



# A Typology of Humor in Business Signage in Padang City: A Linguistic Landscape Approach

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2026-03-07 Revised: 2026-04-13 Published: 2026-05-02	This study investigates the typology of Indonesian humor represented on business signboards and banners in Padang City through a linguistic landscape perspective. The research applies Humor Theory, particularly Raskin's Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (1984), and Kress and Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory (2006) to examine both linguistic and non-linguistic elements of humor. A qualitative-descriptive method was employed to enable an in-depth analysis of the data. Data were collected through field observation by photographing humorous signboards and banners across business areas in Padang City. Total sampling was applied, and Mahsun's MPE framework was used for data analysis. The findings reveal that humor is expressed through both linguistic and visual elements. Linguistically, humor appears in three units: words, phrases, and sentences, with sentences being the most dominant form, accounting for 63.63% on signboards and 60.71% on banners. Non-linguistically, humor is represented through visual features such as text color, background color, and spatial placement. Humor most frequently appears in black text on a white background on signboards and in white text on a yellow background on banners. In terms of layout, humorous elements are commonly positioned at the bottom of signboards and at the center of banners. These findings highlight how humor in business signage is constructed through a combination of linguistic structures and visual design within the linguistic landscape.
<b>Keywords:</b> <i>Signboards;</i> <i>Banners;</i> <i>Humor;</i> <i>Linguistic Landscape;</i> <i>Visual Semiotics.</i>	

Artikel Info	Abstrak
<b>Sejarah Artikel</b> Diterima: 2026-03-07 Direvisi: 2026-04-13 Dipublikasi: 2026-05-02	Penelitian ini mengkaji tipologi humor bahasa Indonesia yang direpresentasikan pada papan nama dan spanduk bisnis di Kota Padang melalui perspektif lanskap linguistik. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Humor, khususnya Semantic-Script Theory of Humor oleh Raskin (1984), serta Visual Grammar Theory oleh Kress dan Leeuwen (2006) untuk menganalisis unsur humor baik secara linguistik maupun non-linguistik. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif untuk mendukung analisis data secara mendalam. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi lapangan dengan mendokumentasikan papan nama dan spanduk yang mengandung humor di berbagai kawasan bisnis di Kota Padang. Teknik total sampling digunakan, dan analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan kerangka MPE dari Mahsun. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa humor direpresentasikan melalui unsur linguistik dan visual. Secara linguistik, humor muncul dalam tiga bentuk, yaitu kata, frasa, dan kalimat, dengan kalimat sebagai bentuk yang paling dominan, yaitu sebesar 63,63% pada papan nama dan 60,71% pada spanduk. Secara non-linguistik, humor direpresentasikan melalui fitur visual seperti warna teks, warna latar, dan tata letak. Humor paling sering muncul dalam teks berwarna hitam dengan latar putih pada papan nama, serta teks berwarna putih dengan latar kuning pada spanduk. Dari segi tata letak, unsur humor umumnya ditempatkan di bagian bawah pada papan nama dan di bagian tengah pada spanduk. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa humor dalam media tanda bisnis dibangun melalui kombinasi struktur linguistik dan desain visual dalam lanskap linguistik.
<b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Papan Nama;</i> <i>Spanduk;</i> <i>Humor;</i> <i>Lanskap Linguistik;</i> <i>Semiotika Visual.</i>	

## I. INTRODUCTION

Humans are often described as *homo ludens* (playing creatures) who have the ability to play with various aspects of life, including language as a medium of communication (Wijana, 2004). One manifestation of such language play is humor. Humor, derived from the Latin word *humor* meaning "fluid," refers to amusing

communication that generates positive emotions and cognitive responses (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). According to Raskin (1984), humor can be categorized into verbal and non-verbal forms. Verbal humor involves linguistic elements such as words, phrases, and sentences, while non-verbal humor relates to meanings conveyed beyond textual expression.

Humor can be expressed in various forms, including literary works, visual media, and everyday language use. In contemporary urban settings, humorous expressions are also found in public spaces. The study of language displayed in such spaces is known as Linguistic Landscape (LL), a relatively recent branch of sociolinguistics that examines the relationship between language and society as manifested in public signage (Abramova, 2016; Wardhaugh, 2006). Landry and Bourhis (1997), who first introduced the concept of Linguistic Landscape, define it as the visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs within a given territory. They further argue that LL serves both informational and symbolic functions, reflecting not only practical communication but also social identity and cultural meaning.

In this sense, LL does not merely capture written language in public spaces, but also reveals how language is constructed, negotiated, and interpreted within a social context. Gorter (2018) expands this view by emphasizing that LL encompasses various forms of written signs, such as advertising boards, shop signs, and public notices, which together shape the linguistic environment of a particular area. Within this framework, business signage can be understood as part of a bottom-up linguistic landscape, where private actors, such as business owners, have the freedom to creatively design their messages (Gorter, 2006). In the present study, this business signage is represented in two forms, namely signboards and banners, through which humorous messages are displayed and interpreted in public space.

As the capital city of West Sumatra, Padang provides a dynamic urban setting characterized by linguistic diversity and active commercial activity. Within this environment, business owners often employ language creatively, including humor, to construct engaging and memorable messages on signboards and banners. This practice reflects the interplay between linguistic and visual elements in public signage, where meaning is produced not only through textual structures but also through visual design. In commercial areas, therefore, the linguistic landscape becomes business-oriented, as signs are not only used to convey information but also to attract attention and shape consumer engagement.

From a linguistic landscape perspective, humor in business signage can be analyzed through both linguistic and non-linguistic

elements, revealing how meaning is constructed and interpreted in public spaces. One example of this phenomenon can be found on a signboard displaying the sentence "*Di sini serba ada, kecuali janji manis mu!*" (Everything is here except your sweet promises).



**Figure 1.** LL in the Business Area on Jalan Dr. Moh. Hatta

The humorous effect arises from the incongruity between the literal meaning of the statement and the unexpected addition of an abstract concept, creating a playful and engaging message. This illustrates how humor is constructed through linguistic forms and supported by contextual interpretation. In addition to its linguistic construction, the humorous effect is also reinforced by visual elements such as color combination and spatial arrangement, which enhance the visibility and attractiveness of the message.

This phenomenon also resonates with Saussure's (1916) view that language works like a chess game, in which each element gains value through its relation to other elements in the system. In this sense, the humorous message on the signboard is not accidental, but strategically arranged through language choice and structural combination to produce surprise, amusement, and social meaning.

Previous studies on linguistic landscape have extensively explored issues such as multilingualism, identity, and language policy in public spaces. However, studies focusing specifically on humor in business signage, particularly in the Indonesian context, remain limited. Moreover, typological analyses of humor that integrate both linguistic and visual elements have not been widely examined. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing a systematic analysis of the typology of humor in business signboards and banners in Padang City from a linguistic landscape perspective.

## II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate the typology of humor in business signboards and banners in Padang City from a linguistic landscape perspective. This approach was chosen to allow an in-depth analysis of both linguistic and non-linguistic elements of humor in public signage.

The data consisted of business signboards and banners containing humorous expressions in Indonesian, collected from several main business areas in Padang City. These locations included major streets such as Jalan Dr. Moh. Hatta (Pauh Sub-district), Jalan Rasuna Said (Padang Barat Sub-district), Jalan Andalas (Padang Timur Sub-district), Jalan Ujung Gurun (Padang Barat Sub-district), Jalan Dobi (Padang Barat Sub-district), Jalan Raya Veteran (Padang Barat Sub-district), Jalan Raya Indarung (Lubuk Kilangan Sub-district), Jalan Perintis Kemerdekaan (Padang Timur Sub-district), Jalan Raya Lubuk Begalung (Lubuk Begalung Sub-district), Jalan Sisingamangaraja (Padang Timur Sub-District), Jalan Bundo Kanduang (Padang Barat Sub-district), and Jalan Prof. Dr. Hamka (Padang Utara Sub-district). Total sampling was applied to include all relevant data encountered during the field observation. In total, 14 signboards and 14 banners were selected as the data for analysis.

Data were collected through direct observation by walking through the selected areas and photographing signboards and banners displaying humorous expressions. Only signs located outside business premises and containing Indonesian-language humor were included. All images were captured using a smartphone camera to ensure sufficient clarity for analysis. The data collection process was conducted over a six-month period from July to December 2024.

In analyzing the data, this study employed Mahsun's Metode Padan Ekstralingual (MPE) to examine the relationship between linguistic forms and their contextual meanings. The analysis focused on identifying linguistic units of humor, including words, phrases, and sentences. In addition, non-linguistic elements such as color, background, and spatial arrangement were analyzed using Kress and Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Theory (2006). Furthermore, Raskin's Semantic-Script Theory of Humor (1984) was applied to interpret the humorous effects based on incongruity. An eclectic approach was adopted to integrate these theoretical

frameworks in explaining how humor is constructed in business signage.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Result

The findings reveal that humor in business signage is constructed through both linguistic and non-linguistic elements. These elements work together to create meaningful and engaging messages within the linguistic landscape.

Linguistically, humor is realized in three units: words, phrases, and sentences. The distribution of these linguistic units is presented in Table 1. It should be noted that the frequency is calculated based on the total number of humorous units identified, rather than the number of signboards or banners, since a single sign may contain multiple elements.

**Table 1.** The Frequency of Linguistic Units in the Business Signboards and Banners

Linguistic Unit	Frequency	
	Signboards	Banners
Sentence	14 (63.63%)	17 (60.71%)
Phrase	7 (31.82%)	10 (35.71%)
Word	1 (4.55%)	1 (3.58%)

The typology of humor found in business signboards and banners demonstrates distinct patterns across different linguistic units. In sentence-based humor, business owners tend to use declarative sentences that incorporate figurative language such as metaphor, satire, irony, and hyperbole, as well as viral or trendy expressions. In more complex structures, humor is often created through the omission of conjunctions and question words, resulting in unconventional yet engaging constructions. On banners, sentence-based humor also frequently appears in imperative forms, particularly in expressions of encouragement or prohibition, accompanied by the omission of subjects and conjunctions.

In phrase-based humor, signboards commonly utilize phonological play and personification, often combined with academic or professional lexical choices presented in the form of noun phrases. Meanwhile, banners tend to employ a wider range of figurative language, including metaphor, personification, and hyperbole. These phrases are frequently structured as *pantun* lines or expressed through culturally

relevant and viral language, enhancing their appeal to the audience.

At the word level, humor is typically realized through content words. On signboards, this often involves the use of viral language, while on banners, humor is also constructed through abbreviations that create unexpected meanings. These patterns indicate that humor in business signage is strategically developed through creative linguistic manipulation and adaptation to contemporary language trends.

In terms of humor types, two main categories are identified: occasional humor and permanent humor. Occasional humor appears in temporary expressions such as slogans, *pantun*, and promotional announcements that are used for a limited time. In contrast, permanent humor is embedded in more stable elements such as business names, brand names, and taglines.

Non-linguistically, humor is represented through visual elements such as color, background, and layout. Signboards predominantly use black text on a white background, whereas banners tend to use white text on a yellow background. In terms of spatial arrangement, humorous elements are commonly placed at the bottom of signboards and at the center of banners, indicating a strategic design choice.

These findings indicate that humor in business signage is systematically constructed through the interaction between linguistic structures and visual design. This combination highlights the multimodal nature of humor within the linguistic landscape. It also demonstrates how both textual and visual elements contribute to the effectiveness of humorous communication.

## B. Discussion

### 1. Linguistic Analysis of Humor on Business Signboards and Banners

#### a) Sentence-Based Humor on Business Signboards and Banners

The analysis indicates that sentence-based humor in business signboards and banners is manifested through three structural forms, namely simple, compound, and complex sentences. Among these, simple sentences appear most frequently, followed by compound and complex constructions. Each structure contributes differently to the

creation of humor, particularly through the use of figurative language, syntactic reduction, and shifts in contextual meaning. These elements collectively reflect how humor is strategically designed within the linguistic landscape (Raskin, 1984).

In business signboards, simple sentences are predominantly utilized to produce humorous effects through semantic deviation and figurative expressions. For instance, the expression *Di sini serba ada, kecuali jodohmu* introduces an unexpected and abstract element into a typical promotional statement. This humorous expression may also be understood as occasional humor, as it appears specifically in the context of a grand opening and is therefore tied to a particular promotional moment.



Figure 2. LL in the Business Area on Jalan Rasuna Said

The inclusion of *kecuali jodohmu* disrupts the logical expectation of the sentence and creates a humorous contrast between commercial offerings and personal or emotional domains. This type of humor aligns with the concept of incongruity, where meaning arises from the clash between expected and actual interpretations (Raskin, 1984). Another humorous expression found on a different signboard in a photography business is *Foto itu perlu sampai hari kiamat*, which illustrates the use of hyperbole. This expression may be regarded as permanent humor because it has been maintained as the business owner's tagline and is still used today. Hyperbole is an extreme or unrealistic claim that is employed to intensify the message while simultaneously producing amusement (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

Humor in compound sentences is generally constructed through structural simplification and the blending of different discourse domains. The omission of conjunctions, combined with the incorporation of contemporary or culturally familiar expressions, creates a more informal and playful tone. Humor in compound sentences is generally constructed through structural simplification and the blending of different discourse domains.

Humor in compound sentences is generally constructed through structural simplification and the blending of different discourse domains. One example found on a culinary business signboard is *Pilihan presiden 2024 boleh labil, pilihan di saat lapar coblos dadar ababil*, where political discourse is recontextualized into a commercial and culinary setting. This expression is classified as occasional humor because it was used only temporarily during the 2024 presidential election and no longer appears today. This expression may be regarded as occasional humor because it appeared only during the presidential election period and is no longer used after the event ended.

In this expression, an adversative conjunction such as *tapi* (but) would normally be expected to connect the two clauses. However, the conjunction is deliberately omitted, making the utterance sound more informal, spontaneous, and closer to everyday spoken interaction. This stylistic choice enhances the sense of familiarity between the seller and potential buyers. The expression also becomes easily recognizable to the public because it emerged during the presidential election period, when political vocabulary and campaign-related discourse were highly familiar in everyday communication.

At the same time, the unexpected combination of political discourse and culinary promotion generates humor by shifting the semantic frame of the message from electoral choice to food preference. Additionally, phonological features such as rhyme contribute to the aesthetic and mnemonic appeal of the

expression, reinforcing its humorous effect.

Similarly, complex sentences exhibit patterns of linguistic manipulation that contribute to humor creation. One example found on a culinary business signboard located in a food area near a university, with students as its primary target audience, is *Lapar menyambar dadar tak gentar*. This expression may be regarded as permanent humor because it is consistently used by the owner as a business tagline.

This sentence demonstrates how metaphorical language and sound patterns are employed to reshape meaning. Words typically associated with dramatic or intense situations are transferred into an everyday commercial context, resulting in a noticeable semantic shift. In this case, the humorous effect is strengthened by the situational context, as the expression is designed for a student-oriented culinary environment in which playful, catchy, and informal language is likely to attract attention. This recontextualization produces humor by creating a contrast between the seriousness of the expression and the simplicity of the product being promoted. Such patterns highlight how humor emerges from the reinterpretation of familiar linguistic elements in unexpected settings (Shorakhmetov, 2024).

In contrast, sentence-based humor on business banners tends to emphasize simplicity and directness. An example found on a laundry business banner is *Nyuci itu berat! Di laundry aja di sini!* These two sentences may be regarded as occasional humor, as they functioned only as a temporary slogan and are no longer in use today. These expressions may be regarded as permanent humor because it is consistently used by the owner as a business slogan. In this expression, simple sentences are employed in persuasive form and are characterized by informal language as well as subject omission. The omitted subject is *kamu* (you), which is implicitly understood from the communicative context.

Linguistically, this omission creates a more concise and conversational tone, resembling everyday spoken interaction. Such a strategy makes the message feel more personal and direct, thereby reducing social distance between the advertiser and potential customers. The phrase presents a routine domestic activity as something burdensome, which is then immediately followed by a practical solution.



**Figure 3.** LL in the Business Area on Jalan Sisingamangaraja

The humorous effect lies in the dramatization of an everyday experience combined with a conversational tone that resonates with the audience. Washing clothes, which is normally perceived as an ordinary domestic activity, is exaggerated as something burdensome and demanding. This contrast between the exaggerated depiction and the ordinary service being advertised enhances the message's relatability as well as its persuasive appeal.

Moreover, compound and complex constructions in banners also demonstrate a tendency toward structural reduction and semantic play. One example found on a culinary business banner is *Pisangnya asli, lumpurnya enggak*. This utterance can be considered permanent humor because the owner has adopted it as a tagline and still uses it today. This statement relies on emphasizing obvious information, creating humor through unnecessary contrast, and absurdity. From a linguistic perspective, this reflects the use of truism, where humor emerges not from new information but from the way it is presented (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).

Similarly, another expression found on a laundry business banner is

*Budayakan malas mencuci karena mencuci adalah tugas kami*. As a temporary slogan, this utterance reflects occasional humor and is no longer found today. The humor is created by juxtaposing a positive social value, represented by the word *budayakan*, with an undesirable behavior, namely laziness in washing clothes. This contradiction generates a strong sense of incongruity that attracts attention and enhances the memorability of the message (Raskin, 1984).

#### b) Phrase-Based Humor on Business Signboards and Banners

The analysis shows that phrase-based humor in business signboards is primarily constructed through phonological play and personification. These patterns demonstrate how humor is created by manipulating sound structures and assigning human-like attributes to non-human entities, which aligns with the concept of incongruity in humor theory (Raskin, 1984).

One example of phonological play found on a culinary business signboard is *Cemilan Cepuluh*, where humor is created through deliberate sound alteration. This phrase is considered permanent because the owner uses it as the fixed business name. The expression *cemilan* functions as a pun on *sembilan* ("nine"), especially because it is followed by *cepuluh*, which is itself a playful distortion of *sepuluh* ("ten") in Indonesian.

This pairing creates a humorous numerical association while imitating child-like pronunciation, resulting in a playful and amusing effect. Although the expressions are phonetically distorted, they remain recognizable, allowing customers to interpret their intended meaning while simultaneously experiencing humor. This type of humor emerges from the contrast between standard linguistic forms and their modified versions, resulting in a form of linguistic deviation that attracts attention.

In addition, personification is commonly used to construct humor in signboards. One example is found in

references to *telur gulung*, a popular Indonesian snack made from beaten egg that is cooked and rolled around a thin wooden skewer. Expressions such as *Dr. Telur Gulung, S.Tg*, and *Spesialis Penyakit Lapar* demonstrate how academic and medical attributes are assigned to food products. They are classified as permanent humor since they function as business names and taglines.

These phrases create humor by placing institutional and professional terminology within a commercial food context. The use of titles such as *Dr.* and *Spesialis* generates an incongruous association, as such qualifications do not exist in culinary practice. Nevertheless, this strategy serves to emphasize product quality while simultaneously producing a humorous effect through semantic mismatch (Fielden-Burns & Piquer-Pfritz, 2022).



Figure 4. LL in the Business Area on Jalan Dr. Moh. Hatta

On business banners, phrase-based humor is constructed through a wider range of strategies, including figurative language, cultural references, and viral expressions. One prominent pattern is the use of metaphor and hyperbole, as seen in expressions such as *Sambal Thor* and *Dewanya sambal pethir*. These two phrases can be categorized as permanent humor because they function as product names and taglines.

These phrases draw on popular culture and mythological references to exaggerate the spiciness of the product. The humorous effect emerges from the unexpected association between culinary items and powerful or divine entities, creating a strong sense of incongruity.



Figure 5. LL in the Business Area on Jalan Prof. Dr. Hamka

Another pattern found in business banners is the use of *pantun*-like structures combined with viral language. Expressions such as *Ubur-ubur ikan lele, di sini ada angkringan, Le rely on rhythmic patterns and familiar cultural formulas to engage audiences. It is treated as occasional humor because its use was limited to a particular period, and it is no longer visible today. The humor in this case is not derived from semantic depth but from absurdity, repetition, and shared cultural knowledge. This demonstrates how humor in the linguistic landscape is shaped not only by language structure but also by social trends and collective familiarity.*

### c) Word-Based Humor on Business Signboards and Banners

The findings indicate that word-based humor is the least frequent linguistic unit found in business signboards and banners, with only one instance identified in each medium. This suggests that humor is more effectively constructed through larger linguistic structures, while single-word expressions play a more limited role. The humorous words identified in this study fall under the category of content words, which carry lexical meaning and conceptual significance (Fromkin et al., 2009).

On business signboards, humor may also be realized through the use of viral or trending lexical items. One example found on a cosmetic business signboard is the promotional statement *Duit bisa dicari, tapi kesempatan glowing cuma sekali! Slebew!* The word *slebew*

regarded as occasional humor because It operates as a short-lived slogan that eventually disappears.

In this context, the word *slebew* functions as an expressive and stylistic addition to the preceding message. From its popular cultural background, the term was first widely associated with Jeje from the SCBD community and later gained broader circulation during the Citayam Fashion Week phenomenon before spreading across social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.

Reportedly, the term also carries negative connotations because it has been associated with pornographic or sexual content (Tya, 2022). Its insertion into a cosmetic promotional text, therefore, creates humor through incongruity, as a slang expression with informal and culturally loaded associations is placed within a commercial message about beauty and self-care. This unexpected combination produces a playful tone while also making the message appear more contemporary and attention-grabbing (Raskin, 1984).

On business banners, word-based humor is commonly constructed through the use of abbreviations or recontextualized lexical items. An example found on a laundry service banner is the word *Promag*. This word reflects occasional humor because its use was temporary and it has since disappeared. In its conventional use, *Promag* is widely recognized as the name of a pharmaceutical product used to treat digestive disorders.



**Figure 6.** LL in the Business Area on Jalan Dr. Moh. Hatta

However, in the context of a laundry service banner, the word is reinterpreted as an abbreviation of *promo mahasiswa mager*. The humor emerges from the shift in meaning, where a well-known brand name is repurposed to convey a completely different message. This semantic transformation creates incongruity between the expected interpretation and the intended meaning, resulting in a humorous effect.

## 2. Non-Linguistic Analysis of Humor on Business Signboards and Banners

### a) Color Choices and Their Role in Conveying Humor

In marketing strategy, attention to the colors applied to products, business names, signboards, and banners is essential because color can influence customers' moods and perceptions at a psychological level. Victor Adir, as cited in Suriadi et al. (2022), explains that colors carry widely recognized symbolic meanings in Western contexts. Black is associated with power, sophistication, mystery, and death. White represents hope, simplicity, cleanliness, goodness, and purity. Red conveys love, passion, danger, interest, and energy. Yellow symbolizes intellect, friendliness, warmth, caution, and cowardice. Blue reflects peace, sincerity, confidence, integrity, and tranquility. Grey represents authority, maturity, security, and stability. Green symbolizes life, growth, nature, money, and freshness. Orange indicates innovation, creativity, thinking, and ideas. Purple illustrates royalty, luxury, wisdom, and dignity. In the context of business signboards and banners, these psychological associations contribute not only to the aesthetic appeal of the display but also to the effectiveness of message delivery.

The distribution of color usage on signboards and banners is shown in Tables 2 and 3. The frequency count is based on the occurrence of colors identified in the data. This is because a single signboard or banner may employ more than one color combination.

**Table 2.** Color Choices on Signboards and Their Frequency

Text	Frequency	Background	Frequency
Black	13 (65 %)	White	10 (25%)
White	3 (15%)	Yellow	4 (18.75%)
Yellow	2 (10%)	Brown	1 (18.75%)
Red	2 (10%)	Red	1 (18.75%)
-	-	Green	1 (12.5%)
-	-	Pink	1 (6.25%)

**Table 3.** Color Choices on Banners and Their Frequency

Text	Frequency	Background	Frequency
White	9 (40.91%)	Yellow	4 (25%)
Red	5 (22.73%)	White	3 (18.75%)
Black	4 (18.18%)	Red	3 (18.75%)
Yellow	2 (9.10%)	Blue	3 (18.75%)
Blue	1 (4.54%)	Black	2 (12.5%)
Pink	1 (4.54%)	Green	1 (6.25%)

These findings indicate that color choice is not merely decorative but also functional in supporting the delivery of humorous messages. Neutral colors such as black and white tend to enhance clarity and readability, allowing humorous expressions to be easily noticed and understood. In contrast, brighter colors such as red and yellow are more effective in attracting attention and creating a lively visual impression. In humorous commercial signage, such combinations strengthen the entertaining tone of the message by making it more striking, engaging, and memorable for viewers. The practical application of these color combinations can be seen in Figure 7.



**Figure 7.** LL in the Business Area on Jalan Raya Indarung

As shown in Figure 7, the use of contrasting colors enhances text visibility and draws immediate attention to the humorous message. This visual strategy reinforces the humorous effect by making the message appear more

playful, noticeable, and emotionally engaging. Overall, these findings suggest that color functions as an essential non-linguistic element in the linguistic landscape because it strengthens both the visibility and the persuasive impact of humor in commercial signage.

#### b) Text Positions and Their Role in Conveying Humor

The findings show that the placement of humorous text on signboards and banners follows consistent visual patterns. Based on the framework of visual semiotics proposed by Kress and Leeuwen (2006), the position of text contributes to how meaning is structured and interpreted. The results indicate that humorous expressions are most frequently positioned in the bottom and center areas on both platforms.

It should be noted that the frequency of text positions is calculated based on the number of occurrences rather than the number of signboards or banners, as a single display may contain multiple placements. The distribution of text positions is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Text Positions on Signboards & Banners and Their Frequency

Text Position	Signboards	Banners
Bottom	10 (47.62%)	8 (32%)
Center	5 (23.81%)	7 (28%)
Top	3 (14.29%)	5 (20%)
Left	2 (9.52%)	3 (12%)
Right	1 (4.76%)	2 (8%)

On signboards, the bottom area is the most dominant position for humorous text, followed by the center. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), the bottom position typically conveys detailed and factual information. In this context, business owners use humor in the bottom section as a concise alternative to conventional promotional text, allowing them to deliver messages efficiently while maintaining visual balance.



**Figure 8.** LL in the Business Area on  
Jalan Dr. Moh. Hatta

As shown in Figure 8, the phrase *pemadam keroncongan* demonstrates metaphorical humor by associating food with the function of a firefighter. The expression suggests that the product is capable of “extinguishing” hunger, thereby creating a humorous effect through semantic incongruity. This metaphor elevates the perceived importance of the product by framing it as essential and problem-solving. The placement of this humorous text in the bottom section reinforces its role as concise yet meaningful information within the visual layout.

Meanwhile, on banners, humorous text is most frequently placed in the center area, which is considered the focal point of visual attention. This placement highlights the importance of humor as a key element intended to immediately attract viewers. The central position enhances visibility and ensures that the humorous message becomes the primary focus of the audience.

Other positions, such as top, left, and right, are used less frequently but still demonstrate specific communicative functions. Text placed at the top tends to convey general or thematic information, while the left position often presents familiar or culturally recognizable expressions. In contrast, the right position typically introduces new or attention-grabbing information. These variations indicate that business owners strategically arrange humorous text to maximize its communicative impact.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that text placement is not random but follows systematic visual principles. By positioning humor in strategic areas such as the bottom and center, business

owners are able to enhance both the visibility and effectiveness of humorous messages within the linguistic landscape.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

##### A. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the presence of Indonesian humor in business signboards and banners in Padang City reflects a systematic and creative use of language within the linguistic landscape. Humor is not merely incidental but is deliberately constructed through various linguistic configurations, namely words, phrases, and sentences, with sentence-level constructions playing a dominant role. This dominance suggests that more complex linguistic structures enable business owners to convey layered meanings and generate stronger humorous effects.

The study also reveals that humor operates in two distinct temporal dimensions. On the one hand, occasional humor emerges as a flexible and context-sensitive form that can be expressed through slogans, *pantun*, and announcement language. On the other hand, permanent humor is embedded in more stable elements of business identity, such as business names, brand names, and business taglines, indicating its role in shaping long-term communicative strategies.

Beyond linguistic realization, humor is further reinforced through visual configurations. The selection of color combinations and the strategic positioning of text contribute to the salience and interpretability of humorous messages. These findings underline that humor in business signage should be understood as a multimodal construct, where meaning is produced through the interplay of textual and visual elements rather than through language alone.

##### B. Suggestion

In light of these findings, future research is encouraged to extend the investigation of humor within the linguistic landscape to a wider range of geographical and socio-cultural contexts. Comparative studies across different cities or regions may reveal variations in humor strategies and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how humor functions in public communication.

Furthermore, subsequent studies may consider exploring additional forms of signage, including digital displays, indoor

commercial spaces, and emerging media platforms, which are increasingly shaping contemporary linguistic landscapes. Such expansion would allow researchers to capture the evolving nature of humor in both traditional and modern environments.

It is also recommended that future researchers integrate diverse analytical frameworks that combine linguistic, semiotic, and visual perspectives in a more nuanced manner. By doing so, research on humor in linguistic landscapes can move beyond descriptive accounts and contribute to a deeper theoretical understanding of how humor is constructed, interpreted, and adapted across different communicative settings.

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