



Multicultural Linguistic Landscapes on Shop Signs in Aceh Besar: Representations of Identity, Language, and Social Space

Herman Rusli^{1*}, Denni Iskandar¹, Raihan Khairunnisa¹

¹Indonesian Language Department, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, 23111, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: herman_rn@usk.ac.id

Received: May 20, 2026; Revised: June 12, 2026; Accepted: August 25, 2026; Published: August 31, 2026

Abstract. This study examines the multicultural linguistic landscape reflected in shop signs across Aceh Besar as representations of identity, language practices, and the construction of social space within the community. The study is grounded in the assumption that shop signs function not merely as informational and commercial media, but also as symbolic representations of power relations, cultural identity, economic orientation, and multilingual dynamics in public spaces. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive-interpretative method, this research is situated within the frameworks of Linguistic Landscape Studies and Sociolinguistics. The data consist of visual documentation of shop signs collected from several commercial areas and strategic routes in Aceh Besar Regency. Data were gathered through field observations, photographic documentation, identification of language use, and limited interviews with business owners to explore the motivations behind the selection of particular languages and symbols. The analysis focuses on language choice, language dominance, code-mixing practices, cultural symbolism, and the social meanings embedded within the linguistic landscape. The findings reveal that shop signs in Aceh Besar represent multilingual practices through the use of Indonesian, Acehnese, and English various combinations of these languages. Indonesian remains the dominant language as a marker of national identity and public communication, while Acehnese serves as a symbol of locality and cultural proximity. English tends to signify modernity, economic prestige, and global orientation. Overall, the linguistic landscape demonstrates an ongoing negotiation of local, national, and global identities within the social space of contemporary Acehnese society.

Keywords: linguistic landscape; multicultural linguistics; Aceh Besar; nameplates; language identity



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

Studies on linguistic landscapes have developed significantly over the last two decades as part of contemporary Sociolinguistics and interdisciplinary language research. The increasing scholarly attention to linguistic landscapes reflects a broader understanding that public space is not merely a physical environment, but also a symbolic arena where language, identity, ideology, and social relations are continuously negotiated and represented. Within the framework of Linguistic Landscape Studies, linguistic landscapes generally refer to the visible display of language in public spaces, including street signs, billboards, institutional signage, advertisements, and shop signs. These visual linguistic forms function not only as

communicative instruments but also as markers of symbolic power, cultural identity, economic orientation, and sociopolitical dynamics within multilingual societies.

Early studies in linguistic landscape research emphasized that public signage provides an important medium for understanding the relationship between language and society through everyday visual representations. Public signs reveal how languages are hierarchically positioned, socially valued, and ideologically constructed in a given social context. In many urban and commercial settings, shop signs have become particularly important objects of analysis because they reflect interactions between economic interests, identity construction, and symbolic language practices. Previous studies conducted in various global contexts demonstrate that language choice in commercial signage is rarely neutral; rather, it often reflects broader aspirations related to prestige, modernity, globalization, and marketability.

In several metropolitan cities, the use of foreign languages, especially English, has become increasingly prominent in commercial linguistic landscapes. Research conducted in Shanghai, for example, demonstrates that English is frequently employed on shop signs as a symbol of internationalization, modern lifestyle, and economic competitiveness. Similarly, studies in Thailand indicate that English dominates signage in tourism-oriented areas because it is associated with prestige, cosmopolitanism, and stronger commercial appeal compared to local languages. Such findings suggest that language choice in public signage is closely related to symbolic economic capital and social positioning within contemporary global culture. Within the Southeast Asian context, linguistic landscape phenomena are particularly complex because they emerge in societies characterized by cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity.

In multilingual regions, public signage often becomes a site where local traditions interact with national ideologies and global influences. Research in Bali reveals that the use of English on commercial signage does not merely serve practical communication for tourists; it also produces geosemiotic meanings associated with cultural branding, spatial identity, and the global image of the region. Consequently, linguistic landscapes can be understood as semiotic spaces where multiple identities and ideological orientations intersect simultaneously. In Indonesia, studies on linguistic landscapes have generally focused on the dominance of foreign languages, the commercial function of English, and the influence of globalization on public language use. Research on public signage in several Indonesian cities indicates that English is frequently utilized to create impressions of modernity, exclusivity, and consumer attractiveness.

In Aceh, linguistic landscapes are likewise characterized by multilingual practices involving Indonesian, Acehnese, Arabic, and English. Previous studies in Meulaboh show that Indonesian remains dominant in public signs, including street signs, institutional boards, and commercial signage. Meanwhile, research conducted in Banda Aceh demonstrates that many business owners intentionally employ foreign languages, particularly English, to attract consumers and enhance the commercial image of their businesses. Other studies further indicate that English is often selected to create unique branding, follow global commercial trends, and strengthen consumer appeal in urban commercial spaces.

Despite the growing number of linguistic landscape studies in Indonesia, research specifically examining multicultural representations and the negotiation of local, national, religious, and global identities in Aceh remains relatively limited. This gap is significant because Aceh represents a unique sociocultural setting in which multiple languages coexist within public spaces. Acehnese functions as a marker of local ethnic identity and cultural intimacy, Indonesian represents national identity and formal public communication, Arabic reflects Islamic values and religious symbolism, while English indexes globalization, prestige, and modernity. The coexistence of these languages creates a complex multilingual environment that reflects broader sociocultural transformations within Acehnese society.

As a region with a strong historical identity and long-standing intercultural interactions, Aceh Besar presents a distinctive linguistic phenomenon within its public spaces, particularly through shop signs. The multilingual use of language on commercial signage reflects not only economic communication strategies but also broader processes of identity negotiation, symbolic representation, and social orientation. Acehnese may function as an expression of

locality and social solidarity, Indonesian as a representation of national integration and administrative legitimacy, while English and Arabic frequently symbolize modernity, religiosity, prestige, and transnational cultural orientation. In this sense, shop signs become symbolic spaces where cultural identities, language ideologies, and social values encounter and interact within a multicultural society.

This study aims to analyze the forms of multicultural linguistic landscapes represented in shop signs across Aceh Besar and to examine how identity, language practices, and social space are constructed through these visual linguistic representations. This research is important because it contributes to the expanding field of linguistic landscape studies in Indonesia, particularly within religious and multilingual societies such as Aceh. Furthermore, the study offers theoretical contributions to contemporary sociolinguistic and linguistic landscape scholarship by demonstrating how public signage reflects the ongoing negotiation of cultural identity and social meaning in contemporary Acehnese public spaces.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach within the frameworks of Linguistic Landscape Studies and Sociolinguistics to investigate the multicultural linguistic landscape represented in shop signs across Aceh Besar Regency. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study seeks to interpret the social meanings, identity representations, and language ideologies embedded in public signage rather than to statistically measure linguistic phenomena. The research specifically focuses on how language is visually displayed within commercial spaces and how these visual representations construct social and cultural meanings in the multilingual society of Aceh Besar.

This study also adopted a qualitative content analysis approach to explore and interpret the meanings contained in linguistic and visual signs appearing in public commercial spaces. Through this approach, shop signs were examined not merely as informational texts but as sociocultural artifacts reflecting language choice, symbolic power, identity negotiation, and social orientation within contemporary Acehnese society.

The data collection process was conducted through several stages: (1) preliminary field observations to identify research locations and the characteristics of commercial signage; (2) photographic documentation of shop signs using high-resolution smartphone cameras to ensure visual clarity and readability; (3) brief interviews with selected business owners to obtain contextual information regarding language choice and symbolic considerations; (4) categorization of data based on language display patterns; (5) coding of data according to geographic location and linguistic characteristics; and (6) compilation of a linguistic corpus for interpretative analysis.

Research Site

The study was conducted in several districts of Aceh Besar Regency, Aceh, including Krueng Barona Jaya, Darul Imarah, Ingin Jaya, Darussalam, and Lhoknga. More specifically, the research focused on commercial and public areas such as traditional markets, urban trade centers, roadside commercial corridors, culinary districts, and business centers characterized by intensive social interaction and economic activity. These locations were purposively selected because they represent socially and culturally diverse environments where multilingual public signage is prominently visible. Furthermore, the selected sites demonstrate strong interactions among local, national, religious, and global cultural influences reflected through the linguistic composition of shop signs and commercial displays.

Data Sources

The primary data of this study consisted of visual linguistic signs displayed on shop signs throughout Aceh Besar Regency. These included storefront signs, banners, commercial billboards, business advertisements, and other forms of public commercial signage. The data encompassed both textual and visual elements embedded within the linguistic landscape.

Supporting data were obtained through brief semi-structured interviews with selected shop owners and business operators. These interviews aimed to explore the motivations underlying language choice, symbolic considerations, target consumers, perceptions of prestige, and identity representations reflected in their signage practices.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through direct field observation in commercial areas to identify and document linguistic signs displayed in public spaces. Shop signs were systematically photographed using digital cameras and smartphone devices. Each sign was coded according to its location, language composition, business category, and visual characteristics.

The documentation process paid particular attention to several analytical dimensions, including: (a) language choice, (b) multilingual combinations, (c) typography and script styles, (d) symbolic and cultural elements, (e) the placement and visibility of signage, and (f) the dominance of particular languages within public space.

Given the large number of commercial signs available in the research area, the study employed a non-probability sampling technique to select representative samples. This sampling strategy allowed the researcher to purposively select signage that reflected distinctive multilingual, cultural, and symbolic characteristics relevant to the objectives of the study. The sampling process emphasized the researcher's interpretative role in determining data relevance and representativeness within qualitative inquiry.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected business owners whose signage demonstrated distinctive multilingual or cultural characteristics. The interviews explored several themes, including motivations for language selection, perceptions regarding language prestige and commercial value, cultural and religious considerations, intended target audiences, and identity-related motivations in naming practices.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative interpretative analysis adapted from analytical frameworks commonly employed in international linguistic landscape studies concerning multilingual public signage. The analysis was conducted through several interrelated stages.

(a) Data classification, all documented signs were categorized based on: monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual forms; dominant language usage; business type; and symbolic visual elements embedded in the signage.

(b) Linguistic analysis, the linguistic analysis focused on identifying patterns of language use, code-mixing practices, transliteration, lexical borrowing, and language hierarchy reflected in the shop signs. This stage also examined how particular languages occupied dominant or secondary positions within multilingual signage structures.

(c) Semiotic and Sociolinguistic Interpretation, the linguistic and visual representations were interpreted to understand how language reflects local identity, religious values, globalization, modernity, economic orientation, and multicultural interaction. Particular attention was given to the symbolic meanings associated with the coexistence of Acehnese, Indonesian, Arabic, and English in public commercial spaces.

(d) Contextual Interpretation, interview data were triangulated with visual findings to interpret the social motivations and ideological meanings underlying language choices in commercial signage. This process enabled a deeper understanding of how business owners negotiate identity, prestige, market orientation, and cultural representation through linguistic practices in public space.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established research ethics principles throughout the research process. Permission for photographic documentation and interviews was obtained from participants prior to data collection. Participants' identities were anonymized to ensure

confidentiality and privacy protection. Furthermore, all photographic documentation was used exclusively for academic and research purposes.

3. Results and Discussions

The linguistic landscape of shop signs in Aceh Besar Regency reflects a highly complex multilingual environment shaped by local identity, national language policy, religious values, and the broader forces of globalization. The documented commercial signs demonstrate the coexistence of Indonesian, Acehnese, English, Malay, Minangkabau, and various forms of mixed-language constructions within public commercial spaces. This multilingual configuration indicates that language displayed on public signage functions not merely as a communicative tool, but also as a symbolic marker of identity, prestige, ideology, cultural affiliation, and socio-economic orientation. The findings reveal that public commercial signage in Aceh Besar operates as a sociolinguistic arena in which multiple linguistic and cultural identities intersect and interact simultaneously.

The presence of local, national, and global languages within the same visual space reflects ongoing processes of identity negotiation among business owners and the wider community. In this context, language choice on shop signs is closely related to attempts to construct social meaning, attract consumers, establish symbolic legitimacy, and position businesses within contemporary commercial culture. The multilingual characteristics of the linguistic landscape also demonstrate the dynamic relationship between globalization and locality in Acehnese public space. Indonesian predominantly functions as the primary language of public communication and national identity, while Acehnese appears as a representation of local cultural attachment and social solidarity. English is frequently associated with modernity, commercial prestige, cosmopolitanism, and global market orientation.

Meanwhile, the presence of Arabic reflects the strong influence of Islamic identity and religious symbolism within Acehnese society. The incorporation of Malay and Minangkabau elements further indicates patterns of cultural mobility, migration, and interethnic interaction in commercial environments across Aceh Besar. Based on the linguistic composition of the documented signs, the linguistic landscape in Aceh Besar can be categorized into three major language-display patterns: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signage. These categories illustrate varying degrees of language interaction and symbolic representation within public commercial discourse. The detailed findings regarding the linguistic landscape of shop signs in Aceh Besar are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1. Linguistic Landscape Data of Shop Signs in Aceh Besar Regency

Language display	Data display	Location	Language use
Monolingual	UD. Spesifik Tani	Krueng Barona Jaya District	Indonesian
	Panglong Kayu UD. Satria Jaya Prabot	Krueng Barona Jaya District	Indonesian
	Che' Yan Kupi	Darul Imarah District	Aceh language
	Vet Point	Ingin Jaya District	English
	Makmu Beusare	Darussalam District	Aceh language
	Rumah Makan Pariaman	Lhongka District	Indonesian
Bilingual	My-Sembako	Krueng Barona Jaya District	English-Indonesian
	Mie Aceh Seafood 74	Krueng Barona Jaya District	Indonesian-English
	Toko Bangunan Beuraya Material	Darul Imarah District	Indonesian-Aceh language-Indonesian

	Monlhok Electronic	Ingin Jaya District	Aceh language-English
	Rumah Makan Uda Awak	Darussalam District	Indonesian-Minang language
	Beulangong Raja Wedding	Lhoknga District	Aceh language-English
Multilingual	Toko <i>Runcit</i> Malayana Mart	Krueng Barona Jaya District	Indonesian-Malay language-English
	MOGANA MART: Menjual Semua Bahan Kelontong	Krueng Barona Jaya District	Aceh language-English-Indonesian
	DUMPUNA SHOP Serba Murah Harga Jakarta	Darul Imarah District	Aceh language-English-Indonesian
	Ceudah Pangkas Rambut Barbershop	Ingin Jaya District	Aceh language-Indonesian-English
	Jasa Poma Taylor	Darussalam District	Indonesian-Aceh language-English
	KUPULA STORE Grosir dan Eceran	Lhoknga District	Aceh language-English-Indonesian

Among the documented shop signs, Indonesian emerged as the most dominant language within the commercial linguistic landscape of Aceh Besar. Its dominance reflects its institutional status as the national language of Indonesia as well as its communicative accessibility across diverse social and ethnic groups. Most commercial signs employ Indonesian either in monolingual form or in combination with other languages, indicating its central role in facilitating public communication and commercial interaction in multilingual urban spaces.

At the same time, the presence of Acehnese language elements appears consistently across a number of commercial signs, demonstrating the continuing significance of local linguistic identity within Acehnese society. The use of Acehnese on shop signs reflects not only linguistic practice but also cultural pride and symbolic attachment to regional identity. For many business owners, Acehnese functions as a marker of locality, social intimacy, and cultural authenticity. Its appearance within public commercial spaces suggests that local language remains an important component of identity construction despite the growing influence of national and global languages.

Discussions

English appears prominently in both traditional and modern business establishments throughout Aceh Besar. Even small neighborhood grocery stores frequently adopt English expressions in their commercial signage, alongside electronic stores, cafés, laundry services, barber shops, and minimarkets. In many cases, English terminology seems difficult to avoid because certain commercial expressions have become strongly associated with modern business culture, urban lifestyle, and consumer attractiveness. The findings indicate that English is widely perceived as a language of prestige, professionalism, and commercial modernity. Terms such as laundry, barbershop, minimarket, and photocopy are commonly displayed on business signage, even when equivalent expressions exist in Indonesian or Acehnese.

This phenomenon demonstrates how English has acquired symbolic economic value within public commercial discourse. The adoption of English vocabulary allows businesses to project a more contemporary, cosmopolitan, and globally connected image to potential consumers. From a Sociolinguistics perspective, the increasing visibility of English in public signage reflects broader processes of globalization and linguistic commodification. Language in this context is not only used for communication but also strategically employed to create symbolic distinction and enhance market competitiveness. Business owners appear to associate English with higher social status, urban sophistication, and broader consumer appeal, particularly among younger and middle-class audiences.

Figure 1. Shop Signs Dominated by English Language Usage



The presence of English in the linguistic landscape of Aceh Besar also illustrates the coexistence of local and global cultural orientations within contemporary Acehnese society. While Acehnese and Indonesian continue to function as markers of local and national identity, English introduces transnational cultural symbolism associated with modern commerce and global consumer culture. Consequently, commercial signage becomes a symbolic site where local identity, national belonging, and global aspirations intersect within everyday public space. Examples of commercial signs incorporating English terminology in several business sectors across Aceh Besar are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 illustrates several commercial shop signs in Aceh Besar that are predominantly characterized by the use of English. The widespread presence of English across different types of businesses demonstrates its strong symbolic and commercial value within the contemporary linguistic landscape of Aceh Besar. English is not only utilized in businesses directly associated with international products or services, but also appears in small-scale local enterprises and everyday commercial activities. The dominance of English in these shop signs reflects broader sociolinguistic processes related to globalization, commodification of language, and the construction of modern commercial identities. Business owners tend to perceive English as a linguistic resource capable of enhancing prestige, professionalism, and market appeal.

Consequently, English expressions are frequently employed to create impressions of modernity, innovation, exclusivity, and urban sophistication. From the perspective of Linguistic Landscape Studies, the visual prominence of English in public commercial spaces signifies more than simple language preference. The larger typography, strategic positioning, and visual emphasis often given to English words indicate their symbolic hierarchy within the signage structure. In many cases, English occupies the most visually salient position, while local or national languages appear in secondary or supportive roles. Such arrangements reveal implicit language ideologies that associate English with economic advancement and global connectivity. At the same time, the incorporation of English into commercial signage does not necessarily erase local cultural identity.

Instead, it reflects a process of linguistic hybridity in which global linguistic forms coexist with local cultural practices. The coexistence of English with Indonesian and Acehnese elements demonstrates how business actors in Aceh Besar negotiate between maintaining local identity and engaging with global commercial trends. This phenomenon highlights the dynamic interaction between localization and globalization within contemporary Acehnese public space. Terms such as *mart*, *barbershop*, *card*, and *wash* are English lexical items used to refer to marketplace, hair-cutting services, cards, and laundry-related services. These expressions appear to have become deeply embedded within contemporary commercial naming practices and are therefore difficult to avoid in businesses operating within similar sectors.

Their repeated use across commercial signage demonstrates how English terminology has become normalized within urban and semi-urban business culture in Aceh Besar. The widespread adoption of these English terms indicates that certain commercial vocabularies are no longer perceived merely as foreign linguistic elements, but rather as standardized symbols of modern business identity. In many cases, business owners consider English expressions to be more commercially attractive, concise, and stylistically modern than their Indonesian equivalents. This phenomenon reflects the commodification of language, where linguistic choices are strategically employed to increase consumer attention and strengthen market competitiveness.

Nevertheless, alongside the strong presence of English, Acehese language also appears prominently in several commercial establishments and service-oriented businesses. The use of Acehese reflects the continuing vitality of local linguistic identity within public commercial spaces. Unlike English, which is often associated with modernity and global orientation, Acehese tends to symbolize locality, cultural familiarity, social intimacy, and emotional attachment to regional identity. The findings suggest that the use of Acehese on commercial signage functions as a form of cultural representation and local identity preservation within an increasingly globalized linguistic environment.

Through the incorporation of Acehese expressions, business owners appear to establish closer cultural relationships with local consumers while simultaneously reinforcing ethnic and regional belonging in public space. This phenomenon can be observed in several business sectors, including building supply stores and professional wedding decoration services, as illustrated in Figure 2. Figure 2 demonstrates the prominent use of Acehese language in several commercial businesses and professional service establishments in Aceh Besar. Unlike English-dominated signage, which generally emphasizes modernity and global commercial orientation, the use of Acehese reflects strong expressions of local identity, cultural attachment, and community solidarity within public space.

The appearance of Acehese on shop signs indicates that local language continues to possess symbolic and sociocultural significance in contemporary Acehese society. Business owners who employ Acehese expressions in their signage appear to intentionally construct an image of cultural familiarity and social closeness with local consumers. In this context, language functions not only as a communicative medium but also as an emotional and cultural marker capable of strengthening relationships between businesses and the surrounding community. From the perspective of Sociolinguistics, the use of Acehese in commercial signage can be interpreted as a form of identity negotiation and linguistic resistance amid the growing dominance of national and global languages in public spaces.

While Indonesian and English frequently occupy dominant positions in modern commercial discourse, Acehese remains visible as a representation of regional pride and cultural continuity. The findings further suggest that Acehese language use in public signage contributes to the preservation and visibility of local linguistic heritage within urban commercial environments. Through visual representation in public space, Acehese becomes socially legitimized as a living language that continues to participate actively in economic and social interaction.

Figure 2. Commercial and Professional Service Signs Dominated by the Acehese Language



In addition, the use of Acehnese in professional services—such as wedding decoration businesses and local commercial enterprises—demonstrates that local language retains persuasive and symbolic value in attracting customers who identify strongly with Acehnese cultural traditions. This reflects the broader sociolinguistic reality of Aceh Besar, where public linguistic practices are shaped by the continuous interaction between local cultural identity and broader national and global influences. The term *mon* is derived from the place name Montasik, while *lhok* in Acehnese means “inside” or “inner area.” Consequently, *Monlhok* can be interpreted as “Inner Montasik”.

This naming practice illustrates how Acehnese linguistic elements are embedded within commercial signage to preserve local geographical and cultural references. The use of indigenous lexical forms in public commercial spaces demonstrates the continuing relevance of local language as a marker of regional identity and sociocultural belonging. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the professional service name *Beulangong Raja Wedding*, which combines the Acehnese terms *beulangong* (“cooking pot” or “cauldron”), *raja* (“king”), and the English word *wedding*. This hybrid linguistic construction reflects a strategic blending of local and global linguistic resources. Although English is incorporated to convey modernity and commercial attractiveness, the business owner simultaneously maintains Acehnese lexical elements as symbols of cultural authenticity and local identity.

Such multilingual combinations indicate that local language remains an important symbolic resource even within commercially modernized naming practices. Further findings reveal that bilingual and multilingual signs constitute the dominant pattern within the commercial spaces of Aceh Besar. Mixed-language signs commonly combine Indonesian with English or Acehnese, while several signs integrate Acehnese expressions to reinforce ethnic and regional identity. In many cases, Indonesian functions as the primary informational language, English contributes prestige and global commercial symbolism, and Acehnese provides local cultural legitimacy and emotional proximity to the surrounding community. These multilingual practices illustrate forms of linguistic hybridity and identity negotiation within a multicultural social environment.

The coexistence of multiple languages within a single sign demonstrates how business owners strategically mobilize linguistic resources to reach diverse audiences while simultaneously projecting particular symbolic meanings. Language choice in public signage therefore becomes a deliberate sociocultural strategy through which businesses negotiate modernity, locality, religiosity, and commercial appeal. From a functional perspective, the linguistic landscape of shop signs in Aceh Besar performs two major roles frequently emphasized in Linguistic Landscape Studies research: informative and symbolic functions. The informative function is reflected in signs that directly communicate the type of services, products, or businesses being offered to the public.

Meanwhile, the symbolic function refers to language choices carrying ideological, cultural, social, and identity-related meanings beyond their purely communicative purposes. The symbolic dimension is particularly visible in the selective use of Acehnese, English, and Arabic within commercial signage. Acehnese indexes locality and ethnic identity; English symbolizes globalization, prestige, and economic modernity; while Arabic frequently reflects Islamic values and religious legitimacy. The interaction among these languages demonstrates that public commercial signage in Aceh Besar operates not merely as an economic communication medium, but also as a semiotic arena where multiple cultural ideologies and social identities are represented and negotiated.

Overall, the linguistic landscape of shop signs in Aceh Besar Regency reveals a dynamic interaction among local, national, and foreign languages within contemporary public space. The findings further demonstrate that public space functions as an arena where formal language regulations, such as Law No. 24 of 2009 and Aceh Qanun No. 10 of 2022, intersect with the social and economic realities of the community. The linguistic landscape therefore not only reflects the multilingual diversity existing within Acehnese society but also illustrates how language functions as a powerful instrument of social and cultural representation within a dynamic and continuously evolving sociocultural context.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study demonstrate that the linguistic landscape of shop signs in Aceh Besar strongly reflects Indonesian national identity and linguistic nationalism. Nearly all documented commercial signs incorporate Indonesian language elements, either in monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual forms. Although local and foreign languages also appear within public commercial signage, Indonesian consistently remains the dominant language. This dominance indicates the strong institutional legitimacy of Indonesian as the national language as well as its broad social acceptance and communicative accessibility among the people of Aceh Besar. The study further reveals that the presence of English in commercial signage is not always motivated by an intention to appear modern or socially prestigious.

In many cases, the use of English terminology has become difficult to avoid because certain lexical forms have already become standardized within contemporary commercial discourse. Terms such as laundry, wash, and barbershop are widely recognized and commonly used in Indonesian public communication, particularly in urban and commercial contexts. Consequently, the incorporation of English expressions into shop signs often reflects practical linguistic adaptation and established commercial convention rather than purely symbolic attempts to project social superiority or cosmopolitan identity. At the same time, the continued visibility of Acehnese language elements demonstrates the persistence of local cultural identity within public space.

The coexistence of Acehnese, Indonesian, and English within commercial signage reflects a dynamic process of linguistic coexistence and sociocultural negotiation in contemporary Acehnese society. Public commercial signs therefore become spaces where local attachment, national belonging, religious values, and global commercial influences intersect simultaneously. Ultimately, this study concludes that the linguistic landscape of shop signs in Aceh Besar functions as a symbolic arena for the construction and negotiation of multiple identities. Commercial signs visually represent local, national, and global identities at the same time, illustrating how multilingual public space embodies broader social, cultural, ideological, and economic dynamics within contemporary Acehnese society.

The findings also reinforce the argument that linguistic landscapes should be understood not merely as communicative displays, but as sociocultural texts through which communities articulate identity, power relations, and collective belonging in an increasingly interconnected world.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Syiah Kuala University for supporting and granting permission for this research. Appreciation is also extended to the Regent of Aceh Besar Regency and the local government authorities of Aceh Besar for providing research access and administrative support throughout the study. The authors are especially grateful to the shop owners and local business operators who generously allowed their commercial signage to be documented as research data. Their cooperation and openness made this study possible and significantly contributed to the successful completion of the research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest..

Referensi

- Afriadi P. Multikultural Dan Pendidikan Karakter Kesenian Didong Pada Masyarakat Gayo Kabupaten Aceh Tengah. *Virtuoso J Pengkaj dan Pencipta Musik*. 2018;1(1):15.
- Amelia CS, Iskandar D, Razali. Toponymy of Village Names in Lhoknga District, Aceh Besar: An Anthropolinguistic Study. *KEMBARA J Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*. 2025;11(2):640–53.
- Bennui P. English in the Linguistic Landscape of Koh Lipe, Satun, Thailand: Lexis and

- Glocalization. *Indones J English Lang Teach Appl Linguist*. 2024;9(November):239–65.
- Choeirod R, Chanthao R. Linguistic Landscape at Patong, Phuket, Thailand: language perception on public signs. *Neuro Quantology*. 2023;21(1):250–61.
- Dewi KLP, Putra INAJ, Paramarta IMS. Linguistic Landscape Analysis of Language Function at Tourist Places Signboard in Banjar Bali. *J Linguist Lit Stud*. 2024;2(2):49–58.
- Fatmahwati A FA. Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia Pada Media Ruang Publik di Kota Pekanbaru. *Suar Betang*. 2019;13(2):131–44.
- Firdausiyah H, Suhandano. A Linguistic Landscape Study of Bandar Girissee: Multilingualism, Memory, and Language Commodification in a Heritage Tourism Place [Internet]. Universitas Gadjah Mada; 2025. Available from: <https://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/penelitian/detail/259952>
- Fortuna RS. Tracing Linguistic Threads: A Linguistic Landscape Study of Academic Institutions in Japan. *Int Res J Mod Eng Technol Sci*. 2023;5(08):893–910.
- Gustian AS, Utami LAP, Fatahillah M, Nurhayati NR, Fatmawati R, Fatimatuzzahra S, et al. Analisis Social Mapping terhadap Masyarakat Dusun. *KAIS Kaji ilmu Sos*. 2023;4(1):19–28.
- Hasriani H, Sofyan RR. Landscape Variation: Language Policy in Public Space in Makassar City. *ARRUS J Soc Sci Humanit*. 2024;3(3):229–38.
- Iskandar D, Batubara K, Tobing FS. Upaya Peningkatan Intensitas Pemakaian Bahasa Ibu pada Ruang Publik di Provinsi Aceh. *Semin Nas Bhs Ibu (SNBI XI)*. 2019;XI.
- Kade N, Rastitiati J, Ngurah IG, Suprastayasa A. Multilingual Signs: The Linguistic Landscape in Nusa Dua Tourist Area, Bali. *LACULTOUR Int J Lang Cult Tour*. 2022;1(1):8–16.
- Li W, Wang L. A study on the linguistic landscape of international public spaces in Shanghai : a cosmopolitan translation perspective. *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* [Internet]. 2026;2(August 2025). Available from: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-026-06986-7>
- Mubarok Y, Koebanu S. Negosiasi Identitas Lokal, Global, dan Religius dalam Lanskap Linguistik Toko Busana di Pamulang. *Alinea J bahasa, sastra, dan pengajarannya*. 2025;5(3):2036–52.
- Mukhlis, Rusli H, Arianto B. Why Do the Acehnese Migrate? A Study of the Hikayat Ranto from the Socio-Cultural Perspective of Acehnese Society. *Stud English Lang Educ*. 2024;11(3):1348–61.
- Mukhlis, Rusli H. Literasi Budaya, Menggali Resolusi Konflik dalam Hikayat Prang Tjumbok [Cultural Literacy, Exploring Conflict Resolution in the Hikayat Prang Tjumbok]. In: *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya (PEDALITRA 1)*. Denpasar: Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia dan Daerah Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas PGRI Mahadewa Indonesia; 2021. p. 189–95.
- Oktavianus O. Linguistic Landscape and Cultural Approach through Minangkabau and Malay Language as Election Campaign Strategies. *Gramatika STKIP PGRI Sumatera Barat*. 2024;10(2):179–202.
- Purnawati KW, Artawa K, Satyawati MS, Nyoman I. Unveiling communication strategies through public space signs: a linguistic landscape study in Badung Smart Heritage Market, Bali-Indonesia. *Cogent Arts Humanit* [Internet]. 2025;12(1). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2444045>
- Rusli H, Mukhlis, Parlindungan F, Lisyati L, Nuthihar R. Character education in an acehnese
-

- cultural saga: hikayat prang sabi. *J Ling Cult.* 2020;14(2):179–86.
- Rusli H, Yusuf Y, Masrizal, Mujizah. Reinterpreting War Literary Texts as A Model Conflict Mitigation and Global Peace Education: A Hermeneutic Study of Acehnese War Hikayat. *Sci Cult.* 2026;12(2).
- Silviyanti TM, Yusuf YQ, Akmal S. From words to wealth: decoding the language markers and compositions of shop names in Banda Aceh. *Humanit Arts Soc Sci Stud.* 2020;24(3):673–88.
- Sirait Z. Penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia Di Ruang Publik Yang Tidak Memenuhi Bahasa Baku. *J Bhs Sastra.* 2021;6(1):1–9.
- Suri I, Datang FA, Linguistik I, Budaya FI, Indonesia U. Language as Social Identity: A Study of Linguistic Landscape in Meulaboh, West Aceh Bahasa sebagai Identitas Sosial: Studi Lanskap Linguistik di Meulaboh, Aceh Barat. *J Sosiol Pendidik Humanis.* 2024;9(2):35–53.
- Suryanto S, Panuntun T. Cultivating Digital Learning Culture: Perspectives of Pre-Service English Teachers at a Private Islamic University in Yogyakarta. *J Foreign Lang Teach Learn.* 2025;10(1):126–52.
- Syartanti NI. Critical Discourse Analysis on Celebrity Case in Online News Headlines. *Lensa Kaji Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, dan Budaya.* 2021;11(1):124.
- Syartanti NI. Pemaknaan Tanda Ruang Publik Pada Papan Peringatan Di Nusa Penida Bali. In: *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Riset Linguistik dan Pengajaran (Senarlip IV).* 2021. p. 73–84.
- Wahid U. Acedemia.edu. 2021 [cited 2023 Jan 5]. Bahasa dan Proses Metamorphosis Self Concept Masyarakat Aceh Melalui Karya Sastra Hikayat “Perang Sabi.” Availabe from: https://www.academia.edu/1941704/Bahasa_dan_Proses_Metamorphosis_Self_Concept_Masyarakat_Ac eh_Melalui_Karya_Sastra_Hikayat_Perang_Sabi_