



## The 'Face' of Indonesian Cosmetics: Investigating Language Choices in Local Brand Advertisement Boards and Consumers' Preferences

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### Abstract:

*English has been extensively chosen by multinational companies for the purpose of advertising cosmetics in expanding circle countries. However, studies focusing on the language choices made by Indonesian local cosmetic companies for their advertisement boards and the consumers' preferences regarding these choices are scanty. The goals of this study, thus, are double-layered. First, the choices of language in each element of the advertisement board copywriting- brand and product names, taglines, slogans, and product descriptions- were revealed. Second, the consumers' preferences regarding language choices on each of these elements were explored. The language choices were revealed by scrutinizing 98 collected local cosmetic advertisement boards using the types of language choice by da Silva (2017). Preferences were gathered using a survey adapted from Hornikx et al. (2010) and da Silva (2014) and were explored using thematic analysis. The findings show that English dominated all elements of copywriting in the local cosmetic advertisement boards- in brand and product names, taglines, slogans, and descriptions. The study, however, pointed out the gap between the domination of English and consumers' preferences. A significant number of people chose Bahasa Indonesia as the voice for these advertisements mainly in the aspect of slogans and brand names. The findings show that the choice of Bahasa Indonesia in brand names was more preferable as it projected the products' national identity in the global market and consumers' national pride. The same preference was also found in the product descriptions as most consumers deemed Bahasa Indonesia to promote better understandability. These findings suggest that Indonesian cosmetic companies' language choice policy for product advertisements needs to be revisited.*

**Keywords:** *language choice, local cosmetic advertisement boards, local identity, preferences, positive associations*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian cosmetic industry, the local brands of big and, especially, small to medium-scale companies have tremendously flourished in the past few years. As proof, in 2018 the number of small to medium-scale cosmetic companies has multiplied to over 25 percent compared to the previous year (Investor.id, 2018). This trend was maintained as in 2020 the establishment of a big number of new local cosmetic companies was recorded (Tempo, 2020). This shows that the cosmetic industry has become a major contributor to national economic growth. With these figures in mind, it is expected that cosmetic advertisements are extensively present in the landscapes in the forms of for example shop signs, posters, banners, and billboards.

Language choice for advertisement boards is a pivotal matter because it is a part contributing to the success or failure of the persuasion that the companies try to deliver (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008). The deliberation to choose which language(s)- national, local, foreign, or even a combination of languages- should become the 'voice' for their products and is often controlled by a subset of complex factors. On one hand, there is a question about readership that has to be considered (Rachmawati et al., 2016) i.e. to what extent the language chosen can be understood and can outreach as wide consumers as possible? On the other hand, there are still many other questions to be considered such as which language is the most congruent with the product (Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2018), and which one creates more positive symbols for the products (Kelly-Holmes, 2014). Krishna and Ahluwalia (2008) found that these company decisions are potentially asymmetrical in a way that certain language(s) are more effective for certain products or particular social contexts. These complexities are also inevitably faced by cosmetic companies.

Regarding cosmetic advertisements in the Indonesian context, at first glance, the use of English in advertisement boards is noticeably ubiquitous. For multinational cosmetic companies in Indonesia, using English exclusively in advertisements is a strategy based on a standardization approach (Hornikx et al., 2010); a policy of using one language to fit all nationalities. By relying on the status of English as the biggest lingua franca of today's world (Jenkins, 2015), English is seen as a universal tool to communicate products to consumers of many different nationalities. This strategy is considered as a more convenient policy due to its economic benefit; it significantly minimizes the costs for these companies. Lauder (2008) concludes that English is the most important foreign language in Indonesia. It is a language taught at schools, but not used as the language at official institutions nor for intra-language communication. These roles are dominantly addressed to the national language, Bahasa Indonesia; thus, it is safe to assume that in the Indonesian context, the use of Bahasa Indonesia in advertisements has a wider outreach for readership compared to English. It, therefore, becomes interesting that the domination of English seems to manifest in the advertisements of Indonesian local cosmetic products advertised in Indonesia. The possible reasons might relate to Landry and Bourhis's (1997) proposition that the choices of languages present in public spaces are not only to mark the demography of the users; it is also to construct symbols desired by them. Da Silva (2014) reaffirms that English used in advertisement billboards in Jakarta was to construct 'global', 'prestige', and 'positive' symbols for the products.

Using the framework of linguistic landscape, many have observed the compositions of languages in multilingual communities through the language choices presented on advertisement boards. These choices inform the positions and the roles of certain languages in the respective landscapes. Though many research has revealed the superiority of English in advertisement boards, the disclosures were done by gaining the major picture of the languages appearances in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs using descriptive statistics techniques (Khazanah & Kusumaningputri, 2021; Lee, 2019; Selvi, 2016; Vettorel, 2013). While advertisements are structured by categorically different elements such as brand names and body copy (Ahn & La Ferle, 2008), and each element is functionally categorized as primary and secondary text (Nikolaou, 2017), many research on language choice overlooks these categorizations. Additionally, many research aimed at explaining how business actors construct symbols profitable for

their businesses through language choices (Khazanah et al., 2021; Purwanto & Filia, 2020; Shang & Zhao, 2017; Yan, 2019), yet, the studies exploring consumers' acceptance on the languages chosen for the cosmetic advertisements are scanty. To fill this void, the current study, therefore, scrutinized the language choices present in each element of the Indonesian local cosmetic advertisement boards and explored the consumers' preferences on such choices.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Printed advertisement and its generic structure**

An advertisement is generally used to inform and persuade (Suphaborwornrat & Punksirikul, 2022). It is a medium used by producers to tell information about their products in an effort to make the consumers buy the goods or services. Thus, advertising plays a critical role in inducing and leveraging consumption. There are different channels used to convey a 'message' in an advertisement, and each channel, arguably, brings forth different language styles. Advertisements can be broadcasted through radio or using printed media such as magazines, flyers, billboards, and shop signs. While radio broadcastings employ only audio mode, printed advertisements cooperate in different modes- textual and visual- at once.

Both language constructions and language systems are utilized to convey messages as well as to make them persuasive to potential consumers (Al-Subhi, 2022; Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001; Harris, 1989). Thus, each textual element in an advertisement is constructed and structured in such ways that can attain the persuasive effect optimally. Albrighton (2010) explains that in the copywriting art of printed advertisements, no matter how diverse the outlooks of the advertisements are, there are certain elements that are persistently employed by the copywriters. These elements are headlines or slogans and taglines. The headlines or slogans and taglines are both persuasive elements intended to grab the attention of the readers (Albrighton, 2010; Iswati & Widodo, 2020). For both elements, usually, the shorter the better. However, they are both functionally different as the first is associated with the companies' visions, but the latter's association is with particular brands or services (Albrighton, 2010; Ilhamsyah & Herlina, 2019). Riyantono and Setyarini (2012) identify other categories of the textual elements of printed advertisements; those are text body which 'provides descriptive information about the products or the service, and the name of the company or the products.

Each element in the board does not have an equal force of persuasion. Nikolaou (2017) finds that in shop boards, the texts are categorically either symbolic or informational. He clarifies that shop names are primary texts in which shop owners are making symbolic associations for the shops, and texts containing the shop descriptions (e.g. place, opening hours, and product information) are informational. Such categories, we argue, exist in advertisement boards. Slogans and taglines are used by the company to establish the theme and set the tone for the contents (Albrighton, 2010), thus they are used to construct significant symbols for the products or the companies. Instead of creating the symbols, the text body (Nissa & Riyantono, 2012) is more for informational purposes as wider readability is more accounted.

### **2.2 Language Choices and printed cosmetic advertisements.**

Indonesia is home to many multilingual communities. Zein (2018) summarizes that within Indonesian linguistic ecology, there are over 700 indigenous languages with Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese, Batak, and Buginese formally included in schools' curricula, Bahasa Indonesia as the national language with its 'superior' status in a political, economic, and social setting, and English as the most important foreign language due to its global significance. As the most important additional language in the country, English is integrated into the curricula of secondary school to higher education. Perceptions in favor of the superiority of English in this country are common such as graduates who are better at English skills for communication are paid higher.

Within a multilingual community in Indonesia, members have a range of options of languages to assign for different domains or different situations. Regarding the forms, da Silva (cited in da Silva, 2017) made categorizations of the types of language choices present on the commercial signs in the linguistic

landscape of Jakarta; they are: (1) monolingual- signs which consist of one language i.e. English or Indonesian only; (2) signs which consist of Indonesian-English or English-Indonesian translations; and (3) bilingualized- that is signs that contain English borrowing, code-mixing, code-switching, and English idiosyncrasies.

The linguistic landscape has long testified to the contestations and negotiations of languages found in public signs on multilingual grounds. The degree of salience and visibility of languages chosen to be present on the signs mark their social and economic value among the community members. Given its status as a global lingua franca, English has contacts with other operating languages in many different nations across the globe; making it what Friedrich (2002) calls a viable choice in many environments. Many LL studies of shop names and advertisement boards have testified to its domination (Huebner, 2006; Lee, 2019; Pumanto & Ardhian, 2020; Sutthinaraphan, 2019).

With regard to language choices present in printed cosmetic advertisements, some reports have been recorded. In the case of cosmetic advertisement boards in expanding circle countries, LL studies have recorded English dominations. Lee (2019) reported that no language beat the English domination in advertisement boards located in two shopping centers in South Korea; Myeongdong and Insadong. English appeared monolingually and as a counterpart of the Korean language or other languages such as Mandarin Chinese in both bilingual and multilingual cosmetic advertisement boards. The domination was also reflected through the writing; English was frequently written in bigger fonts. Da Silva (2014) found that among the advertisement billboards located in Jakarta and Greater Jakarta, beauty and body appearances billboards were fully loaded with English. Both of the studies did not, however, consider the categorization of local versus international products as one variable that potentially influences language choices in the LL.

### **2.3 Local versus English: Preferences**

Language choice is a strategy of persuasion (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008); thus, it becomes a strategy used by copywriters to attract potential consumers. Various research has explored the motives for choosing certain codes. English is used by copywriters to create certain effects on readers' minds and for some features, they deem positive for copywriting. Sutthinaraphan (2019) disclosed that creating an international and advanced image for the products was a target achieved via presenting English on the boards. Using English as a foreign language was also seen as a strategy for an attention grabber. Feature-wise, English usually has shorter forms that facilitate memorization. Similar associations were disclosed by other research where English was used to project modernization (Backhaus, 2007; Yan, 2019), and up-to-datedness (Khazanah et al., 2021).

As English has risen as the dominant language in business, one of the questions remains is how effective English is regarding its effect on consumers (Hornikx et al., 2010). A psycholinguistic study on the effects of the use of English in a non-English advertising context-Germany- was done by Thoma (2013). By using eye-tracking technology, the hypothesized effects of choices between English and Germany in printed advertisements on Germans readers are tested. This study resulted in confirmation of the attention advantage effect when English is shown; yet, the choice of German in printed advertisements promotes language comprehension. It means that the strategy of using English as the attention grabber is proven in this study. A study by da Silva (2014) scrutinized the presence of English in billboard advertisements and explored people's preference between Indonesian and English slogans. Generally, people chose English over Bahasa Indonesia for most slogans shown to them. They claimed that English has better marketability, attractiveness, and simplicity and is more convincing.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This current study employs a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2014). There are several elements that become the focus of this study; type of language, language prevalence from the frequency of appearance

in the advertisement board, and also cosmetic users' preference for the language used in the advertisement billboards. The integration of the quantitative and qualitative data occurred at some stages. The profile of the language choices was made clear through the calculation results of the language typology analysis, and the preferences were elicited through the combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions on the survey. The data of the study were 98 advertisement boards of Indonesian local cosmetics which were showcased in two Indonesian big cities, Jakarta and Malang. They were both shown on the boards found on the main roads and displayed in the shop booths in big malls in Jakarta (Kasablanka Mall, Plaza Indonesia Mall, Plaza Blok M Mall, Taman Anggrek Mall, Grand Indonesia Mall) and in Malang (Olympic Garden Mall, Malang town Square, Ramayana mall). These data were taken by two data collection volunteers who were original residents of the cities as they have knowledge of the linguistic landscape of the advertisement boards. The data were taken in two months, September-October 2022 using smartphone cameras for easy uses yet with good results. The local cosmetic boards under investigation are as follows:

Table 1. Name of Indonesian local cosmetic brands

| No  | Indonesian local cosmetic brands |
|-----|----------------------------------|
| 1.  | By Lizzie Parra (BLP) Beauty     |
| 2.  | Mineral Botanica                 |
| 3.  | Emina Cosmetics                  |
| 4.  | Make Over                        |
| 5.  | La Tulipe                        |
| 6.  | Luxcrime                         |
| 7.  | Rivera                           |
| 8.  | Mustika Ratu                     |
| 9.  | Pixy                             |
| 10. | Wardah                           |
| 11. | Somethinc                        |
| 12. | Azzarine                         |
| 13. | Carasun                          |
| 14. | Whitelab                         |
| 15. | Mustika Ratu                     |
| 16. | Y.O.U                            |
| 17. | Sensatica Botanicals             |
| 18. | Esqa                             |
| 19. | Implora                          |
| 20. | Hanasui                          |
| 21. | MS Glow                          |
| 22. | Nivea                            |
| 23. | Viva                             |
| 24. | Dear Me Bauty                    |
| 25. | Poppy Dharsono Cosmetics         |
| 26. | Ivan Gunawan Cosmetics           |
| 27. | Sariayu                          |

### 3.2 Participants

Besides language choice present in advertisement boards, this study also reveals cosmetic users' preference on the language used in the boards. Seven people were asked to collect the survey data. They were 6 female and 1 male college students who had access to wider cosmetic users. There were 169

participants joined the survey. They were recruited using convenience sampling on the basis of participants' easy access and willingness to answer the survey questions (Charles & Fen, 2007). Twenty three male and 146 female participants joined this study. They were 14 to 58 years old with education backgrounds ranging from elementary school to master degree graduates. Their occupations were various; senior high school students, college students, housewives, singers, teachers, government officers, midwives, farmers, assistant managers, and private sector employees.

### **3.3 Instruments**

One instrument, Google form-based, was used to collect data on the cosmetic users' preference for the language(s) used in the cosmetic boards. The questionnaire asked the participants' preference for the language used on the boards covering four aspects; the name of the product, tagline, slogan, and product description. It also questioned the reasons for their language choices for each of the aspects of the boards. They were informed that filling in the questionnaire, it is similar to give their consent. They received a description of the study, the identity of the researchers, the goals of the study, and that their answers would appear in an article for publication, yet their identity was kept confidential. The questionnaire (see appendix) used Bahasa Indonesia to allow for a fuller understanding of the questions for the participants. It consisted of 5 questions with three options to choose, from and an open-ended question afterward to record their reasons. The questions were adapted from (Hornikx et al., 2010) and (da Silva, 2014).

### **3.4 Data Analysis Procedures**

Firstly, all 98 data from boards were read and coded according to the language used; Bahasa Indonesia only, English only, or mixed language (Bahasa Indonesia, English, or another language (s) for every aspect under investigation; the brand names, taglines, slogans, and the product descriptions. The participant's preference for the language used for each aspect was coded and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After the questionnaire data were gathered, we read and reread the participants' reasons for choices and made ourselves familiar with the data variations. We developed initial codes for these responses on the semantic level to obtain participants' meanings. Each response is translated into a code, for example, a response like 'the use of English sounds more promising and it made me think that it is an international brand' is coded as 'credibility' and 'international affiliation'. After generating codes from all responses, we moved on to the next stage: generating themes. We reviewed all generated codes and identify themes on the basis of the codes' similarities and overlaps. Thus, codes like 'credibility' and 'international affiliations' are categorized into a theme called 'positive associations'. We reviewed the potential themes to avoid any similarities, for example, during data reading we found that participants expressed national identity and national pride as their preference over the use of Bahasa Indonesia for brand names. We eventually came up with a 'nation-related' reason for the use of Bahasa Indonesia as the code because both reasons refer to nation-related reasons. When themes were saturated, we reported the results of the analysis.

## **4. RESULTS**

### **4.1. Characterizing language choices of Indonesian local cosmetics.**

The study recorded 27 local cosmetic brands from a total of 98 local cosmetic advertisement boards. The observation of the language choices of these boards (see Table 1) reveals that there are far more English names for local cosmetic brands compared to Indonesian names. Brand names like Something, Luxcrime, Whitelab, Mother of Pearl, Dear Me Beauty, and Make Over are some examples. Indonesian names were used in cosmetic brands like Mustika Ratu, Sariayu, and Wardah. The code mixing found in brand element in local advertisement boards use the same pattern: the proper names of the Indonesian founders are attached to the word 'cosmetics' to denote the type of the business/products e.g. Poppy Dharsono Cosmetics, Ivan Gunawan Cosmetics. The rest two brand names use other foreign languages: Japanese and French. From the local cosmetic advertisement boards, we also recorded 79 products



offered in which the use of English names is ubiquitous. English is used to name all of the products offered i.e. Power Liner, Lip Cotton, Urban Lipcream Matte, Daily Matte Loose Powder

Table 2. Language choices on local cosmetic advertisement boards

| Elements of local cosmetic advertisement boards | Monolingual English | Monolingual Bahasa Indonesia | Bahasa Indonesia-English | Other languages |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Brand names                                     | 15                  | 7                            | 3                        | 2               |
| Product names                                   | 79                  | 0                            | 0                        | *               |
| Taglines  | 31                  | 9                            | 10                       |                 |
| Slogans   | 24                  | 6                            | 2                        |                 |
| Product descriptions                            | 32                  | 1                            | 5                        |                 |

In the body copy elements-taglines and slogans- English also shows its domination compared to Bahasa Indonesia. In 98 local advertisement boards, of all 50 taglines recorded, monolingual English appeared 31 times. The same language choice pattern is found in slogans where English appeared 24 times over 32 slogans appearing on the boards. From the observation of the product descriptions presented on the boards, of all 38 product descriptions appearing on the boards, almost all of them are in English (32 appearances); monolingual Bahasa Indonesia only appeared once and code-mixing of English and Bahasa Indonesia appeared 5 times.

#### 4.2. Consumers’ preferences

The study scrutinized consumers’ preferences on the language choice to represent brand names, taglines and slogans, and also product descriptions through a survey to a total number of 169 participants. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Results of participants’ preferences on language choices for brand names, taglines, slogans, and product descriptions

| Elements of local cosmetic advertisement boards | Monolingual English | Monolingual Bahasa Indonesia | Bahasa Indonesia-English |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Brand names                                     | 36%                 | 41%                          | 23%                      |
| Taglines  | 57%                 | 28%                          | 15%                      |
| Slogans   | 23%                 | 64%                          | 13%                      |
| Product descriptions                            | 40%                 | 40%                          | 20%                      |

When asked about which language to represent the name of the brands of the local cosmetic products, the choices between monolingual English and Bahasa Indonesia are significantly polarized. There is almost half-half division of the participants chose between English and Bahasa Indonesia; with a few more participants choosing Bahasa Indonesia. There are fewer participants who chose to have the languages combined for the brand. The strong polarization, though, was not reflected in local cosmetic companies’ choices in which English brand names have significantly dominated the brand names of the local cosmetic brands; they seemed less to prefer Bahasa Indonesia as the voice of their brands. This denotes the discrepancy between companies’ policies and consumers’ preferences. In the minds of the consumers, Bahasa Indonesia needs to represent the brand names for some reasons. Participants who preferred Bahasa Indonesia over English or the code-mixing claimed that they understand better when it is in Bahasa Indonesia a.k.a. votes for understandability (41%), they memorized the brand names better (38%), they feel that Bahasa Indonesia promotes ‘Indonesianness’ that is the quality of being Indonesian (43%): it shows products’ national identity in international markets, it projects nation’s pride, and it differentiates the locals from other countries products. For some other participants who chose English

over Bahasa Indonesia for brand names, their choice is driven by the positive values associated with English including up-to-datedness, luxury, prestige, being cool, better quality, and is expensive (74%). Some participants also claim that English brand names fits better for international markets (12%). Additionally, some participants feel that using English as brand names is something common; that is a norm already accepted by consumers (10%). Few participants think that the use of English catches their attention.

In the aspect of taglines and slogans, the opposite trend was captured. The participants tend to prefer English for taglines, but Bahasa Indonesia is more favored for slogans. More than half of the people who participated in the survey show their preference for English for taglines. Such preference is driven by several reasons. The first is related to the features of the language. English is seen as easy to use and pronounce, easier to understand, has shorter forms, and is more effective (54%). Other reasons are related to the positive associations that are attributed to English such as giving a more convincing and professional outlook, being more attractive, and guaranteeing quality (41%). The reason for international affiliation was also found in the sense that English as a Lingua Franca will promote intelligibility for both local and international consumers (5%). On contrary, over 60% of the participants chose Bahasa Indonesia for slogans. Among these participants, the majority (90%) of them claimed that their preference was based on clarity and better comprehension. Such a want for clarity and comprehension was not accentuated in taglines.

In the aspect of product descriptions, the polarization of preference was detected. There was a clear division of preference. Almost half of the entire participants prefer to see the product description in monolingual English, and almost the other entire half prefers to see it in monolingual Bahasa Indonesia. Those who prefer it in English claim that the product descriptions are easier to read because the wordings are usually shorter, and easy to understand (39%). The positive associations were also addressed to this choice such as English being more cool, catchy, and elegant (24%). Few participants also convey that their preference was influenced by their observation that English has become the 'norm' in the cosmetic industry; everything is written in English and they have become very familiar with it (20%). Another reason for this preference was the international association for the products. They claim that if the products are launched internationally, English is the language that fits the image and becomes universal access for international communication (17%). On the other hand, of the 40% of participants who opted for monolingual Bahasa Indonesia used in the product description, the majority (84%) think that using Bahasa Indonesia promotes their comprehension of the detailed information they deem necessary about cosmetics. The polarization of the preference between English and Bahasa Indonesia is prevalent in this aspect.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The elements of copywriting in an advertisement board carry different functions; names, taglines, and slogans are used to create symbolic values for the brands and the products and product descriptions carry informational value. Language choice is one strategy to achieve the beneficial associations that the business owners desire. The current study revealed some findings regarding language choice in Indonesian local cosmetic boards. First, the use of English is dominant in all elements of the copywriting in the advertisement boards; brand names, product names, taglines, slogans, and product descriptions. English is the most important foreign language in Indonesia (Lauder, 2008); it is the language people use in educational and intercultural communication settings, however, it is not for intra-cultural communication. With that in mind, it is expected that in Indonesia readership in English is not extensive. Yet it is interesting that the company's product description which supposedly targets readership is written dominantly in English. This possibly means that the language policy taken by the company does not target readership, but it is used to satisfy other ends, for example, building beneficial images for the products. A similar result is shared by other research. Companies choosing English to represent their brand or product is a practice found in Brazil (Friedrich, 2002); it is used to attract the attention of local not the



international community. The positive associations that are created through English e.g. modernism, international association, prestige are used to grab consumers' attention (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2014; Nederstigt & Hilberink-Schulpen, 2018). Friedrich (2002) argued that English was the resource that expanding circle countries use to innovate particularly in brand naming and advertising. We think that such is the case with English prevalent appearances in Indonesian local cosmetic boards.

The current study also resounds what was captured in the study of food and cosmetic advertisement boards in two trade centers in South Korea (Lee, 2019). It is found that English appearance in cosmetic advertisement boards in these two trade centers was omnipotent. It is concluded that the beauty industry in South Korea is 'heavily relying' on English. We also notice the reliance on English by these Indonesian local cosmetic companies. We think that one factor potentially inducing the reliance is the competition with the global brands. With the domination of the global brands in the cosmetic business in Indonesia (Global Business Guide Indonesia, 2018), it makes great sense that the local cosmetic brands try to create 'international' image for their local consumers. Considering that many multi-national companies use English to standardize their advertisements (Hornikx et al., 2010), we argue that this strategy is adopted by the local cosmetic companies to construct the international affiliation.

The findings also reveal that there is a gap between local cosmetic companies' language policy manifested in advertisement boards with consumers' preferences especially in the aspects of brand names, slogans, and product descriptions. The domination of English to advertise local cosmetic brand names receive ambivalent responses by the potential consumers. Indonesian local cosmetic consumers perceived that bahasa Indonesia for brand names is more preferable because Indonesian names are important as it projects local identity as a national marker in the vast international target market. This finding is not in line with some of findings from other studies such as De Run et al's (2012), and Ho et al., (2019). De Run et al's (2012) investigated the Chinese Malaysian participants' responses to language choice used in the brand names of same products category. With the multilingual realities as the background, English and Chinese were more positively perceived and preferred by the majority of the participants. Malay language, though as national language, was least preferred. Their preference for English was due to their strong perception of English as the most important language to break the barrier in business communication though it means that English might overshadow Malay as their national language. In Ho, Chiu, Jiang, Shen & Xu's study (2019), the use of English in the packaging labels attracted more customers, received a better evaluation, and impacted stronger consumers' purchase intention.

In this study, slightly higher number of participants chose Bahasa Indonesia for the brand names than English. In the participants' point of view, Bahasa Indonesia might create some positive associations for the products, as the brand names promote more Indonesian identity national identity in international market and resound nationality. This finding supports what Dardjowidjojo (cited in Zein, 2018) states that Bahasa Indonesia 'has achieved status of a national language in its true sense'. Furthermore we believe that although English has been the most popular and widely taught foreign language in Indonesia, English use for brand names receives negative stigma, as a foreign language jeopardizing 'Indonesianess'. We argue that this perspective is still strongly persistent in the society especially with those who obtained little access to English skill and proficiency attainment during initial learning of this language (Kusumaningputri, 2023). Brand names are arguably the important part of a goods, a representation to what something is. It is therefore crucial for a brand name to be project more 'Indonesia' than other countries (westerns).

For slogans different preferences were revealed. Indonesian consumers preferred Bahasa Indonesia for slogans than English despite the evidence of high monolingual English uses in Indonesian cosmetic slogans (see table 2). There is a discrepancy between company's aim to use English to sell the product through slogans while the fact speaks that the consumers prefer Bahasa Indonesia. The questionnaire result provides evidence that comprehension becomes an important factor influencing participants' preferences between the languages. Many prefer slogans in Bahasa Indonesia for this reason. The

prevalence of consumers' comprehension was also noticeable in Horny et al's (2010) study. In their study, they observed the preferences of language choice used in easy and difficult English slogans in advertisements in Netherland. They found that English was more appreciated by the participants in easy English slogans, but not so much when they have to rate it in difficult English slogans. In this study, the participants see the importance of comprehensibility for the slogans, thus, most participants chose Bahasa Indonesia as they believe that it will promote better comprehension. This happens also for the case of product description. Avoiding misunderstanding if the product is described in English, Indonesian consumers preferred Bahasa Indonesia. Equal percentage of consumers opted for English to describe the products as they found 'familiar' key terms of cosmetics in English.

The high appearance of monolingual English in the taglines complies with the consumers' preference toward this company policy decision. This finding is contrary to the results of the study form (Alonso García et al., 2013) Garcia in Mexico. They revealed that English uses for products' tagline generated less positive attitudes and brand trust due to Mexican high patriot feelings, linguistic pride, and ethnocentrism. In the eyes of Indonesian customers the use of English taglines for local cosmetic products were preferred as they communicated attraction, simplicity, trust, and professionalism. Product awareness as the function of taglines speaks more when it is brought using English as an international language.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In this study, we have highlighted a gap between language choice designed by the local cosmetic companies for their advertisement boards and potential consumers' preference on the choice. On one end, there is a domination of English which manifests the companies' standardization policy. English is also seen to provide them with many positive values which elevate the economy value of the local cosmetic products. On the other end, though the importance of English was well translated by the consumers, a number of significant votes for comprehensibility and identity retention results in Bahasa Indonesia preference for brand names, slogans and product description. Therefore, it is recommendable that the policy of using exclusive, monolingual English in local cosmetic advertisement boards should be revisited. We argue that Bahasa Indonesia should appear as the equal counterpart to cater such needs.

This study has limitations especially in the area of the number of the data and the specifications of the variables relational to consumers' preference. We believe that the bigger number of data should serve the study better and richer exploration. We also acknowledge that a closer look to participants' responses based on their profiles such as age, gender, professions, and the degree of English proficiency will highlight specific conditions regarding consumers' preferences, thus shedding better light for the local cosmetic companies to understand their targeted market. Thus, we recommend the future researchers to fill this void.

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