
Research Article

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Exploring Students' Multilingual Awareness through Linguistic Landscapes: A Case Study of Pondok Pesantren Modern Sunanul Muhtadin, Gresik

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Abstract

The presence of multilingualism in educational settings does not necessarily indicate that students are aware of linguistic diversity, language functions, and language meanings within their social environment. Linguistic landscapes offer an opportunity to examine how visible language practices may contribute to students' multilingual awareness. This study aims to explore students' multilingual awareness through the linguistic landscape of Pondok Pesantren Modern Sunanul Muhtadin, Gresik. Specifically, it investigates how the linguistic landscape reflects multilingual practices, examines the extent of students' multilingual awareness, and explores the role of linguistic landscapes in promoting such awareness. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study collected visual data through documentation and questionnaires to 50 students. The findings reveal that the linguistic landscape reflects multilingual practices through the coexistence of Indonesian, Arabic, English, Javanese, and Mandarin in monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signs. Next, students demonstrated relatively high multilingual awareness, particularly regarding language presence, language functions, and positive attitudes toward multilingualism, although their critical awareness of language hierarchy and power relations remained less developed. Furthermore, the linguistic landscape functions as a pedagogical resource that supports vocabulary acquisition, language development, and the formation of language awareness. These findings highlight the educational value of linguistic landscapes in fostering multilingual awareness within multilingual learning environments.

Keywords: linguistic landscape; multilingual awareness; modern pesantren

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1. Introduction

The increasing mobility of people, information, and cultures in the era of globalization has intensified multilingual practices in many social domains, including educational institutions. As a result, multilingualism has become an important area of inquiry in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. One approach that has received considerable attention in multilingualism studies is linguistic landscape (LL), which refers to the visible display of languages in public spaces through signs, billboards, posters, notices, and other written texts. Since the pioneering work of Landry and Bourhis (1997), the linguistic landscape has been recognized as a valuable tool for understanding how languages are represented, negotiated, and valued within a particular community (Gorter, 2013).

Linguistic landscapes do not merely function as informational resources, they also carry symbolic meanings related to identity, ideology, power, and language policy (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The presence, absence, or prominence of particular languages in public spaces often reflects broader sociocultural and political processes. Consequently, linguistic landscape research has expanded beyond documenting language distribution to examining how linguistic signs shape and are shaped by social actors and their language practices. In educational settings, linguistic landscapes have increasingly been viewed as potential learning resources. The linguistic landscape can provide authentic language input and create opportunities for language learning beyond classroom boundaries (Gorter, 2018). Through exposure to multilingual signs, students may become more aware of language diversity, language functions, and the sociocultural meanings attached to different languages. The educational value of linguistic landscapes has therefore attracted growing scholarly interest, particularly in multilingual schools, universities, and other learning environments.

One concept that has gained prominence in this line of inquiry is multilingual awareness. Multilingual awareness refers to individuals' consciousness and sensitivity toward the existence, functions, and meanings of multiple languages within their social environment (Carter, 2003). It means that multilingual awareness encompasses not only the recognition of linguistic diversity but also the ability to reflect critically on language use, language choice, and the social implications of multilingual practices. Several studies have suggested that multilingual awareness contributes positively to language learning (Haukås et al., 2024; Sulis et al., 2025), intercultural understanding (Gkaintartzi & Katsara, 2024), and the development of favorable attitudes toward linguistic diversity (Xu, 2024). Although linguistic landscape studies in educational settings have attracted considerable attention, a growing number of studies have also examined linguistic landscapes in pesantren contexts (Aqila & Efendi, 2024; Aziz et al., 2025; Lailiyah & Amelia, 2025; Yusuf, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2022). These studies have mainly explored the distribution, visibility, and functions of languages displayed in public spaces, highlighting how Arabic, English, Indonesian, and local languages reflect institutional identities, language policies, and educational orientations. Similar findings were reported by Al Wafi et al. (2025), who argued that the integration of linguistic landscapes in the educational environments provides added value by strengthening students' reading, writing, and speaking skills while fostering multilingual awareness and positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity. However, despite acknowledging the pedagogical potential of linguistic landscapes, previous studies have rarely explored the extent to which students develop multilingual awareness or how linguistic landscapes contribute to such development. This gap is particularly important in pesantren settings, where multilingual practices are institutionalized through language policies and everyday interactions, making them an ideal context for examining the relationship between linguistic landscapes and students' multilingual awareness.

In Indonesia, modern pesantren provide a relevant setting for investigating the relationship between linguistic landscapes and multilingual awareness. Unlike many conventional pesantren, modern pesantren commonly implement bilingual or multilingual language policies involving Arabic, English, Indonesian, and, in some cases, local languages. These languages coexist and interact within both spoken and written domains, creating a rich multilingual environment that potentially influences students' language perceptions, attitudes, and practices. One example is Pondok Pesantren Modern Sunanul Muhtadin (henceforth: PPM Sunanul Muhtadin) in Gresik, East Java. As a modern pesantren that promotes the use of English and Arabic alongside Indonesian, the institution presents a diverse linguistic landscape manifested in signs, announcements, slogans, instructional materials, and other written texts throughout the institutional environment. Such multilingual displays provide students with continuous exposure to different languages and may serve as an important source of language awareness and language learning.

Given this context, the present study aims to explore students' multilingual awareness through the linguistic landscape of PPM Sunanul Muhtadin, Gresik. Specifically, the study seeks to examine how

the linguistic landscape reflects multilingual practices, investigate the extent of students' multilingual awareness, and explore how linguistic landscapes contribute to the development of such awareness (Bhandari, 2023). To address these objectives, this study draws on two relevant conceptual frameworks: the linguistic landscape framework (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and the concept of multilingual awareness (Carter, 2003). These frameworks provide a basis for examining the multilingualism in pesantren and the students' multilingual awareness. By integrating these perspectives, this study contributes to the growing body of research on linguistic landscapes in educational settings and offers insight into the role of multilingual environments in fostering language awareness among students in pesantren.

2. Methods

This current study employed descriptive qualitative design with a mixed-methods approach. It integrates documentation of linguistic landscape data and a questionnaire on students' multilingual awareness to examine the relationship between multilingual environmental exposure and students' language awareness in a modern pesantren context. The qualitative component focuses on the analysis of linguistic landscape data, while the quantitative component provides descriptive insights into students' multilingual awareness. This current study was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Modern Sunanul Muhtadin, Gresik, East Java, Indonesia. The institution was selected due to its status as a modern pesantren that implements bilingual language policies, particularly Arabic and English, alongside Indonesian and local languages. This multilingual environment makes the institution a relevant site for investigating linguistic landscape and multilingual awareness.

This current study was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Modern Sunanul Muhtadin, Gresik, East Java, Indonesia. The institution was selected due to its status as a modern pesantren that implements bilingual language policies, particularly Arabic and English, alongside Indonesian and local languages. This multilingual environment makes the institution a relevant site for investigating linguistic landscape and multilingual awareness. Data were collected from May 15 to 19, 2026, through visual documentation of linguistic signs and questionnaires.

The documentation was carried out by collecting visual data of the linguistic landscape within the pesantren environment. This included photographs of written languages on signs, announcements, and other visible language displays found in the dormitories, canteen, musholla, and various outdoor areas of the pesantren. The photographs were captured using a smartphone camera to systematically document the visible signs. The use of documentation as a data collection method is consistent with the methodological tradition of linguistic landscape research. According to Hult (2009), linguistic landscape analysis relies primarily on photography and visual analysis, with photographs serving as the core source of data for documenting language use in defined social spaces. Through systematic photographic documentation, researchers are able to capture the visibility, distribution, and functions of languages represented in a public environment. In this study, the documentation data were used to identify patterns of language use and representation in the pesantren's linguistic landscape.

Next, the questionnaires were distributed to 50 students, consisting of 25 male and 25 female students. Those questionnaires used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). It consisted of five dimensions designed to measure students' multilingual awareness in relation to the linguistic landscape of the pesantren. The first dimension, Awareness of Language Presence, comprised four items (A1-A4) examining students' recognition of multilingual practices in their environment. The second dimension, Perceptions of Language Functions in the Linguistic Landscape, consisted of five items (B1-B5) exploring students' understanding of the roles and meanings associated with different languages. The third dimension, Attitudes toward Multilingualism, included six items (C1-C6) measuring students' affective responses to multilingual practices. The fourth dimension, Critical Awareness of the Linguistic Landscape, comprised four items (D1-D4)

investigating students' critical reflections on language choice and language dominance. Finally, the fifth dimension, Language Practices and the Influence of Multilingual Exposure, consisted of seven items (E1-E7) examining how the linguistic landscape influenced students' language learning and language use.

As previously mentioned, this study employed a mixed-methods approach, in which the questionnaire data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics to identify general patterns of students' responses across the five dimensions. Meanwhile, the documentation data were analyzed qualitatively by categorizing the signs based on language use and function. The integration of both data sources was used to support interpretation and to provide a more holistic understanding of the relationship between linguistic landscapes and students' multilingual awareness.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Multilingual Practices in the Pesantren Linguistic Landscape

A total of 103 signs were documented across the pesantren environment, consisting of 38 signs from the male dormitory (pondok putra) and 65 signs from the female dormitory (pondok putri). The analysis revealed the presence of four languages in the linguistic landscape, namely Indonesian, Arabic, English, and Javanese, as well as one sign containing Mandarin. These languages appeared in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual forms, reflecting the multilingual character of the pesantren environment.

Table 1. The Distribution of Languages in the Linguistic Landscape of PPM Sunanul Muhtadin

Type	Language Combination	Female Dormitory	Male Dormitory	Total
Monolingual	Indonesian	23	11	34
	Arabic	1	1	2
	English	2	1	3
Bilingual	Indonesian - Arabic	9	19	28
	Indonesian - English	4	4	8
	English - Indonesian	7	0	7
	Arabic - Indonesian	6	0	6
	Indonesian - Javanese	8	0	8
	Mandarin - Indonesian	1	0	1
	Arabic - English	0	1	1
Multilingual	Indonesian - Arabic - English	2	2	4
	Indonesian - Arabic - English - Javanese	1	0	1

English - Arabic - Indonesian	1	0	1
Total	65	39	104

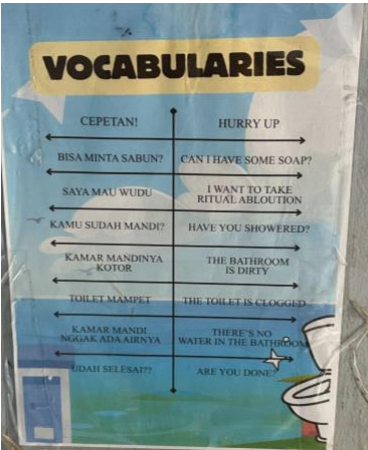
Source: Author's analysis

Table 1 presents the distribution of languages across the documented signs. Overall, bilingual signs constituted the largest category within the linguistic landscape. Indonesian appeared as the most dominant language and was frequently combined with Arabic and English. In the female dormitory, bilingual combinations included Indonesian - Arabic, Indonesian - English, English - Indonesian, Arabic - Indonesian, Indonesian - Javanese, and Mandarin - Indonesian. Meanwhile, in the male dormitory, the most common bilingual combinations were Indonesian - Arabic and Indonesian - English, with one sign displaying Arabic - English. This dominance of Indonesian and its combination with other languages can be observed in various signs throughout the pesantren. Figure 1 illustrates the use of Indonesian alongside Javanese expressions in a daily conversation guide, while Figure 2 presents a bilingual vocabulary poster combining Indonesian and English. These signs demonstrate how Indonesian serves as a primary language that coexists with other languages to facilitate communication and language learning in the pesantren environment



Kepanggih malih	Ketamu lagi
Sugeng rawuh	Selamat datang
Ampun kuwatir	Jangan khawatir
Kula angsal tangklet	Saya boleh tanya
Kula remen sanget	Saya senang banget
Tolong bangsul malih	Tolong ulangi lagi
Atos - atos	Hati - Hati
Bade tindak pundi	Mau pergi kemane
Mlampah mawan	Jalan kaki saja
Jenengan tiang sae	Kamu orang baik

Figure 1. An Indonesian and Javanese sign in the female dormitory



CEPETAN!	HURRY UP
BISA MINTA SABUN?	CAN I HAVE SOME SOAP?
SAYA MAU WUDU	I WANT TO TAKE RITUAL ABLUTION
KAMU SUDAH MANDI?	HAVE YOU SHOWERED?
KAMAR MANDINYA KOTOR	THE BATHROOM IS DIRTY
TOILET MAMPET	THE TOILET IS CLOGGED
KAMAR MANDI NGGAK ADA AIRNYA	THERE'S NO WATER IN THE BATHROOM
UDAH SELESA?	ARE YOU DONE?

Figure 2. An Indonesian and English sign in the male dormitory

Monolingual signs were also observed, particularly in Indonesian. Of the signs documented, 34 monolingual signs were written exclusively in Indonesian, indicating its important role as the primary medium of communication within the pesantren. Arabic and English appeared less frequently as standalone languages, suggesting that they are more commonly used alongside Indonesian rather than independently.



WAKTU	KEGIATAN
3.00 – 05.00	Beristirahat
05.00 – 06.00	Hafidz Tahfid al-Qur'an
06.00 – 06.45	Sarapan, Pukul Keras, dan Pengetikan untuk Matakuliah
06.45 – 07.00	Asal Pagi
07.00 – 13.00	Kegiatan Belajar Mengajar di Kelas
13.00 – 13.40	Sholat Zhuhur Berjamaah, Sunnah Rawatib, dan Makan Siang
13.40 – 14.40	Qailulah (istirahat siang)
14.40 – 15.30	Sholat Ashar Berjamaah
15.30 – 16.00	Hafidz Tahfid al-Qur'an
16.00 – 17.00	Hafidz Lughawiyah
17.15 – 18.15	Sholat Maghrib, Dzikir, dan Sunnah Rawatib
18.15 – 19.00	Bathtul Haid, Nihases Al-Qur'an
19.00 – 19.30	Sholat Isya, Dzikir, dan Sunnah Rawatib
19.30 – 19.40	Language drills
19.40 – 20.00	Makan Malam
20.00 – 21.00	Madrasah Fardiyah
21.00 – 21.40	Belajar Mandiri
21.40 – 22.00	Adab Tidur (bersuci, Slat, Membaca Do'a, dan Memberikan Tempat Tidur)
22.00 – 03.00	Tidur

Figure 3. A multilingual sign in Indonesian, Arabic, English, and Javanese

Multilingual signs were relatively limited in number but demonstrated the coexistence of three or more languages within a single text. These signs combined Indonesian, Arabic, English, and in one case Javanese. The presence of multilingual signs reflects the institution's effort to accommodate diverse linguistic resources and to reinforce its multilingual orientation. Figure 3 above provides an example of a multilingual sign displaying the daily schedule of female students. While Indonesian serves as the primary language throughout the poster, lexical items from Arabic (e.g. *halaqah tahfidz* al-Qur'an and *qailulah*), English (*language drills*), and Javanese (*nderes*) are incorporated to refer to specific religious, educational, and cultural practices. This sign illustrates how different linguistic resources coexist within a single text and contribute to the multilingual character of the pesantren environment.

3.2. Students' Multilingual Awareness in the Pesantren Environment

To examine the extent of students' multilingual awareness, questionnaire data from 50 respondents were analyzed. The questionnaire explored multilingual awareness through four dimensions: awareness of language presence, perceptions of language functions in the linguistic landscape, attitudes toward multilingualism, and critical awareness of the linguistic landscape. Together, three dimensions provide insights into how students perceive, interpret, and respond to the multilingual environment of the pesantren.

3.2.1 Awareness of Language Presence

The first dimension of multilingual awareness examined students' awareness of language presence within the pesantren environment. As shown in Table 2, all four indicators received relatively high mean scores, ranging from 4.04 to 4.50. These results indicate that students possess a strong awareness of the multilingual aspect of their educational environment.

Table 2. The Mean Score of Students' Awareness of Language Presence

Item	Statement	Mean
A1	I am aware of the use of more than one language in the pesantren environment	4.32
A2	I can distinguish the languages used on signs, slogans, and banners in the pesantren	4.04
A3	I pay attention to the use of Arabic, English, Indonesian, and local languages in the pesantren environment	4.06
A4	I am aware that each language serves particular functions in the pesantren	4.50

Source: Author's analysis

Among the four indicators, awareness of the functional roles of different languages obtained the highest mean score ($M = 4.50$). It shows that students not only recognize the existence of multiple languages but also understand that each language serves distinct communicative and symbolic purposes within the pesantren. Such awareness is likely influenced by the institution's language policy, which promotes the use of Arabic and English alongside Indonesian and local languages in different contexts.

Students also demonstrated a strong awareness of the presence of multiple languages in the pesantren ($M = 4.32$) which reflects the visibility of multilingual practices in everyday interactions and public displays throughout the institution. In addition, respondents reported paying attention to the use of Arabic, English, Indonesian, and local languages in their surroundings ($M = 4.06$), while also indicating that they were able to distinguish the languages used on signs, slogans, banners, and other informational displays in within the pesantren environment ($M = 4.04$).

3.2.2. Perceptions of Language Functions in the Linguistic Landscape

The second dimension explored students' perceptions of the functions performed by different languages in the pesantren's linguistic landscape. As presented in Table 3, all items obtained relatively high mean scores, ranging from 3.84 and 4.66. These results show that students generally understood that different languages serve distinct communicative and symbolic purposes within the pesantren environment.

Table 3. The Mean Score of Students' Perceptions of Language Functions

Item	Statement	Mean
B1	Arabic is used to represent Islamic identity in the pesantren	3.96
B2	English is used to emphasize the	4.18

	importance of global competence for students	
B3	Indonesian is used as the national language and to facilitate understanding among students	4.66
B4	Local languages are used to reflect cultural identity	3.84
B5	The use of more than one language helps improve understanding of information in the pesantren	4.28

Source: Author's analysis

The highest mean score was recorded for the statement that Indonesian is used as the national language and facilitates understanding among all students ($M = 4.66$) which indicates a strong recognition of Indonesian as the primary language for ensuring accessibility and effective communication within the institution. The result is consistent with the linguistic landscape findings, which showed that Indonesian appeared most frequently and functioned as the dominant language across monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs.

Students also revealed strong agreement that the use of multiple languages enhances their understanding of information in the pesantren ($M = 4.28$). Similarly, respondents perceived English as a language associated with the development of global competence ($M = 4.18$), reflecting the institution's emphasis on preparing students to engage with broader educational and international contexts.

3.2.3. Attitudes toward Multilingualism

The third dimension examined students' attitudes toward multilingualism in the pesantren environment. As shown in Table 4, most indicators received relatively high mean scores, suggesting generally positive attitudes toward the use of multiple languages. The mean scores ranged from 3.22 to 4.46, indicating varying degrees of agreement across different aspects of multilingualism.

Table 4. The Mean Score of Students' Attitudes toward Multilingualism

Item	Statement	Mean
C1	Pride in the use of multiple languages in the pesantren	4.20
C2	Support for multilingual signs and information boards	4.30
C3	Motivation to learn languages frequently encountered in the pesantren	4.16
C4	Multilingualism makes the pesantren appear more modern and educational	4.46
C5	The use of multiple languages is not confusing	3.22

C6	Local languages remain important despite the use of foreign languages	3.58
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Source: Author's analysis

The highest mean score was obtained for the statement that multilingualism makes the pesantren environment appear more modern and educational (M= 4.46) which indicates that students strongly associate the presence of multiple languages with educational quality and institutional development. Similarly, students expressed strong support for the use of multiple languages on informational signs and public displays (M= 4.30) and reported feeling proud of the multilingual environment of the pesantren (M= 4.20).

Students also indicated that the multilingual environment encouraged their interest in learning languages that frequently appeared in the pesantren (M= 4.16). This finding shows that exposure to multiple languages may contribute positively to students' motivation to develop their language competencies. However, some variation emerged in responses to the remaining indicators. The statement regarding the continued importance of local languages despite the use of foreign languages received a moderate mean score (M= 3.58), with half of the respondents selecting the neutral option. This result may indicate differing views among students regarding the role of local languages within a pesantren environment that strongly emphasizes Arabic and English.

The lowest mean score was recorded for the statement that the use of multiple languages is not confusing (M= 3.22). Nearly half of the respondents (48%) selected the neutral option, while 16% expressed disagreement. Although students generally viewed multilingualism positively, these findings suggest that navigating multiple languages simultaneously may present certain challenges for some students.

3.2.4. Critical Awareness of the Linguistic Landscape

The fourth dimension examined students' critical awareness of language use in the pesantren's linguistic landscape. Compared with the previous dimensions, the findings reveal greater variation in students' responses, suggesting differing levels of critical engagement with multilingual signs and language practices.

Table 5. The Mean Score of Students' Critical Awareness of the Linguistic Landscape

Item	Statement	Mean
D1	Awareness of language errors in signs and written displays	3.20
D2	Awareness that language choice serves particular purposes	4.28
D3	Understanding that language use may reflect power or status	3.24
D4	Questioning why certain languages are more dominant than others	3.38

Source: Author's analysis

Table 5 shows mean scores ranged from 3.20 to 4.28 with the highest mean score for the statement that language choices on signs and public displays serve particular purposes (M= 4.28). A substantial

majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that students generally recognize that the selection of languages in the linguistic landscape is not arbitrary. Rather, they perceive language choice as reflecting specific communicative, educational, or institutional objectives.

In contrast, the remaining indicators received noticeably lower mean scores. Students demonstrated only moderate awareness of language errors in signs and written displays ($M = 3.20$). Half of the respondents selected the neutral option, while 20% expressed disagreement. This finding indicates that although students are frequently exposed to multilingual signs, many may not actively evaluate their linguistic accuracy. Similarly, students showed moderate levels of awareness regarding the relationship between language and social power ($M = 3.24$). While some respondents recognized that certain languages may symbolize authority, prestige, or status, a considerable proportion remained neutral or disagreed.

3.2.5. The Role of Linguistic Landscape in Fostering Students' Multilingual Awareness

To examine how the linguistic landscape contributes to the development of multilingual awareness, students were asked to evaluate the influence of multilingual exposure on their language practices and learning experiences. As presented in Table 6, all seven indicators obtained high mean scores, ranging from 4.10 to 4.68. These results indicate that the linguistic landscape of the pesantren plays a significant role in shaping students' multilingual awareness and practices.

Table 6. The Mean Score of Linguistic Landscape Role in Fostering Students' Multilingual Awareness

Item	Statement	Mean
E1	The presence of multiple languages motivates me to use more than one language	4.38
E2	Multilingual signs help me acquire new vocabulary	4.68
E3	I have used words or expressions that I encountered in the pesantren environment	4.42
E4	My language ability has developed because of the pesantren environment	4.30
E5	The pesantren environment has increased my awareness of the importance of multilingual competence	4.26
E6	Multilingual signs encourage me to use foreign and local languages more actively	4.10
E7	Written languages in the pesantren environment (linguistic landscape) help shape students' language habits	4.14

Source: Author's analysis

The highest mean score was recorded for the statement that multilingual signs help students acquire new vocabulary ($M = 4.68$). More than two-thirds of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that the linguistic landscape functions as an informal language-learning resource. Through

continuous exposure to written Arabic, English, Indonesian, and local languages, students are able to encounter and learn new lexical items beyond formal classroom instruction.

Similarly, students reported that they had used words or expressions encountered in the linguistic landscape ($M = 4.42$) and that the presence of multiple languages motivated them to use more than one language in their daily lives ($M = 4.38$). These results show that the linguistic landscape not only provides linguistic input but also influences students' language behavior by encouraging active engagement with multiple languages. The respondents also perceived the multilingual environment as contributing to the development of their language abilities ($M = 4.30$) and increasing their awareness of the importance of multilingual competence ($M = 4.26$). Such results indicate that students recognize the educational value of multilingual exposure and view linguistic diversity as beneficial to their language learning experiences.

Although slightly lower than the other indicators, the statements concerning the role of linguistic landscape in encouraging active language use ($M = 4.10$) and shaping students' language habits ($M = 4.14$) still received positive evaluations. These results suggest that students generally perceive a meaningful relationship between the linguistic landscape and their everyday language practices.

The findings of this study suggest that the linguistic landscape of PPM Sunanul Muhtadin should be understood not merely as a collection of written signs displayed throughout the institution, but as a manifestation of the pesantren's multilingual ideology and educational orientation. The predominance of Indonesian alongside the visible presence of Arabic and English reflects the coexistence of national, religious, and global orientations within the same educational space. In addition, the presence of Javanese, although less visible, represents the local cultural identity of the surrounding community and demonstrates the pesantren's connection to its sociocultural environment. In line with Landry and Bourhis (1997), the linguistic landscape serves not only informational purposes but also symbolic ones, representing identities, values, and language ideologies embedded in a community. Similar observations have been reported in previous studies on pesantren linguistic landscapes (Aqila & Efendi, 2024; Aziz et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2022), which highlight how the visibility of Arabic, English, and Indonesian reflects institutional identities and language policies. However, rather than simply illustrating language distribution and functions, the present findings suggest that the linguistic landscape of a modern pesantren embodies a broader educational ideology that simultaneously promotes Islamic values, national identity, and global competence. In this sense, multilingual signs function as visible representations of the pesantren's aspiration to prepare students who are rooted in religious traditions while remaining responsive to global challenges.

Another important finding concerns the nature of students' multilingual awareness. Previous studies have generally acknowledged that multilingual environments contribute to the development of multilingual awareness and positive attitudes toward linguistic diversity (Al Wafi et al., 2025), yet little empirical attention has been paid to the extent and dimensions of such awareness. The present study demonstrates that multilingual awareness is not a singular phenomenon but a multidimensional and gradual process. Students showed strong awareness of the existence of multiple languages and demonstrated a clear understanding of the symbolic and communicative functions attached to each language. Their positive attitudes toward multilingualism further support findings from previous studies which indicate that awareness of linguistic diversity facilitates language learning and promotes favorable dispositions toward multilingual practices (Haukås et al., 2024; Sulis et al., 2025; Xu, 2024). Nevertheless, the relatively moderate level of critical awareness indicates that recognizing linguistic diversity does not necessarily lead to deeper reflections on language hierarchy, language dominance, and power relations. Although Carter (2003) emphasizes that multilingual awareness involves sensitivity to the social meanings and implications of language use, the findings suggest that students' awareness remains largely descriptive rather than critical. This finding expands the current

understanding of multilingual awareness by showing that its development involves different levels and dimensions rather than emerging automatically from multilingual exposure.

The relationship between the linguistic landscape and students' perceptions of language functions further illustrates how visible languages shape social meanings. Languages that occupied more prominent positions within the linguistic landscape were also associated with stronger functional values by students. Indonesian, which dominated the linguistic landscape, was strongly perceived as a language that facilitates communication and comprehension, while Arabic and English were associated with religious identity and global competence respectively. These findings reinforce the argument that linguistic landscapes do not merely reflect multilingual practices but also participate in constructing meanings and influencing language perceptions. As Landry and Bourhis (1997) argue, the symbolic function of public signs contributes to the formation of language attitudes and identities. Therefore, the linguistic landscape can be regarded as a social text through which students continuously encounter and interpret the values attached to different languages. Such a process demonstrates that multilingual awareness is not formed independently of the environment but is shaped through repeated interactions with visible linguistic resources.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the pedagogical role of linguistic landscapes in fostering multilingual awareness. While Gorter (2018) argues that linguistic landscapes provide authentic language input and opportunities for language learning beyond classroom boundaries, empirical evidence explaining how such learning occurs in pesantren contexts remains limited. The present findings reveal that multilingual signs contribute to vocabulary acquisition, encourage the use of expressions encountered in written texts, enhance language abilities, and strengthen students' awareness of the importance of multilingual competence. These findings provide empirical support for the pedagogical potential of linguistic landscapes suggested by Al Wafi et al. (2025), while extending previous research by showing the mechanisms through which multilingual awareness develops. Rather than functioning as passive visual objects, multilingual signs appear to operate as continuous sources of linguistic input that accompany students in their daily lives. Through repeated exposure in dormitories, canteens, mushollas, and outdoor spaces, students internalize linguistic forms and meanings that subsequently influence their language practices. In this regard, the linguistic landscape can be viewed as a "silent language teacher" that facilitates language learning beyond formal classroom instruction and transforms the educational environment into a space for continuous multilingual engagement.

Taken together, these findings contribute to the growing body of linguistic landscape research by shifting the focus from what languages are displayed to how those displayed languages are perceived and how they influence learners. Previous studies on linguistic landscapes in pesantren have predominantly examined language distribution, visibility, and identity (Aqila & Efendi, 2024; Aziz et al., 2025; Lailiyah & Amelia, 2025; Yusuf, 2024). The present study offers a different perspective by positioning multilingual awareness as an empirically observable outcome reflected in students' perceptions, attitudes, and language practices. More importantly, the findings suggest that multilingual awareness should not simply be assumed as a by-product of multilingual environments, as implied in earlier studies, but should instead be examined as a dynamic process shaped by interactions between learners and their linguistic surroundings. By demonstrating that linguistic landscapes function simultaneously as representations of multilingual ideologies and as pedagogical resources that nurture multilingual awareness, this study expands the educational dimension of linguistic landscape research and provides new insights into how multilingual environments can support language learning and awareness development in pesantren and other multilingual educational settings.

4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the linguistic landscape of PPM Sunanul Muhtadin functions not only as a medium of information but also as a visible representation of the pesantren's multilingual educational ideology. The presence of Javanese, Indonesian, Arabic, and English reflects the integration of local cultural identity, national identity, Islamic values, and global orientation within the educational environment. The findings further indicate that students demonstrate a relatively high level of multilingual awareness, particularly in recognizing linguistic diversity, understanding the functions of different languages, and developing positive attitudes toward multilingualism. However, their critical awareness of language hierarchy and power relations remains less developed, suggesting that multilingual awareness emerged through multiple dimensions and levels rather than automatically resulting from exposure to multilingual environments.

The study also shows that the linguistic landscape contributes to the development of students' multilingual awareness by shaping their perceptions of language functions and providing continuous linguistic input in everyday life. Through repeated exposure to multilingual signs, students expand their vocabulary, strengthen language practices, and develop a greater appreciation of multilingual competence. These findings highlight the pedagogical potential of linguistic landscapes as educational resources that support language learning beyond formal classroom instruction. Future research may explore pedagogical interventions based on linguistic landscapes to promote critical multilingual awareness and examine their long-term impact on language learning and multilingual development in pesantren and other multilingual educational contexts.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author(s) Contribution

The authors are contributors to this manuscript, including the conceptualization, data collection, analysis, and writing of the study.

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