELNI vessels as a regulated maritime space where language, authority, and safety intersect. The findings reveal that the signage is an institutional semiotic system that actively organizes space and enacts state authority. In line with core LL scholarship (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), these findings are interpreted through authorship, language hierarchy, and semiotic governance.

Institutional Authorship and Top-Down Dominance

One of the most salient findings is the overwhelming dominance of top-down signage. As shown in Table 1 (Top-Down Prohibition Signs for General Safety and Health), Table 2 (Top-Down Prohibition Signs for Operational Security and Cleanliness), and Table 9 (Facility Signs), all documented markers were produced by official authorities. No instances of bottom-up signage, such as handwritten notices, were observed. This absence indicates a communicative environment

that is tightly regulated. On PELNI vessels, language use is carefully managed to ensure compliance, positioning the ship as a centralized semiotic space where signage functions as an extension of institutional power rather than a site of linguistic contestation.

Language Hierarchy and National Identity

The analysis demonstrates a clear hierarchy in language choice, as synthesized in the distribution of languages across all tables. Indonesian consistently functions as the primary language, especially in regulatory signs like "Dilarang Merokok" (No Smoking) and "Pastikan Tiket Sesuai Identitas" (Ensure tickets match identity). English appears selectively and occupies a secondary position, often appearing after the Indonesian text in signs like "Musholla (Mosque)" or "Kelas Ekonomi (Economy Class)".

As theorized by Backhaus (2007), such ordering indexes power relations. The primacy of Indonesian reflects its status as the national language, reinforcing its role as the medium of authority. While English facilitates intelligibility for non-Indonesian speakers on the Surabaya-Jayapura route, it remains an auxiliary code. This hierarchy reflects accommodation rather than multilingual equality, anchoring the vessel within national governance while aligning it with international maritime conventions.

Informational and Symbolic Functions

Consistent with Landry and Bourhis (1997), the LL aboard PELNI vessels fulfills a strong informational function by providing essential guidance for spatial navigation and safety procedures. However, the signage also fulfills a symbolic function. The pervasive use of standardized institutional phrasing such as "Hanya untuk Anak Buah Kapal" (Crew Only) communicates the presence of state authority and the legitimacy of maritime governance. These signs operate as semiotic markers of power, delineating permissible actions and reinforcing the hierarchical relations between the institution and the passengers.

Multimodal Semiotic Governance

The extensive use of visual symbols, particularly in safety-related signage (e.g., life jacket illustrations and evacuation diagrams), highlights the multimodal nature of the LL (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). On PELNI vessels, text and image work together; while written language establishes authority, visual symbols provide immediacy and universality. This multimodal strategy is crucial in a multilingual environment, transforming the ship into a regulated space where movement and behavior are guided through a combination of linguistic and visual cues.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the LL aboard PELNI vessels as a semiotically regulated maritime space, contributing to the expanding scope of LL research beyond fixed urban environments. Rather than treating signage as neutral informational artifacts, the analysis demonstrates that language on board functions as a structured system of meaning through which authority, safety, and spatial order are continuously maintained. The findings reveal that the linguistic landscape on PELNI vessels is overwhelmingly characterized by top-down signage authored by institutional actors. As documented in the findings (Tables 1–7), across all categories, which include room identification, facilities, prohibition notices, safety instructions, and general information, language use is

standardized, formal, and aligned with regulatory objectives. The near-total absence of bottom-up signage underscores the highly controlled nature of the maritime communicative space, positioning the ship as an environment where linguistic expression is tied to institutional governance rather than individual agency.

Language choice further reinforces this regulatory structure. As synthesized in the analysis of Language Hierarchy, Indonesian consistently occupies the primary position. This is particularly evident in signs governing behavior and enforcement, such as "Dilarang Merokok" (No Smoking) and "Pastikan Tiket Sesuai Identitas" (Ensure tickets match identity). English appears selectively and occupies a secondary position, primarily in technical labels and international safety terminology like "Muster Station" and "Exit." This hierarchical bilingual arrangement reflects a functional division: Indonesian indexes state authority and national legitimacy, while English operates as an auxiliary resource for global accessibility.

Drawing on Landry and Bourhis's (1997) framework, the study confirms that the LL aboard PELNI vessels performs dual functions. Informationally, signage guides navigation and facilitates safety procedures. Symbolically, the consistent prioritization of Indonesian and strategic placement of signs construct the ship as a governed space where language materializes state presence. Consequently, this study illustrates how linguistic landscape analysis can illuminate the role of language in governing movement and risk in highly regulated public spaces. Overall, the findings reinforce the value of LL as a framework for examining how language, space, and power intersect, providing a clear trace from empirical data to theoretical synthesis.

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