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Unveiling the Linguistic Landscape of Educational Spaces in a Remote Indonesian Area

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Abstract

The signs materialized in the linguistic landscape (LL) symbolize what people believe about the language. Hence, most studies of LL focus on both language use and language ideology. While the study of LL is quite general worldwide, it is relatively new in East Nusa Tenggara, especially for those investigating LL in the educational setting. This study aimed to 1) find what language patterns and languages are exposed in the LL of the educational setting in Maumere City, NTT province, and 2) find the language ideology as the basis of why certain language was used and other language was rarely used. This research employed a qualitative case study. Data were obtained through documentation and interviews with 9 informants from 8 high schools and 1 university. The data were analyzed in three steps of qualitative data analysis: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicated that there were three sign patterns, namely, monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs. There were 7 languages used in the three sign patterns above, namely Indonesian, English, Indigenous languages, Sanskrit, Japanese, German, and Latin. The situation represented through the school and university landscape manifested the language ideology. Interviews with informants revealed four main themes: language policy influencing language practice, language as a learning tool, language as a school identity marker, and language as a symbol of culture. These results are expected to provide a wider insight into the LL study in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Linguistic Landscape; Linguistic; Educational Spaces; Remote Area; Indonesian*

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Introduction

As the linguistic landscape (hereafter LL) refers to a textual form that emerges in the public space of a specified area (Gorter, 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997), we can easily find it around us by observing what appears on street signs, wall graffiti, shop planks, government buildings, schools, airports, etc. Sometimes, we see that those signs are printed in one single language or monolingual signs, but mostly, they are captured together with other languages to form bilingual or multilingual signs. The last-mentioned is even inevitable in the modern era because of the spread of English as the global language and

international brand names or slogans in non-English-speaking countries (Gorter & Cenoz, 2016). As a result, the LL frequently takes shape in a combination of the three following languages: international languages, national languages, and indigenous languages. The use of international languages, especially English, informs the reader about the global orientation, modernity, and the language of progress (Jiao & Singh, 2024; Piller, 2003). The national language represents the language the writer knows very well. Meanwhile, the indigenous language symbolizes ethnic identity (Brown, 2012).

The existence of these environmental prints shown around us, whether monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual signs, always reflects a general set of beliefs or ideology of the members of a speech community. These beliefs both derive from and influence language practices of the community, including in the Indonesian school setting. One good example of this interrelated relationship was reflected in a Chinese-heritage multilingual school, where the ideologies of globalization, nationalism, and ethnic identity were visible through the school signboards written in English, Indonesian, and Chinese (Lestianingsih et al., 2023).

Moreover, what people think of the language can also be a basis for language management or policy (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015; Spolsky, 2003) which can influence the LL. Many countries and regional authorities have regulated signage as one of the targets of their language policy. It is called the top-down policy, which covers public signs such as official signs for street names, road signs, building names, street names, etc. The clear examples of this policy are in South Africa through the change of bilingual provincial name from Oranje Vrystaat/Orange Free State to the monolingual English version, Free State, and the adoption of a new English-only provincial motor-vehicle license mark, FS (for 'Free State'). Both instances resulted in a reduction of official visibility in Afrikaans (Du Plessis, 2012). Besides, there is also the bottom-up language policy enacted by private parties. These private signs are mainly commercial or informative signs, such as the signs on shops. They may be influenced by language policy, but mainly reflect individual preferences in shops, advertising, private offices, etc. (Gorter & Cenoz, 2008).

In the educational setting, many scholars have conducted studies regarding LL. Most studies examine landscape texts captured or produced by teachers and students as part of language teaching and learning. The results indicated that LL or signage could be useful for language learners as a pedagogical tool for language acquisition, teaching and learning about multilingualism, and exploring multilingualism issues (Gorter et al., 2021; Li & Marshall, 2020). In an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) writing practice, LL was also believed to contribute as a stimulus for genuine and engaging EFL writing. Using photos captured in their community, students were encouraged to write, in English, descriptions of their reflections and analysis of the messages embedded within (Hayik, 2020). The other study reported that language learners who engaged with texts displayed in public could particularly develop their symbolic competence and literacy skills. The students could show an aptitude for analyzing the unwritten, symbolic meanings and associations attached to written texts in the LL, i.e. the sense of 'coolness' of using English in the Japanese LL (Rowland, 2013). In Indonesia, LL was used by university students as a learning resource to morphologically analyze how Indonesian people invented new English words (word formation) in commercial signs in LL (Kweldju, 2021).

Regardless of the pedagogical benefits of using LL in language teaching and learning, some studies regarding LL at schools and universities did not involve teachers or students. Still, they investigated the school signage in the way they studied the linguistic landscape in public spaces. These LL studies focused on language patterns, representation, and policy. They were intended to answer typical questions of how mono-, bi-, or multilingual signs appeared in the school linguistic landscape (schoolscape), what languages were exposed, and what beliefs or values drove the language use. For example, a study conducted in seven multilingual schools in the Basque Country revealed that monolingual signs dominated by Basque

appeared the most compared to bilingual and multilingual signs. Those signs served generally as informative, symbolic, or both informative and symbolic functions (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015). In South Africa, the presence of English in the public sphere was dominant while African languages were significantly underrepresented despite the constitutional declaration of the 11 official languages on a macro-level (Kretzer & Kaschula, 2021). Furthermore, in Indonesia, the results indicated that Indonesian dominated the LL in most schools, whether in mono-, bi-, or multilingual signs. Meanwhile, the presence of Indigenous languages was still limited even when they were compared to English (Andriyanti, 2019; Harbon & Halimi, 2019; Riani et al., 2021; Sumarlam et al., 2021).

The results showing the language patterns and language presence of LL in Indonesian school settings should not be overgeneralized. Further LL studies involving schools from the Indonesian remote area, like East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province, are also crucial to enrich what has been found out by the previous studies. In East Nusa Tenggara, there are only a few studies about LL. Previous researchers have conducted qualitative studies related to the LL on mobile objects, the *bemo*, in Kupang city, to capture the dominant language and people's perceptions of the languages displayed on the *bemos*. The results revealed that English dominated the LL. People were also happy to see their language exposed on the *bemos* in the city (Kamengko et al., 2022). Another study tried to analyze the LL in the same city in terms of regional language contestation displayed in public spaces. The results of documentation showed that local languages were starting to be rarely used due to language shifts, and the speakers were more often using Kupang Malay due to socio-economic factors (Benu et al., 2023).

However, observations that are still missing from the two previous studies are language contestation in schools and universities in NTT province. Thus, this research investigates the LL of the educational setting of the province, which is still a remote and less-documented region of Indonesia but is highly diverse in indigenous languages. NTT Province has 72 indigenous languages. This number is the third largest in Indonesia, after West Papua and Papua (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2025). While linguistic landscape studies have gained traction globally, research in this specific region, particularly in the educational setting, is scarce.

As in other cities in NTT, LL research focusing on educational institutions in Maumere city is relatively new. If in other cities in NTT there have been several studies that examine the LL of the cities, then in Maumere city these two areas have never been touched. Therefore, the research focusing on a geographically and sociolinguistically unique area fills a critical gap in the field of linguistic landscape studies in Indonesia.

By employing a case study design (Yin, 2018), the present study is intended to close the gap mentioned previously and to answer two research questions as follows:

1. What language patterns and languages are exposed in the LL of the educational setting in Maumere City, NTT province?
2. What are the reasons/ideology for using certain languages in the LL of the educational setting in Maumere City, NTT province?

Methodology

The LL approach employed in the present study mainly focuses on the display of languages on signs, billboards, and storefronts in public spaces, serving both informational and symbolic roles in society (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). It is deeply embedded in the sociolinguistic approach, which explores the relationship between language and society, particularly how language practices reflect and shape elements like social identities, power relations, and ideologies. Under the umbrella of sociolinguistics, the language visibility captured in the landscape means more than just written language in public spaces. It reflects more complex elements as mentioned above (Holmes et al., 2022). Other than that, LL research often intersects with Language planning and policy (LPP) concerning how governments regulate language use through legislation, education, and signage (top-down) and how private institutions reflect their

preference in using languages (bottom-up) (Nekvapil & Sherman, 2015). Therefore, LL is also believed as a visible product of LPP since choices in public signage show up the authority power in giving official recognition of certain languages, standardized or marginalized languages, and the sociopolitical status of certain languages in public domains. For example, signs in bilingual or multilingual formats may reflect a state's recognition of minority languages, while the absence of indigenous languages may reflect linguistic marginalization.

This sociolinguistic-based LL approach is suitable for the analysis of this study because it allows a better understanding of how languages function not just as communication tools, but as symbols of power, identity, and policy. It helps uncover underlying ideologies and institutional decisions that shape language visibility in public spaces. In contexts like Indonesian school settings, this approach helps to explore how language policies enacted by the Indonesian or provincial government are visually and ideologically manifested in school signs, banners, or bulletin boards.

As a qualitative study that relied on a case study design, the data of the present research were collected through interviews and photographs. The case study was seen as the most appropriate design to investigate a real-life phenomenon such as the LL and its context. Moreover, using this design allowed the researcher to pilot future studies in the field of LL in the educational setting in East Nusa Tenggara.

The informants in the present study were 9 people, 8 informants from 8 different High Schools, and 1 informant from 1 University. The informants were selected considering their contextual knowledge about the educational setting, language policy, and community ideologies that could not be captured through observation alone. Employing the informants as human subjects was crucial in this study since the researcher realized that the present study should reveal the ideology that could be accessed through the interviews. While visual documentation of signs should provide the language visibility, it would not fully explain why certain language choices were made. Hence, by interviewing the informants, the researcher could get a clear picture of their thoughts and intentions behind the LL. In conducting the interview, the interview guidelines had been prepared in advance. Yet, new questions related to interesting answers from the informants were also raised during the interview sessions (semi-structured interview). It was intended to get the extended information that could answer the research question. The questions in the interview guidelines were open-ended questions that allowed informants to convey their ideas more freely. They questioned mainly about the language choice in the LL of the informants' school and why particular languages were used more often while others were rarely used.

The data that provides the information about the school code, range of data, and informants in this study can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. School code, data range, and informants

No.	School Code	Range of Data	Number of Informants	Informant Code
1	A1	A1/1 - A1/92	1	I1
2	A2	A2/1 - A2/74	1	I2
3	A3	A3/1 - A3/74	1	I3
4	A4	A4/1 - A4/83	1	I4
5	A5	A5/1 - A5/35	1	I5
6	A6	A6/1 - A6/39	1	I6
7	A7	A7/1 - A7/60	1	I7
8	A8	A8/1 - A8/72	1	I8
9	A9	A9/1 - A9/165	1	I9
Total			9	

Other than the interview, the data collection in the present research relied on observation and photographs. During the observation, the photographs of the signboard inside the school landscape were captured using digital cameras and smartphone cameras. It focused on capturing the salient signs outside the school classrooms, such as room names, building names, school rules, school decorations, and school vision and mission. Signs that are located in a less prominent location, such as those on the announcement board, were excluded from analysis. The counted signs were considered the work of school authorities that reflected a top-down policy rather than students' work (bottom-up). Moreover, the interviews collected data regarding language ideology, or what informants thought about the language.

The data collection process began by sending a letter of permission to every High School and the university one week before data collection. After that, LL photographs were taken first to gain an overview of LL within the informants' sphere of authority. After the LL data were available, the research advanced to the interview with the informants to confirm the LL data and to explore further reasons that became the basis for using a particular language. The time and place of the interview were set based on the agreement of the researchers and informants. The interviews with the informants were also recorded using a smartphone to facilitate the process of transcribing and analyzing the data.

The collected data were analyzed through the following steps: 1) data condensation (data sorting, coding, thematic analysis), 2) data display (visualization in a table), and 3) conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). In the first stage, the data from photographs were selected carefully based on the research needs. Unclear photographs were excluded to get a total of 694 signs. After that, each datum was coded. For example, A1/1 means the datum 1 from school A1. Next, the data were categorized based on sign patterns (monolingual, bilingual, multilingual signs) and languages (Indonesian, English, Latin, Indigenous language, etc.). Signs consisting of one language only were grouped in monolingual signs. Two language signs were grouped into bilingual signs. Meanwhile, more than two language signs were assumed to be multilingual signs. The frequency of occurrences was also counted using Microsoft Excel. On the other side, the data regarding language ideology obtained from the interviews were analyzed based on keywords and themes introduced by the interviewees. In the second stage, the results obtained from the analysis in the first stage were visualized through the tables. Finally, research conclusions were drawn based on the results of the previous stages.

Results and Discussion

1. Language Patterns in the LL of High Schools and the University in Maumere City

The sign patterns in the LL of the research sites are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Sign patterns and frequency of occurrence

School Code	Sign Patterns			Total
	Monolingual	Bilingual	Multilingual	
A1	67	25	0	92
A2	43	30	1	74
A3	56	18	0	74
A4	78	5	0	83
A5	33	2	0	35
A6	11	1	27	39
A7	55	5	0	60
A8	70	2	0	72
A9	130	32	3	165
Total	543	120	31	694

School Code	Sign Patterns			Total
	Monolingual	Bilingual	Multilingual	
Percentage	78.24	17.29	4.47	100

There are three sign patterns, namely monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual patterns. The monolingual sign pattern dominates the LL by 78.24%, followed by the bilingual pattern by 17.29%. The lowest one is the multilingual pattern, namely 4.47%. All research sites in this study have monolingual and bilingual patterns. Meanwhile, the multilingual pattern exists only in School A2, School A6, and University A9.

a. Monolingual Sign Pattern

In the monolingual pattern, four languages are found, as shown in Table 3 for the data distribution.

Table 3. Languages in Monolingual Pattern

School Code	Languages in Monolingual Pattern			Total
	Indonesian	English	Japanese	
A1	64	2	1	67
A2	41	2	0	43
A3	55	1	0	56
A4	78	0	0	78
A5	33	0	0	33
A6	11	0	0	11
A7	55	0	0	55
A8	70	0	0	70
A9	125	5	0	130
Total	532	10	1	543
Percentage	98.0	1.8	0.2	100.0

Indonesian is the most frequently used by 98%. Almost all monolingual signs at the research sites were written in Indonesian as examples of schoolroom names in the following figures.



Figure 1. Monolingual sign in school A4 (A4/58)



Figure 2. Monolingual sign in school A5 (A5/7)

The monolingual sign pattern has indicated that Indonesian dominates the linguistic landscape at the research sites. The dominant use of Indonesian in the school landscapes legitimates its status as the official language of education. This fact certainly implies the hegemony of Indonesian in schools, even in remote areas of Indonesian educational settings. People feel that the most appropriate sign to display at schools is a monolingual sign using Indonesian. Besides, it also indicates the successful implementation of the educational language policy by the Indonesian government. The government policy to promote Bahasa Indonesia in schools generates occurrences and positive attitudes towards Indonesian as the national and official language.

Through its policy, the Indonesian government enacts Indonesian as the language of instruction during the teaching and learning process, as mandated in the national constitution (Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, 2003; Undang-

undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 24 Tahun 2009 Tentang Bendera, Bahasa, dan Lambang Negara serta Lagu Kebangsaan, 2009). Indonesian must be the main one, while the others, such as Indigenous and foreign languages, are the supports. The further implication of this policy also affects the language choice of school environmental printing, prioritizing Indonesian rather than other languages.

Indonesian domination in the remote educational setting is also contrary to the previous study regarding the language used on the moving objects, bemo, in Kupang City of East Nusa Tenggara (Kamengko et al., 2022). While the previous study indicates that English mostly appears as the written language on *bemo*, whether as words, phrases, or sentences, the present study shows that Indonesian dominates the LL in the educational setting. In other words, individual language preference in a more casual setting favors English, while in a more formal setting like schools and universities, Indonesian is the favorite.

The ranked second and third in monolingual signs are English and Japanese, respectively. English appeared in 3 schools and University A9, as in the following examples.



Figure 3. Monolingual sign in school A3 (A3/6)



Figure 4. Monolingual sign in university A9 (A9/84)

It was seen only 10 times out of 544 monolingual signs. Meanwhile, Japanese was found once in School A1 in the lobby, giving information about the school's name.



Figure 5. Monolingual sign in school A1 (A1/4)

Other than the national constitution, the low occurrence of English and Japanese at the research sites is often associated with their status in Indonesia as foreign languages (Dardjowidjojo, 1998). As foreign languages, exposure to English and Japanese is limited in the national curriculum compared to Indonesian. In schools administered by the Ministry of Education, English is taught in elementary, secondary, and tertiary education, but mostly as a subject lesson. Meanwhile, Japanese is not taught in elementary and Junior High School. It is taught in the language specialization of Senior High School as a subject lesson (Zein, 2020).

b. Bilingual Sign Pattern

Bilingual sign patterns were also found in all schools and the university. This pattern encompasses the following language combinations: Indonesian-English, Indonesian-Latin, Indonesian-Indigenous Language (Bahasa Sikka), Indonesian-German, and Indonesian-Sanskrit. Even though bilingual signs involve Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka), Sanskrit, and 2 foreign languages other than English, namely Latin and German, these four languages never come as monolingual signs. These languages always appear in combination with Indonesian as the *lingua franca* that connects dialects and languages in the super-diverse Indonesia.

The occurrences of the four languages with Indonesian are also divided into translation and code-switching signs

(Andriyanti, 2019). The first type of sign conveys the same meaning in two different expressions, while the second type is a code-switching expression in which the codes change in delivering the sign's meaning.

The distribution of languages in bilingual signs is presented in the following table.

Table 4. Languages in Bilingual Pattern

School Code	Languages in Bilingual Pattern					Total
	Indo* - Eng*	Indo - Latin	Indo - IL*	Indo - Ger*	Indo* - Sans*	
A1	18	0	3	2	2	25
A2	30	0	0	0	0	30
A3	18	0	0	0	0	18
A4	5	0	0	0	0	5
A5	2	0	0	0	0	2
A6	1	0	0	0	0	1
A7	5	0	0	0	0	5
A8	2	0	0	0	0	2
A9	18	14	0	0	0	32
Total	99	14	3	2	2	120
Percentage	82.50	11.67	2.50	1.67	1.67	100

Indo: Indonesian, Eng*: English, IL*: Indigenous language, Ger*: German, Sans*: Sanskrit*

The majority of bilingual signs are Indonesian-English, which is 82.50%. In combination with Indonesian, English mostly appears compared to other languages like Latin, the indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka), German, and Sanskrit. This bilingual sign pattern dominates the schools and university landscapes, as shown in the following examples.



Figure 6. Bilingual sign in School A2 (A2/2)



Figure 7. Bilingual sign in School A7 (A7/11)

Figure 6 provides the information about the room name in Indonesian, followed by the translation in English below. Meanwhile, Figure 7 asks everybody to keep the school clean and not to smoke in the school area. The codes switch between Indonesian and English.

The frequent display of English with Indonesian is acceptable considering its significant role in Indonesia despite its status as a foreign language. The language is used in a large number of communicative domains, including academic research and publishing, development, technology, trade, and tourism, as well as for international and regional diplomacy. Even in tourist attractions like Legian Street, Bali, English is the most visible language (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Hence, despite competition with other foreign languages in Indonesia, English has been believed to be the most important foreign language for many years (Lauder, 2020). It has become the most important foreign language in Indonesia. Moreover, since the adoption of English as the official language of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the position of English is now perceived not only as a foreign language but also as the lingua franca to communicate with other ASEAN members (Zein, 2020).

In the second place of the bilingual patterns is Indonesian-Latin for 11.67%. As the following examples show, those signs were captured 14 times in University A9.



Figure 8. Bilingual sign in University A9 (A9/25)



Figure 9 Monolingual sign in university A9 (A9/27)

In University A9, all Indonesian-Latin signs are code-switching signs. In Figure 12, the name of one faculty of the University is written in Indonesian, and then the university motto *'non scholae sed vitae discimus'* is written in Latin. The next figure shows one of the building names of the University, where 'Gedung' is Indonesian, and the name of the building *'Sapientia',* meaning wisdom, is Latin.

Other than English, Latin is another foreign language that appears quite often as bi- and multilingual sign, especially at the university A9 and school A2. It is interesting because even though Latin is not a subject taught at most high schools and universities, many of them still display the landscape using Latin. From a historical perspective, Latin is used quite often because it has a strong root in education. In long-established universities like Oxford, Cambridge, and Leeds University, etc., the mottoes that can be seen in their landscape are naturally in Latin. Some universities in South Africa also do so. Since the emergence of universities in Europe in the middle of the eleventh century, Latin continued to be the language used to educate and converse (Evans, 2015). Moreover, the scientific names of animals and plants are also in Latin. Sometimes, for learning purposes, Indonesian and Latin names of plants in the school area are written side by side. In Indonesia, the study of LL also showed that Latin was used to identify plants and trees in the school environment because it was believed that attaching the sign of the plant's name in Indonesian and Latin could enhance students' understanding of learning a foreign language (Riani et al., 2021).

The third is the combination of Indonesian-Indigenous Language (Bahasa Sikka) at 2.50%. It occurred 3 times in School A1 as follows.



Figure 10. Bilingual sign in School A1 (A1/8)

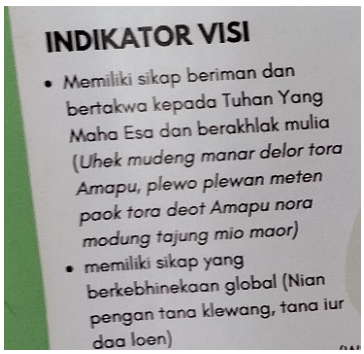


Figure 11. Bilingual sign in School A1 (A1/1)

All three signs are translation signs. Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) is used to translate the phrases or sentences written in Indonesian. In Figure 14, Bahasa Sikka *'uhe die dan hading'* translates Indonesian *selamat datang*. In the next Figure, some *'Indikator Visi'*s of School A1 were written in Indonesian, while the translations in Bahasa Sikka were also provided below.

Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) is eventually exposed in school A1 as a bilingual sign and in school A6 as a multilingual sign. However, its presence is only in a small number compared to Indonesian and English. This finding strengthens what has been stated by some scholars who believe that LL can be a

beneficial tool in studying minority languages, in many cases, indigenous languages. It helps to confirm or to resist existing or presumed language prestige patterns and hierarchies, and what languages are highly valued(Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Marten et al., 2012). If the previous studies of LL in Indonesia have already informed us that Indigenous languages like Javanese, Sanskrit, Torajan, etc. tend to be marginalized (Andriyanti, 2019; Foster & Welsh, 2021; Halim & Sukamto, 2023; Harbon & Halimi, 2019; Riani et al., 2021; Sumarlam et al., 2021), the present study also reveals the same findings, indicating that the indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) is not used frequently in the school landscape. It is never shown as monolingual signs at all research sites. Moreover, as the bi- and multilingual signs, Bahasa Sikka, in combination with other languages, appear only in two schools, with fewer occurrences than Indonesian and English.

In the last place is the pattern of Indonesian-German and Indonesian-Sanskrit, 1.7%, respectively.



Figure 12. Bilingual sign in School A1 (A1/77)



Figure 13. Bilingual sign in School A1 (A1/67)

Both signs above were seen in School A1. In Figure 16, an Indonesian-German bilingual sign emphasizes the position of the school as a future partner school program in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, the cultural institution of the Federal Republic of Germany. Besides, in Figure 17, an Indonesian-Sanskrit sign appears in the building's inauguration inscription. Sanskrit is used to mention the motto of the central foundation patronizing school A1. The central foundation is located on Java Island, which is home to Sanskrit.

c. Multilingual Sign Pattern

Multilingual sign patterns were captured in School A2, School A6, and University A9, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Languages in Multilingual Pattern

School Code	Languages in Multilingual Pattern		Total
	Indonesian – English - IL*	Indonesian – English - Latin	
A1	0	0	0
A2	0	1	1
A3	0	0	0
A4	0	0	0
A5	0	0	0
A6	27	0	27
A7	0	0	0
A8	0	0	0
A9	0	3	3
Total	27	4	31
Percentage	87.1	12.9	100

IL: Indigenous language*

In the multilingual sign pattern, there are two language combinations, namely Indonesian-English-Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) and Indonesian-English-Latin. The combination of Indonesian-English-Indigenous language is found only in School A6, while Indonesian-Latin-English is only found in School A1 and University A9. The multilingual signs that dominate the linguistic landscape are the combination of Indonesian-English-Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka), at 87.1%, and in second place is the combination of Indonesian-Latin-English, at 12.9%. All multilingual signs in School A6 are translation signs. Meanwhile, all multilingual signs in University A9 and School A2 are code-switching signs.



Figure 14. Bilingual sign in School A6 (A6/2)



Figure 15. Bilingual sign in School A2 (A2/37)

Figure 14 shows the use of three languages, in which English and Bahasa Sikka provide the translation of Indonesian *'Perpustakaan'*. The next Figure demonstrates the translation sign dominated by Indonesian, while Latin appears as the school motto *'totus tuus'*, and English is characterized by the school's name 'St. John Paul II'.

2. Language Ideology in the LL of High Schools and the University in Maumere City

The use of seven languages in three sign patterns indicates the existence of multilingualism in the school environment in Maumere City. The situation represented through the school landscape is a manifestation of the language ideology. Interviews with informants narrowed down to four main themes: language policy influencing language practice, language on display as learning tools, language as a school identity marker, and language as a symbol of culture.

a. Language Policy Influencing Language Practice

Language policy influences language practice, including language use in the school landscapes. According to Informant 4, the use of English in the school landscapes is in line with the policy enacted by the ex-East Nusa Tenggara Governor, Viktor Laiskodat, which encourages the use of English and stipulates Wednesday as an English Day (Peraturan Gubernur Nusa Tenggara Timur Nomor 56 Tahun 2018 Tentang Hari Berbahasa Inggris, 2018). He said,

> *Yes, and it is also in accordance with the old governor's program, Governor Laiskodat, that students must be required to be able to speak English, so this can make the habit (Informant 4).*

The Informant reaffirms that other than following the governor's rule, the use of English in the school landscape aims to familiarize students with English. The use of English in the school setting is believed to assist students' learning. Therefore, in implementing the English Day policy, they can perform better.

Besides, the minimum exposure of the Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) at the research sites is also influenced internally by a covert language policy (Du Plessis, 2012) towards the use of Indigenous languages at schools, as stated by Informant 1 from School A1.

> *It is not written, in this school, it's not just Sikka people who come to school, so it's not just Sikka people, it's people from outside, from Larantuka, Ende, if they must learn Bahasa Sikka, they have to work hard. It is burdensome (Informant 1).*

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From the informant 1, we know that School A1 is a favorite private school in Maumere city. It is a destination for students from neighboring regencies who speak different indigenous languages. Enacting one indigenous language displayed in the public space is assumed to be unfair to students from various ethnic groups who may feel obliged to learn Bahasa Sikka. Hence, there is an unwritten school rule that promotes more use of Indonesian as the *lingua franca* and the lesser use of the indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka).

Apart from the covert language policy, the scarce use of Bahasa Sikka in the school setting may also be affected by unclear policies that guide the efforts to revitalize the indigenous languages through education. For example, recent findings suggest that in primary schools in South Sulawesi, there are no explicit policies that require them to adopt the indigenous languages to be involved in the school language practice. In the absence of clear directives from educational authorities, schools and teachers are left without adequate guidance to implement multilingual education effectively. As a result, the majority of educators tend to rely on Indonesian (Rusdiansyah et al., 2025).

Regarding the use of Indonesian in the research setting, it has already been elaborated in the previous part that it is a further implication of the language policy. The absolute dominance of Indonesian at the schools and the university has implied that the stakeholders have implemented the language policy in their respective work environments as mandated by the constitution.

b. Language on Display as a Learning Tool

The emergence of bilingual and multilingual signs, whether as translation or code-switching signs, is perceived as a good learning tool for students. Informant 2 said,

> *English accompanying Indonesian is actually just an introduction to vocabulary because we know that English is a global language. One way to introduce vocabulary is to put up signs that have English on them (Informant 2).*

Informant 2 assesses that there is a pedagogical purpose in making bilingual translation signs in his school. These bilingual signs can provide benefits, especially in terms of students' knowledge of foreign language vocabulary, especially English.

On the other side, Informant 9 stresses the use of language, especially Latin, as a learning tool by putting them in the landscape of the campus area. He said,

> *Indeed, Latin is not widely used as a daily language, but it is a language used to provide scientific names. In the biology education study program, for example, the scientific names of plants or animals are from Latin (Informant 9).*

The informant reveals an awareness of the importance of Latin in the academic world, providing the names of plants and animals. Hence, Latin exposure in the campus landscape can be supportive for students learning those Latin names.

Both Informants insist on the use of bi- and multilingual signs in the school LL, which is assumed to be beneficial for students' learning of foreign languages. In the context of English learning, some scholars reveal that the linguistic landscape can provide wide opportunities for students to conduct incidental learning of lexical items, structures, and spelling in English, including learning about lexical, grammatical, or spelling errors. Students can also be more aware of text-to-world connections that allow creative analysis around social language use (Da Silva, 2023; Li & Marshall, 2020). Other than incidental learning, the languages on display in public spaces are supposed to be an important resource for language teaching and learning in the classroom, and they can also be used for raising language awareness and developing students' symbolic competence and literacy skills (Gorter, 2018; Gorter et al., 2021; Rowland, 2013).

c. Language as School Identity Marker

Language is also seen as the marker of school identity. The existence of monolingual signs of several foreign languages, as well as

bilingual and multilingual signs involving several foreign languages, points out the particular characteristic of School A1. Informant 1 from School A1 said,

> *Because, yes, because this high school has its own characteristics, its characteristic is in the language, there are so many languages taught here, so that all school residents, especially students, must understand that, not only in learning but, contextually, it can also be from outside (Informant 1).*

The Informant 1 from School A1 emphasizes the school's characteristics through the languages taught and shown in the school landscape. This claim is also supported by the data indicating the language richness in that school. School A1 is the only school that has a monolingual sign in Japanese as well as bilingual signs in Indonesian-Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka), Indonesian-German, and Indonesian-Sanskrit.

In school A2, the Latin motto *'totus tuus'*, meaning 'totally yours', has been taken as the school motto. It derives from St. John Paul II life motto, and this motto is associated with the identity of the catholic school that upholds St. John Paul II as its patron. Informant from School A2 said,

> *So that's a kind of school spirit. The spirit of this school is taken from the figure of Pope John Paul II. Then, the Pope's motto is Totus Tuus, so we follow the Pope's motto. That is the spirit of this school (Informant 2).*

She has made it clear. Inspired by the life of St. John Paul II, School A1 has adopted the motto to be the life spirit of the school. That means that every action, policy, and school program is taken under the spirit of '*totus tuus*' which devotes everything to God only.

The use of Latin as a school motto is quite prevalent in private catholic schools all over the world, including School A2, which has a strong relationship with the catholic religious foundation under the local diocese. It characterizes the school itself as a private catholic school. One of the academic studies that supports this claim is in the case of South Africa. If the higher and secondary education institutions in South Africa have strong ties to Christian religious foundations, then naturally, their mottos, usually in Latin, will reflect this relationship and heritage (Evans, 2015).

Informant 6 also implies the language as an indicator of school identity as follows.

> *. . . if Indonesians or people from outside want to know where the school is located, they will see the Indigenous language, and it is an identity that, oh this is in Sikka Regency or Maumere, not in Ende (Informant 6).*

The informant argues that the Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) functions as the marker of the geographical location of the school. The use of Bahasa Sikka emphasizes that the school is located in the Sikka regency of East Nusa Tenggara.

d. Language as a Symbol of Culture

Language is also perceived as a symbol system. As a symbol, language stands in or represents something else, including culture. It embodies a community's collective knowledge, values, beliefs, practices, and traditions. It is delivered by Informant 9, saying that,

> *Because it is very symbolic, language is symbolic, something symbolic has a meaning behind a word. It is very deep when we encounter indigenous languages. For example, in welcoming people, we have Huler Wair using Bahasa Sikka and so on (Informant 9).*

He highlights the importance of using the Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) as a symbol that has a deep cultural meaning. He gives the example of one traditional ceremony in welcoming people that used to be conducted in the Sikka Regency called *Huler Wair*. During the process, the Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) in a lyrical form is conveyed to the newcomers.

The last theme introduced by the informants regarding the LL in the school

environment is language as the symbol of culture. One of the informants insists that language as a symbol of culture must be preserved, including through exposure in public space. It is important to have language exposed in public areas since language is a symbol system that also carries culture with it (Tektigul et al., 2023). As a symbol, language is usually associated with norms, values, traditions, and practices, which later form the ethnic identity of a group of people. Hence, when a person uses his/her language, others can capture those things associated with the language. By using the language, we preserve not only the language itself but also the culture.

Conclusion

In the era of a borderless community, everything, including languages, becomes easier to enter a community. The high intensity of human interaction among communities provides a space for more language contact and multilingualism, especially in the municipal area. In Maumere city of NTT province, the school and university landscapes have depicted multilingualism through the use of seven languages in public space, namely Indonesian, English, Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka), Sanskrit, Japanese, German, and Latin. Some languages appear as monolingual signs, while the combination of those seven languages forms sign patterns in bi- and multilingual signs. Furthermore, Indonesian has a greater preference from the school authorities, followed by English, the Indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka), and other foreign languages.

The linguistic display in the school and university landscape is also not arbitrary. It represents language ideology or what people think about the language itself. In this regard, the language use in LL of schools and the university in Maumere city is associated with several themes. First, language practice, like what is written in the landscape, is the implementation of language policy enacted by the authority. Second, the language on display is also seen as a beneficial learning tool for students in their incidental and in-class learning. Other than that, LL represents the school's identity. It becomes the indicator of school characteristics, values that they uphold, and the geographical location of a school. Finally, language also represents culture. Using language, oral or in writing, means preserving the language and also all norms, values, traditions, and practices associated with the language.

This research also clearly confirms the position of the indigenous languages, which are indeed less desirable in the public sphere in Indonesia. Marginalization towards the indigenous language (Bahasa Sikka) is also captured in the present research, following the national pattern, while Indonesian and English appear to be the dominant language trends. In addition, the large number of indigenous languages in a region does not guarantee their adequate use, especially when they have to compete with national languages and other more prestigious international languages. In NTT Province alone, which has 72 indigenous languages, the indigenous languages are considered important as identity markers and symbols of culture, but they are still not widely used in public spaces.

However, the present study has a limitation in terms of the scope of the study. It is still limited only to the educational setting, which covers high schools and a university. It cannot describe the comprehensive linguistic ecology of Maumere city. To understand it more thoroughly, it is necessary to carry out further research that focuses on the bigger scope of the city. In this way, future studies can complement the existing study and, at the same time, contribute to research related to the linguistic landscape in Indonesia.

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