

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking certain language at home is a form of language policy. Using Indonesian at school is another form of language policy. When an employer wants his/her subordinates to use certain language at work, it is also a form of language policy. Inevitably, language policy exists in different domains of people's life. According to Spolsky (2009), language policy is a choice made by an individual or speech community with regard to language use. Oftentimes, this choice is determined and intervened by an individual or an entity outside a speech community. However, that does not mean that members of speech community cannot interfere with the community's choice. An inseparable part of this choice is the notion of domain, for every domain has its own policy concerning the language choice. In another definition, Baldauf (2006 cited in Alburry, 2012) explains that language policy is a set of political tools (such as legislation, rules, ideas, and practices). Language policy has three essential components, and they interrelate with one another: practice, belief, and management (Spolsky, 2007).

Translation is an integral part of language policy. Translation can foster the use of language within a specific domain with regard to an imposed language policy. For instance, in all countries that belong to European Union, all legal and other important documents must be translated in 23 official languages of European Union countries belong because there is a language policy there ensuring all EU

citizens can access all EU documents in their respective language (Meylaerts, 2011). The presence of translation in certain domains offers a choice of more than one language for society to choose. Translation can be defined as a practice of transmitting meaning of a text from one language to another one without changing the source text's content (G. Jäger, 1975 cited in Moentaha, 2006). Translation can be further divided into three types, namely intralingual translation, interlingual translation, and intersemiotic translation (Jakobson cited in Munday, 2009). Intralingual translation deals with the transfer of verbal signs within the same language, while interlingual translation is the transfer of verbal signs into different language. Different from the previous two, intersemiotic translation is transferring a verbal sign into non-verbal signs.

In Indonesia, an example of government's language policy is the mandatory use of Indonesian in public signs, direction, public facility, banner, and other information by means of public service regulated in law of Republic of Indonesia no.24 of 2009 article 38 chapter 1 and 2. The same law also mentions that local language(s) and foreign language(s) can be used as complement to Indonesian if needed. The use of local and foreign language(s) is an obvious manifestation of translation in the public domain.

According to the law mentioned above, it is initially assumed that all information facilities are written mainly in Indonesian; if there is additional local or foreign language(s) used, it is likely that it is only limited to a few public signs. This initial assumption is derived from a rationale that stakeholders involved in displaying those information facilities in public places certainly understand the

existing regulation. However, when the writer went to a shopping center in Surabaya one day at a time, the writer found a contradictory phenomenon. The public signs of the mall that the writer went to were mostly written in English without the companion of Indonesian. Considering this as an interesting phenomenon, the writer visited some other shopping malls in Surabaya to find out if similar phenomenon also occurs. The result of the field observation turned out to be the same as the writer's initial observation with the additional result that some public signs in several malls are only written in picture symbols.

Public signs serve as information facilities enabling visitors to find their way around and their chosen destinations without confusion. It is one of the information and communication facilities a building like shopping malls must provide according to law of the Republic of Indonesia no.28 of 2002 article 27 paragraph 4. In public places like shopping malls, public signs are undoubtedly useful for visitors. Moreover, in metropolitan city like Surabaya where there are approximately 26 shopping malls (Setyaningsih, 2013), providing efficient and effective public signs is a must for shopping malls due to the high number of visitors.

Wai (2004) mentioned that signs can increase the popularity of malls since they facilitate three contributing factors towards the popularity of shopping malls: location, access and visibility. Additionally, he contended that signs can become promotional instruments to construct an image. Signs are used to show information about something, such as a business or a road (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). Sign itself, based on Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary 8<sup>th</sup> edition, is a board, notice, etc that directs sb towards sth, gives a warning, advertises

business, etc. Wai (2004) added that signs can be classified into three types: advertising signs, the-way finding signs, and the facilities signs. In malls, as Setyaningsih (2013) found in her research, there are five common types of signs: text only, text and arrow, text and symbol, symbol and arrow, and text, arrow, and symbol. All of them serve informative function to visitors.

Considering that the majority of visitors are Indonesians or local Surabaya people, there is a question arises upon the matter of people's acceptance towards the abundance of public signs in several Surabaya malls written in English. Thus, the present study is intended to analyze visitors' acceptance towards the ideology offered by managers of shopping malls through translation practice in public signs in several malls in Surabaya. The analysis is conducted within the framework of translation ideology under Venutti's theory of domestication and foreignization and Spolsky's theory of language policy. The writer hypothesizes that prestige is the underlying catalyst of the visitors' acceptance towards English translation of directory signs in several malls in Surabaya and the imposed language policy within the domain of shopping malls. It can also be assumed that such translation strategy of signs in several malls in Surabaya might be accepted by the visitors because of dwindling pride in Indonesian.

In fact, there are several writers who have conducted studies vis-à-vis public signs, particularly in China. However, a few has discussed about translation practice in public signs in Indonesia, particularly regarding how public signs in malls hold a place in translation field. Setyaningsih (2013) conducted a research on public signs written in English in shopping malls in Surabaya. The analysis was drawn

from the combination of personal field observation and literary research. However, this study is different in terms of the theoretical frames, the samples of malls, and the method used. This study can be said as a further study of Setyaningsih's study as it constitutes an attempt to further investigate visitors' acceptance towards the use of English in many public signs in several shopping malls in Surabaya by asking their opinions through interview guided by predetermined semi-open questions. The survey is intended to shed a light on the society's acceptance towards English translation found in public signs in some Surabaya malls.

In China, the study of pairs of Chinese – English translation used in public signs displayed at tourism sites, roads, shopping malls, and many others, is quite plentiful. Ko (2010) found that there are three main strategies employed in translation of public signs for tourism in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, resulting in incorrectness of the translation. In a similar vein, Guo (2012) conducted a study on the translation errors of English translation of public signs in Changcun. Investigating slightly different types of errors in public signs, Li (2013) examined the pragmatic failures in bilingual public signs in Xi'an area. All three works converge in their analysis of translation errors in public signs in which the most frequent errors were due to literal translation. However, the three did not investigate people's acceptance as target readers towards the employed translation strategy. Thus, this study does not take into account translation errors in public signs or some proposed strategies, rather, it concerns with language policy aspect contributing to the selected translation practice of public signs in several malls in Surabaya.

## 1.2 Statement of the problems

Based on the background of the study, the major questions guide the present study:

- 1) What are the translation practices in public signs in shopping malls in Surabaya?
- 2) How is the visitors' acceptance towards the ideology residing in public sign translation in Surabaya malls?
- 3) How is the translation practice in public signs in shopping malls in Surabaya in comply with the government's language policy regarding public signs?

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

Given the research problems, the objectives of this study are as the followings:

- 1) To explain the translation practices in public signs in shopping malls in Surabaya.
- 2) To explain visitors' acceptance towards the ideology residing in public sign translation in Surabaya malls.
- 3) To explain how the translation practice in public signs in shopping malls in Surabaya is in comply with the government's language police regarding public signs.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The writer expects that this study can both contribute to the theory and practice of translation practice and language policy. From a theoretical perspective, it is hoped that this study can contribute to translation studies especially on public signs in malls with regard to language policy. So far, Setyaningsih's study is the only one in Indonesia discussing public signs within the frame of translation studies. This paucity of translation research on public signs can be enriched with the present study. Not to mention that there has not been a study where language policy and translation studies converge. For further significance in the future, the writer also expects that this study can be a reference for further research in the field of translation studies and language policy.

The practical contribution deals with the growing awareness of the importance of public signs translation. The language used for public signs in public areas like shopping malls reflects the position of national language and foreign language within a country. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to raise public awareness of the position of national language Indonesian, and to find out whether it still holds an important function in this country or it has been replaced by foreign language(s). This study can also provide inputs and recommendations to Balai Bahasa for further future policy or actions.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The present study collected different kinds of signs found in shopping malls in Surabaya. However, it did not cover all 26 malls in Surabaya, but only focused on seven shopping malls in the central area of Surabaya. The shopping malls located

in central Surabaya are TP 1, TP 2, TP 3, TP 4, Plaza Surabaya and Grand City Mall. Thus, this study only represents the selected sample of malls, and cannot represent all shopping malls in Surabaya. The study employed the use of interview to find out visitors' opinion about the translation practice of public signs and the enacted language policy of the use of English translation in the domain of shopping malls. In relation to language policy, although there are other important stakeholders involved in the selected domain such as authorities of the malls, the present study only focuses on two stakeholders, which are the government and the visitors of the malls. In other words, this study does not investigate the underlying reason of translation practice in public signs in the selected malls due to permission issue.

### **1.6. Definition and Key Terms**

**Language Policy** : Planned intervention to determine language choice of an individual or a speech community implemented by an individual or an entity outside speech community (Spolsky, 2009).

**Translation** : a practice of transmitting meaning of a text from one language to another one without changing the source text's content (Jäger, 1975 cited in Moentaha, 2006).

**Foreignization** : a translation strategy that retains linguistic and cultural differences of foreign text in target text, resulting in a sense of strangeness or otherness (Venutti, 1995).



**Public Signs** : a piece of paper, metal, etc. in a public place, with words or drawing on it that give people information, warn them not to do something, etc (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1997)

