

The Implementation of Language Policy in the Linguistic Landscape of Universities in Malang

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Abstract

Language policy plays an important role in shaping how languages are used in public spaces, including university environments. One way to see how this policy works in daily life is through the linguistic landscape, which refers to the languages displayed on public signs. This study examines how languages appear and how the implications of linguistic landscape relate to language policy in three universities in Malang: Universitas Brawijaya, Universitas Negeri Malang, and Universitas Islam Malang. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through photographic documentation and analysed using the framework of Landry and Bourhis (1997). The findings show that Indonesian is the dominant language, reflecting the national language policy. English is mainly used in formal and academic contexts to indicate international orientation, as well as being visible as a resource for English Language Teaching (ELT) by providing real examples of language use beyond the classroom. Arabic appears more frequently in the Islamic-based university to express religious identity. Future research may explore how students engage with these signs in their learning.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape; Language Policy; Language Used; University

INTRODUCTION

Language policy refers to the principles and decisions made by authorities or institutions to regulate how languages are used, promoted, or granted status within a community (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). The influence of language policy can be observed in public spaces through the languages that appear on signs, announcements, and nameplates. This condition is known as a linguistic landscape, which highlights how language presence in public spaces conveys meanings related to identity, ideology, and cultural representation (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Bernardo Hinesley, 2020).



Public signage not only functions to inform or direct, but also reflects symbolic values, social messages, and collective identity (Gorter & Cenoz, 2006; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Therefore, linguistic landscape provides a useful framework to analyse the relation between language, space, and power in society (Manan et al., 2017). Research interest in this field continues to grow as the linguistic landscape can reveal how languages coexist and how language choices are shaped by institutional or



social contexts (Rungswang, 2018). It can also support policymakers in identifying language-use patterns that are relevant for national development (Chuaychoowong, 2019).



At the university setting, linguistic landscape intersects directly with language policy and English Language Teaching (ELT). English as a Lingua Franca encourages the use of English for communication rather than native speaker norms, enabling nonnative speakers to use English in multilingual academic contexts (Rose & Galloway, 2019). The visibility of English in university signage reflects its symbolic role as an international language and supports institutional efforts to improve students' English proficiency, which aligns with higher education policies that emphasise English as an essential academic and professional skill (Jiang & Ma, 2018).



In Indonesia, linguistic landscape studies have mostly discussed urban and commercial environments, while university contexts remain less explored (Ulla, 2019). However, a university plays an important role in shaping language awareness,

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promoting intercultural understanding, and representing institutional values. It functions as environments where linguistic practices reflect both national identity and academic culture (Haynes, 2012; Yavari, 2012). Therefore, the linguistic landscape at the universities is not merely linguistic decoration but a representation of institutional identity and language policy orientation.

This study focuses on three universities in Malang, an academically-centred city with diverse higher education institutions. Universitas Brawijaya, Universitas Negeri Malang, and Universitas Islam Malang, which vary in type, governance, religious orientation, and student population (Regina, 2015). Universitas Brawijaya and Universitas Negeri Malang hold PTN BH status under Government Regulations Nomor 108 Tahun 2021 dan Nomor 115 Tahun 2021, which grants greater authority in academic decision-making. Universitas Islam Malang is affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama and is known as one of the leading Islamic private universities in Indonesia (Unisma, 2020). These differences create meaningful variation in how languages appear and are used in university signage.

Previous studies in university settings show that the linguistic landscape reflects broader sociolinguistic influences. For example, Muriungi & Mudogo (2021) found that English-dominated signage in Kenyan universities shows global influence despite the presence of a national language. Chuaychoowong (2019) observed English and Thai coexisting in a Thai university, reflecting bilingual identity. Rámila (2016) explained how French universities use signage to negotiate national language protection and multilingual openness. Other scholars highlight the educational potential of linguistic landscape, which can increase language awareness and support English learning through real-world exposure (Ferrarotti, 2016).

However, research that specifically examines the linguistic landscape in Indonesian universities, particularly in a multilingual academic environment such as Malang, is still limited. There is a need to investigate how Indonesian, English, Arabic, and other languages are used in university signage and how these language choices reflect institutional as well as language policy orientations. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the linguistic landscape of three universities in Malang by focusing on the languages used and the implications of these

patterns for language policy. Thus, the research questions are:

- What languages are used in the linguistic landscape of three universities in Malang?
- What are the implications of the linguistic landscape in the three universities in Malang for language policy?

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate the linguistic landscape of three universities in Malang: Universitas Brawijaya, Universitas Negeri Malang, and Universitas Islam Malang. These universities were purposefully selected to represent variations in institutional type (public and private), religious affiliation (Islamic), and student population, as well as factors that may influence language visibility in the university environments. Data were collected through systematic photographic documentation of publicly accessible university areas, including buildings, gates, public boards, and directional signs. The documentation continued until data saturation was reached, meaning no new language variations or signage types appeared.

To answer the first research question, the collected signs were classified based on their language use (monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual), and their frequency and distribution were analysed to describe the linguistic composition of each university. Then, for the second research question, the findings from language use were interpreted to explain their implications for language policy. This step focused on how the presence and distribution of the languages use at the universities' signage reflect, support, or differ from existing language policy practices in each university.

FINDINGS

Languages Used in the Linguistic Landscape of Universities in Malang

The results of this study demonstrate that multilingualism is evident in the language environment of Malang's public and private universities. From three separate universities, 258 signs were gathered. The details are presented in Table 1. The largest number of signs by public universities is 112 from Universitas Brawijaya, followed by 85 from Universitas Negeri Malang, and Universitas Islam Malang has 61.

Table 1: *Languages in Public Signs at Universitas Brawijaya*

No	Language(s) Used	Total	Description
1.	Indonesian	54	Monolingual in Indonesia
2.	English	13	Monolingual in English
3.	Latin	1	Monolingual in Latin
4.	Indonesian & English	43	Bilingual: Indonesian & English
5.	Indonesian & Arabic	1	Bilingual: Indonesian & Arabic

The data shows that Indonesian is the dominant language in public signage at Universitas Brawijaya, appearing in 54 monolingual signs. This indicates that Indonesian remains the main tool for official communication in university spaces. This finding is consistent with Ulfa et al. (2023), who note that Indonesian continues to be widely used in higher education environments to reinforce national identity and ensure accessibility for all university users. English appears monolingually in 13 signs. Its presence reflects the university's international orientation, especially in contexts involving academic promotion and global communication. As Rampton (2006) states, English as a lingua franca is used to facilitate communication across linguistic backgrounds. In Universitas Brawijaya's context, English serves as a complementary language that supports the university's global engagement rather than replacing Indonesian.



Figure 1: *Two examples of signage at Universitas Brawijaya*

The 43 bilingual Indonesian-English signs show a deliberate integration of national identity and global communication goals. This bilingual pattern supports Universitas Brawijaya's vision of becoming a world-class institution. Smit (2010) explains that the

use of English in multilingual higher education spaces often functions as a shared medium that enables participation in international academic networks while still maintaining local linguistic identity. In addition, there is one Arabic sign which associated with religious facilities, indicating cultural representation rather than functional communication. Also, one Latin sign reflects a symbolic academic sign, consistent with Anwar (2013 in Kameswari, 2022), who notes that Latin continues to be used to convey scholarly prestige. Thus, the linguistic landscape at Universitas Brawijaya demonstrates a multilingual environment that balances national identity, global academic positioning, and cultural symbolism.

Meanwhile, at Universitas Negeri Malang, the table below shows that the language used in its signage highlights the university's linguistic diversity. Out of 85 recorded signs, Indonesian dominates, appearing alone on 49 signs, confirming its role in administrative and informational communication (Gultom et al., 2024). This dominance reflects the university's role in reinforcing national identity in the academic environment. Only 8 signs are in English, targeting international students and visitors, showing Universitas Negeri Malang's engagement with global academic networks (Ferrarotti, 2016). Then, 23 signs use both Indonesian and English to ensure clarity for local readers while accommodating non-Indonesian speakers, demonstrating English as a lingua franca without replacing Indonesian (Smit, 2010).

Table 2: *Languages in Public Signs at Universitas Negeri Malang*

No	Language(s) Used	Total	Description
1.	Indonesian	49	Monolingual in Indonesia
2.	English	8	Monolingual in English
3.	Javanese	2	Monolingual in Javanese
4.	Indonesian & English	23	Bilingual: Indonesian & English
5.	Indonesian & Chinese	1	Bilingual: Indonesian & Chinese
6.	Indonesian & Arabic	1	Bilingual: Indonesian & Arabic
7.	Indonesian, English, Chinese, German, Javanese, and Arabic	1	Multilingual: Indonesian, English, Chinese, German, Javanese, and Arabic

Other signs include Indonesian and Arabic, reflecting the religious diversity, and Indonesian and Chinese, likely tied to cultural or academic initiatives. Notably, 2 signs are entirely in Javanese, symbolising local identity and cultural heritage (Erikha, 2018), reinforcing Universitas Negeri Malang's connection to the East Java community. Thus, Universitas Negeri Malang's linguistic landscape shows a multilingual environment balancing national, global, and regional identities.

Furthermore, at Universitas Islam Malang, there are several differences compared to other institutions. The table below shows the language use in signage



at Universitas Islam Malang, revealing the university's communication style and cultural identity. A total of 61 signs were observed and categorised by language, showing the university's use of multiple languages to address academic, religious, and international audiences. Indonesian is the most common language, appearing alone on 14 signs, highlighting its central role in official and public communication (Rohmah & Wijayanti, 2023). Arabic appears on 8 signs, reflecting the university's Islamic identity; meanwhile, English appears on 6 signs, possibly intended for international students and indicating ongoing internationalisation efforts.



Figure 2: Two examples of signage at Universitas Negeri Malang

Table 3: Languages in Public Signs at Universitas Islam Malang

No	Language(s) Used	Total	Description
1.	Indonesian	14	Monolingual in Indonesia
2.	English	6	Monolingual in English
3.	Arabic	8	Monolingual in Arabic
4.	Indonesian & English	7	Bilingual: Indonesian & English
5.	Indonesian & Arabic	3	Bilingual: Indonesian & Arabic
6.	Indonesian & French	1	Bilingual: Indonesian & French
7.	Indonesian, English, and Arabic	22	Multilingual: Indonesian, English, and Arabic

Bilingual signs include 7 combining Indonesian and English and 3 combining Indonesian and Arabic. There is a sign, combining Indonesian and French, that illustrates that multilingualism in education is not only about language choice but also about supporting communication among diverse participants (Rampton, 2006). These signs show the university's strategic use of multiple languages to create an inclusive environment. The largest group,

22 signs, uses Indonesian, English, and Arabic, highlighting multilingualism as a core part of the university's identity. Arabic is especially used for religious expressions, reinforcing the faith-based mission (Nuranti, 2021). In this context, Indonesian remains the main language, Arabic emphasises religious foundation, and English functions as a lingua franca.

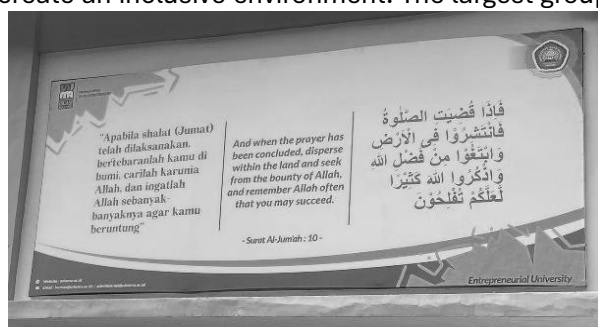


Figure 3: Two examples of signage at Universitas Islam Malang

Implications of LL in Malang's Universities Related to Language Policy

This section answers the second research question by discussing how the linguistic landscape reflects language policy orientations in the three universities. Linguistic landscape is shaped not only by formal regulations, but also by institutional identity and community practices (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Therefore, the choice of language displayed on the university signage shows how universities interpret national policy, internationalisation goals, and cultural values.

At Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesian appears predominantly in public signage, indicating strong alignment with the national language policy that establishes Indonesian as the primary language in formal educational communication. This supports Shohamy's (2005) view that public signs often represent the language legitimised by authority. English is present especially in academic and international contexts (Husin et al., 2019), reflecting Universitas Brawijaya's global academic orientation. The presence of Latin in one of the faculty motto symbolises prestige, in line with Gorter & Cenoz (2006), who explain that the linguistic landscape also carries symbolic institutional identity. Thus, Universitas Brawijaya's language use reflects a balance between national identity, academic tradition, and global engagement.

Meanwhile, at Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesian continues to serve as the main language for institutional communication, while English appears widely in academic service information, demonstrating a commitment to internationalisation (Zhang & Ou, 2021). In addition, some signage uses Javanese, reflecting local cultural identity. This suits Ben Rafael et al.'s (2006) explanation that the linguistic landscape also expresses the identity of

the community that occupies the space. Universitas Negeri Malang, therefore, demonstrates a linguistic environment that supports national language policy, encourages global academic participation, and maintains local cultural heritage.

Furthermore, at Universitas Islam Malang, Indonesian remains dominant to fulfil national language regulation, while English is used in academic settings and in contexts related to global partnerships (Munishi, 2018). However, Arabic is especially visible in religious and institutional spaces, functioning not mainly for communication but as a representation of Islamic identity. This supports Bernardo-Hinesley (2020), who states that the linguistic landscape can express ideological and belief-based identities. Hence, Unisma's linguistic landscape reflects three orientations: national (Indonesian), global academic (English), and religious cultural identity (Arabic).

In addition, from an ELT perspective, the presence of English in higher education spaces provides an opportunity to connect classroom learning with language use in everyday life. Sayer (2010) states that language signs in public spaces can serve as authentic learning materials, for example, to teach vocabulary, expressions, or language forms that appear in real contexts. The "*English literacy walk*" model by Chern & Dooley (2014) also shows that observing multilingual signage can increase students' awareness of the function of language in their environment.

Thus, the presence of English in the linguistic landscape of three universities in Malang not only reflects the institution's internationalisation policy but also has pedagogical value that can be utilised to increase students' sociolinguistic awareness and engagement with English in real contexts. The following pictures demonstrate how the signs found in the university environment serve as media for ELT.



Figure 4: Examples of bilingual signage related to ELT's Media

Furthermore, it is similar to research by Rampton (2006) that English functions to facilitate communication across linguistic backgrounds, particularly in multicultural higher education environments. This also suits the findings of Husin et al. (2019) and Munishi (2018) that English is used primarily in academic and international contexts. Thus, the university linguistic landscape is truly related to the language policy: Indonesian remains the official language of the public sphere, while English serves as a means of academic mobility and strengthening international orientation.

DISCUSSION

The linguistic landscape of universities in Malang prominently features Bahasa Indonesia, English, and Arabic, with variations across institutions. Bahasa Indonesia dominates in all three universities, reflecting the implementation of Presidential Regulation No. 63 of 2019, which mandates the use of the national language in public and institutional signage (Backhaus, 2007; Rohmah & Wijayanti, 2023). Its widespread presence shows compliance with the national language policy and reinforces national identity within university spaces. Furthermore, English appears alongside Indonesian, particularly in academic and formal contexts such as faculty nameplates, program banners, and institutional boards. This reflects universities' efforts toward internationalisation and positions English as a lingua franca for global academic communication (Ayyub & Rohmah, 2024; Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). The English signage also has pedagogical value for English Language Teaching (ELT), as it provides authentic materials for vocabulary, grammar, and sociolinguistic awareness (Ferrarotti, 2016).

Meanwhile, Arabic is mainly used at Universitas Islam Malang, marking its Islamic identity through religious expressions, Qur'anic verses, and Islamic quotes, while its presence is limited in public universities (Nuranti, 2021). Javanese at Universitas Negeri Malang highlights regional identity and cultural heritage. Thus, the linguistic landscape demonstrates that language policy in these universities is enacted through signage. Indonesian ensures national compliance and accessibility, English supports internationalisation and teaching, and Arabic or Javanese signals religious or regional identity. The patterns of language use show that public signs both reflect and reinforce institutional goals.

In addition, the presence of English in the linguistic landscape at these three universities is also closely related to English language teaching (ELT) and reflects the direction of institutional language policies. The use of English on academic information boards demonstrates that universities position English as a lingua franca for global academic communication (Ayyub & Tyas, 2022), without replacing the role of Indonesian as the national language (Smit, 2010). This shows that the universities implement policies related to language policy: Indonesian is maintained as the official language of the university space, while English is intentionally promoted in academic and international domains to support global engagement. In terms of ELT, this policy means that English is not only taught in the classroom but is also reinforced through everyday exposure in university environments, allowing students to encounter English in authentic contexts. Thus, the linguistic landscape functions as a pedagogical extension of ELT, relating institutional language planning with practical opportunities for students to develop communicative competence in English.

CONCLUSION

The linguistic landscape at three universities in Malang shows that Indonesian remains the dominant language and serves as the official language of university communication, in accordance with national policy requiring the use of the national language in public spaces. However, the visible presence of English, particularly in academic contexts and international services, reflects the institutions' internationalisation orientation and English's role as a lingua franca in global academic communication, without displacing Indonesian. Meanwhile, the use of Arabic at the Universitas Islam Malang and Javanese at Universitas Negeri Malang demonstrates expressions of local religious and cultural identities. Beyond reflecting language policy, exposure to English in public signs also has pedagogical implications for English language learning (ELT), as it provides an authentic source of input that helps students connect classroom learning with language use in real-world contexts. Thus, the linguistic landscape at three universities not only reflects language choices that reflect institutional policies and identities but also serves as a learning medium that supports students' language competence and sociolinguistic awareness.

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