Translanguaging Practices in the Rural Tourism Linguistic Landscape in Showcasing Cultural Identity: An Activity Theory Analysis

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Abstract:

This study examines the roles of translanguaging practices in the linguistic landscape in a rural tourism area and their contribution to showcasing cultural identity from the perspective of activity theory. Translanguaging emerges as a significant tool in rural tourism, serving as a cultural hub where diverse linguistic and cultural expressions intersect to attract visitors with their unique nature, heritage, and traditions. Through an analysis of activity theory, this study explores the translanguaging practices of signage containing verbal and other multimodal semiotic resources at Alamendah in constructing and promoting tourism activities and its local cultural identity. The data were gathered from photographs of signage, observation, and interviews with the tourism manager, staff, and the local elder to see how translanguaging practices enable the community to showcase the local heritage and engage with local and global audiences. The findings revealed that translanguaging practices as the mediating tool seen from the 182 signage where 51 (29%) were written in monolingual, which is Indonesian that represents the official language, 71 % were written in bilingual or multilingual, combining Indonesian, English, Sundanese, and Sundanese old scripts. The use of Indonesian and Sundanese dominated the signage, indicating the strong local cultural representation and identity. The prevalent use of Sundanese exemplifies the heightened community awareness of the Sundanese heritage identity with the expectation that visitors would learn more about the language and culture through tourism activities. The community and other stakeholders' contribution to the public signage signifies distributive and creative power relations and division of labor.

Keywords: activity theory, cultural identity, linguistic landscape, rural tourism, translanguaging

1. INTRODUCTION

Linguistic landscapes are a growing area of study that intertwines with language use across various domains, reflecting the dynamic relationship between language and space (Kallen, 2023; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The linguistic landscape concerns with the visible and written display of language in public spaces serves as a powerful medium for representing identity, culture, and heritage encompassing all visible language in public spaces such as signage, advertisements, and street names, serves as a mirror of the cultural and social dynamics of a community (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Their framework proposed that LL is not merely a tool for communication but a means of constructing social identity and negotiating power relationships in multilingual spaces. Building on this, Shohamy and Gorter (2009) emphasized LL as a dynamic and contested arena where ideologies, policies, and community practices converge. The communicative function of LL is particularly evident in rural tourism, which is the focus of the study. Kallen (2023) argued that signage in rural destinations often uses multilingual and multimodal strategies to enhance accessibility and cultural engagement. Integrating national and local languages with English, for example, helps create a narrative that is both authentic and globally relevant and serves as a bridge between local identities and global visitors (Doering & Kishi, 2022; Lu et al., 2020; Ruzaite, 2017).

Translanguaging practices in LL, as explored by Garcia and Wei (2015), further illustrate how communities utilize their full linguistic repertoires to construct hybrid cultural identities. This concept shifts away from viewing languages as fixed systems and instead emphasizes the fluidity of linguistic practices. In addition to linguistic diversity, the multimodal design of LL enhances its communicative power. Signage often combines textual information with visual and symbolic elements, such as colors, motifs, and images, to convey cultural narratives effectively. Traditional patterns or locally significant icons on signage communicate cultural identity in ways that transcend language barriers, making them accessible to non-native speakers. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) emphasize that multimodal designs allow for the integration of different semiotic resources, enabling richer and more inclusive communication. Blommaert (2013) pointed out the role of LL as a multimodal platform that combines textual, visual, and material elements to convey complex messages. For example, Gorter and Cenoz (2015) analyzed how rural tourism destinations in Europe use LL to simultaneously address local residents and international visitors, blending local languages with global semiotic resources.

Rural tourism destinations often rely on their distinctiveness to attract visitors, and the linguistic landscape plays a critical role in this distinctiveness. Local languages, dialects, and scripts showcased in signage, menus, promotional materials, and other public texts serve as markers of cultural identity (Backhaus, 2007). For example, the use of indigenous languages alongside national or international languages in signage may emphasize the cultural uniqueness of a destination while ensuring accessibility for non-local visitors. Similarly, linguistic artifacts such as place names, traditional sayings, or cultural references in public texts provide a rich narrative of the local heritage, helping to shape the visitor's perception of authenticity (Spolsky, 2009).

Furthermore, the linguistic landscape contributes to rural development by creating economic opportunities linked to cultural tourism (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). When effectively curated, the LL can become a resource for branding rural destinations, enhancing their visibility in competitive tourism markets. For instance, multilingual signage incorporating traditional artistic styles or symbols can attract visitors interested in cultural exploration.

Activity Theory (AT), rooted in the works of Vygotsky (1978), Leontiev (1978), and later expanded by Engeström (1987), offers a holistic lens for analyzing human activities within their sociocultural contexts. AT focuses on the interaction between subjects (actors), objects (goals), mediating tools (e.g., language, signs), rules, community, and the division of labor. Engeström's (2001) expanded model highlights how contradictions within these components drive societal development and transformation. In the context of linguistic landscapes, signage operates as a mediating tool that reflects and shapes social activities. It embodies cultural, political, and economic influences, making AT a powerful analytical tool for examining how signs mediate social relationships and convey collective identities (Blommaert, 2013; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Simultaneously, the linguistic landscape can empower local communities by validating their cultural identity and fostering pride in their heritage (Kallen, 2010).

Despite its importance, the linguistic landscape in rural tourism remains underexplored in academic research, particularly in periphery regions where indigenous languages and traditions are at risk of erosion due to globalization and urbanization. Such research is particularly relevant in the current context of sustainable tourism, which emphasizes preserving cultural and linguistic diversity as a key objective (UNWTO, 2019). This study then argues that the linguistic landscape plays a vital role in preserving local heritage within rural tourism by showcasing linguistic diversity, fostering cultural pride, and educating visitors. Utilizing the intersection of LL and AT, this study is particularly interested in exploring the ways the translanguaging practices showcase the cultural identity of Alamendah rural tourism and the contribution of instigators as cultural mediators in creating the vibrant and multilingual linguistic landscape at the tourism site in question. This present study highlights how human activities are mediated by tools, language, and cultural artifacts in a particular social system (Engeström, 2001) realized through the translanguaging practices serving as a mediational tool used by instigators to shape and maintain Alamendah's cultural identity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Linguistic Landscape as a Cultural Medium in Rural Tourism

The concept of the linguistic landscape has evolved over the past two decades, moving from a focus on the quantitative analysis of language use in public signage to a broader consideration of its social, cultural, and political dimensions (Gorter, 2013). Scholars argue that the linguistic landscape is more than a passive reflection of linguistic practices; it actively constructs and reinforces cultural and social identities (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). In rural tourism, where the focus is on providing an authentic and immersive experience, the LL serves as a narrative device, telling the story of the community through the languages and symbols it displays. For example, the linguistic landscape in rural destinations often incorporates traditional scripts, proverbs, and visual motifs that resonate with the community's cultural values (Laihonen & Szabó, 2018). These elements serve not only as markers of identity but also as points of connection between locals and visitors. The use of local languages in signage can evoke a sense of place and authenticity, creating a memorable experience for visitors while reinforcing the cultural identity of the host community (Ashworth, 2003). The dominance of global languages, particularly English, in tourism signage can sometimes marginalize local languages, raising concerns about linguistic equity and cultural homogenization (Lado, 2006). Balancing the needs of international visitors with the preservation of local linguistic heritage is a complex but essential task for rural tourism stakeholders.
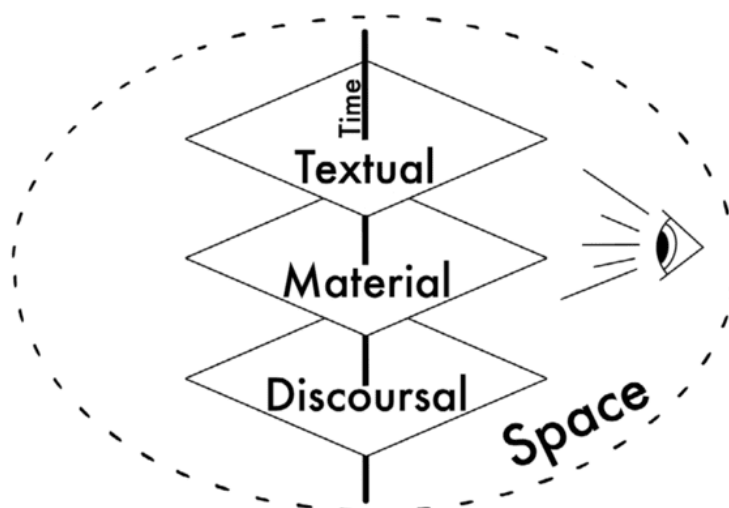
Figure 1. The public eye and the construction of the LL (Kallen, 2023)

In LL, Kallen (2023) emphasized the critical role of public visibility in the construction and interpretation of linguistic landscapes (Figure 1). In Kallen's exploration of the LL, the interplay of time, textual, material, discoursal, and spatial aspects is central to understanding how LL is constructed, interpreted, and experienced. Each of these dimensions plays a vital role in shaping the meaning and function of signage, and by extension, the broader communicative environment in which they exist. The following sections examine each of these aspects in the context of LL, drawing on Kallen's framework while integrating relevant scholarly perspectives. Exploring the Linguistic Landscape (LL), the interplay of time, textual, material, discoursal, and spatial aspects is central to understanding how LL is constructed, interpreted, and experienced. Each of these dimensions plays a vital role in shaping the meaning and function of signage and by extension, the broader communicative environment in which they exist. The "public eye" refers to the various ways in which signage and other forms of language representation are not just tools for communication but also mechanisms for social interaction, identity construction, and power dynamics in public spaces. Kallen (2023) argued that LL signs are frequently instigated by multiple stakeholders, each with specific interests in how language is displayed in public spaces.

The influence of LL is particularly pronounced in rural tourism, where the interplay between local languages and those of visitors shapes the linguistic environment (Doering & Kishi, 2022). In rural settings, signage, brochures, and other public texts often incorporate multiple languages to cater to diverse audiences. Ruzaite (2017) highlights that rural tourism destinations strategically employ multilingual signage to attract international visitors while preserving local cultural identity. By doing so, these regions create an inclusive atmosphere that accommodates both local inhabitants and global visitors.

2.2 Translanguaging as Linguistic Resources

Translanguaging posits that speakers engage in a fluid practice of utilizing all their linguistic resources to communicate effectively (Wei & Garcia (2017). Rather than treating languages as separate entities, translanguaging acknowledges that speakers move between languages and modes seamlessly to negotiate meaning and understanding. This perspective is particularly

relevant in multilingual settings where individuals use multiple languages within a single interaction, demonstrating flexibility and creativity. Otheguy, et al. (2015) further elaborated on translanguaging by describing it as "the act of deploying all of the speakers' lexical and structural resources without regard to socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (p. 297). This practice challenges traditional notions of language purity, promoting the idea that linguistic boundaries are socially constructed rather than naturally fixed. Translanguaging moves beyond traditional bilingual or multilingual paradigms, emphasizing the fluid deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire (Otheguy et al., 2015). It challenges the notion of discrete language boundaries, arguing that speakers draw from a holistic linguistic system to communicate effectively in diverse contexts (Pacheco & Smith, 2015). In rural tourism, this approach becomes especially pertinent as visitors, locals, and businesses navigate multiple languages to foster inclusivity and enhance communication (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015).

In rural tourism settings, translanguaging practices extend beyond linguistic efficiency to embody socio-cultural meanings. The use of indigenous languages alongside international ones signals cultural pride and heritage promotion that such practices foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity, essential for sustainable tourism. Moreover, linguistic landscapes in rural areas can challenge hegemonic language ideologies by elevating minority languages in public spaces (Brown, 2012). Studies in rural Estonia and Italy have illustrated how linguistic landscapes reflect complex translanguaging practices. For example, rural Estonian schools incorporate both Estonian and Russian in their signage to accommodate diverse linguistic backgrounds, promoting multilingual literacy (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Brown, 2012). Similarly, signs blending Italian dialects with standardized Italian and English in rural Italy help local businesses attract international visitors while preserving regional linguistic identity (Coluzzi, 2009).

2.3 Activity Theory and Linguistic Landscape in Rural Tourism

Activity Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding signage as a dynamic component of broader social and cultural activities. Central to AT is the concept of mediation, where tools (e.g., language, signage) act as intermediaries between the subject (actor) and the object (goal) (Engeström, 2001). In rural tourism, signage serves as a mediating tool that connects different actors—local communities, visitors, and government bodies—to the shared objective of cultural preservation and tourism promotion. By focusing on the interaction between actors, tools, and community norms, AT reveals how signage mediates power relationships, constructs cultural identities, and navigates contradictions in linguistic landscapes. Its application in LL studies not only enriches our understanding of public signage but also informs practical approaches to language policy and urban planning. As global societies become increasingly multilingual, the insights provided by AT will remain essential for fostering inclusive and culturally responsive public spaces. Activity Theory's emphasis on tools extends beyond language to multimodal elements such as images, colors, and symbols. Kress (2010) highlights how multimodal signs convey meaning through a combination of textual and visual resources. In urban spaces, signs often combine linguistic elements with symbols to communicate across language barriers. This multimodality is particularly significant in globalized cities, where diverse populations interact with signage (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011).

Using Activity Theory in linguistic landscape research shifts the focus from static analysis of signs to understanding them as part of broader, dynamic human activities. This approach enriches the analysis by embedding LL within social practices, power structures, and cultural negotiations. On

the division of labor which denotes the allocation of roles and responsibilities among different actors within an activity system (Engeström, 1987). In rural tourism, sign instigators include local residents, government officials, and business owners, each contributing to the creation and maintenance of signage.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the dynamics of Desa Wisata Alamendah, a rural tourism village. A case study allows an in-depth, contextualized understanding of complex phenomena by investigating a single case in its real-life context (Stake, 2008). This method provides an effective and rigorous research design as it enables the researchers to examine the richness, complexity, and context-specific nature of Desa Wisata Alamendah's rural tourism linguistic landscape in the naturally occurring context. By focusing on the intersection of linguistic landscape and Activity, Theory in understanding the translanguaging practices and the roles of the stakeholders as instigators in showcasing the uniqueness of the site and its cultural identity, this study produces nuanced analysis and offers a deeper understanding of how multilingualism and cultural identities are constructed and negotiated at Desa Wisata Alamendah.

3.2 Research Site

Desa Wisata Alamendah, located in rural West Java, Indonesia, was selected as the research site due to its reputation as a successful community-based tourism destination. Its diverse stakeholders, including local leaders, staff, and visitors, contribute to a multifaceted view of rural tourism. This village is known for its strong community involvement and sustainable tourism practices, making it a compelling case for examining the impacts and operations of rural tourism initiatives.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection process utilized multiple sources of evidence to ensure the validity and reliability of findings. According to Yin (2018), the use of diverse data sources is a hallmark of robust case study research, as it promotes triangulation and a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The primary data sources for this study were photographs, interviews, and direct observations.

Photographic data were collected to visually document the tourism-related activities, cultural artifacts, and physical environment of Desa Wisata Alamendah. Photographs can reveal non-verbal cues and contextual elements that might not emerge through interviews or observations alone (Kallen, 2023). These images provided a visual narrative that complemented the textual data and helped capture the essence of the tourism village, including community interactions, local architecture, and environmental sustainability initiatives.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four key participants: the village elder, who provided historical context and insight into the cultural significance of tourism in the village, the head of Desa Wisata Alamendah, who discussed administrative aspects, community involvement, and the village's tourism strategy, and staff members who shared their experiences

managing daily tourism operations and interacting with visitors. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to maintain confidentiality and ethics in research. These interviews followed a flexible guide to allow participants to elaborate on topics they considered important. This approach enabled the researcher to gather detailed, personalized accounts while maintaining focus on the central research themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Observation was used as a supplementary data collection method to capture real-time interactions and behaviors within Desa Wisata Alamendah. Observations focused on community engagement in tourism activities, the interaction between staff and visitors, and the operational dynamics of the tourism village. Observation allows researchers to witness behaviors and processes that participants may not articulate in interviews, thus providing a holistic understanding of the research context. Field notes were meticulously recorded to document these observations, emphasizing both verbal and non-verbal interactions.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis involved two primary techniques: descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The photographs of the signage were analyzed by descriptive statistics to see the occurrence and distribution of language use and display in public space at Alamendah rural tourism site. In addition, these photographs were further analyzed in terms of their linguistic categories of monolingual, multilingual, or mixtures of both, along with other semiotic resources such as symbols and logos. The interviews were transcribed verbatim to preserve the content of the interviews. Systematic coding was conducted by identifying key phrases, expressions, and recurring concepts relevant to rural tourism linguistic landscape, cultural identity, and multilingual practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Field notes from direct observations were categorized into descriptive notes from the documentation of events, actions, and interactions, which were then analyzed into thematic interpretive notes. The triangulation of the data sources and the analysis (Flick, 2018) was done by cross-referencing insights from photographs, interviews, and observations, allowing for both numerical insights and in-depth thematic exploration to identify and interpret patterns within the interview and observational data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to explain the translanguaging practices and stakeholders contribution in the linguistic landscape of Desa Wisata Alamemdah in constructing and showcasing its cultural identity.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Language Distribution of LL in Desa Wisata Alamendah

The data reveal that Indonesian is the dominant language across most categories, indicating its role as a lingua franca in Desa Wisata Alamendah. However, Sundanese—reflecting the local cultural identity—appears frequently alongside Indonesian, particularly in street names (28.5%) and businesses (18.6%). Additionally, other semiotic resources such as images, symbols, logos, and QR codes are increasingly utilized, especially in posters (36.2%) (see Table 1). The inclusion of these diverse resources suggests a dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in the village's public communication. The adoption of QR codes and logos, for instance, highlights the integration of contemporary digital practices into traditional rural settings (Solima & Izo, 2018).

Table 1. The language distribution of LL in Alamendah Rural Tourism

Categories	Counts	Percentage	Language(s)/other semiotic resources used
Street names	52	28,5%	Indonesian, Sundanese, Sundanese scripts, logos
Government buildings	6	3,2%	Indonesian, logos
Religious premises	12	6,5%	Indonesian, Arabic
Schools (K-12)	5	2,7%	Indonesian, numbers
Businesses (permanent and non-permanent)	34	18,6%	Indonesian, Sundanese, images, numbers, symbols
Posters	66	36,2%	Indonesian, Sundanese, symbol, images, logos, numbers, QR codes
Health services	3	1,6%	Indonesian, Sundanese
Graffiti	2	1,1%	Indonesian, Sundanese, English
Inauguration stones	2	1,1%	Indonesian, symbols, numbers
Total	182	100%	

Street names represent the most prominent category, with 52 instances accounting for 28.5% of the total dataset. The use of both Indonesian and Sundanese in this category illustrates a bilingual approach to public signage. Sundanese script, a significant element, underscores the cultural heritage of the region, as its presence reinforces local identity and pride (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013). Posters constitute the largest single category (66 instances, 36.2%). These posters predominantly use Indonesian but some also incorporate Sundanese, symbols, images, logos, numbers, and QR codes. The diversity of semiotic resources indicates a multifaceted communication strategy aimed at various audiences, including visitors and locals. QR codes suggest an effort to engage digitally literate individuals, enhancing accessibility to additional information through mobile technology (Scollon 2003). This multimodal approach signifies a shift towards digital literacy while retaining traditional elements. The presence of Sundanese alongside Indonesian in posters demonstrates the preservation of local language even within modern communicative practices.

Businesses, both permanent and non-permanent, account for 34 instances (18.6%). The linguistic landscape in this category is marked by the use of Indonesian, Sundanese, images, numbers, and symbols. Businesses often employ multilingual signage to attract both local and visiting customers, thereby fostering an inclusive atmosphere. The use of Sundanese in business names or descriptions highlights a strong local identity, while Indonesian ensures comprehensibility for a broader audience. Symbols and images further enhance brand recognition and communicate messages to non-literate or non-local audiences, reflecting the influence of visual semiotics in marketing (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021). Religious premises (12 instances, 6.5%) primarily use Indonesian and Arabic. The presence of Arabic, particularly in Islamic contexts, emphasizes the religious significance and connection to global Muslim

communities. Arabic script carries cultural and spiritual meaning, reinforcing religious identity in public spaces (Blommaert, 2010).

The linguistic practices in this category reveal a fusion of local and global religious identities. By using Indonesian for general communication and Arabic for religious texts, the signage accommodates both local worshippers and those familiar with Islamic religious language. With only 6 instances (3.2%), government buildings primarily display signage in Indonesian, often accompanied by official logos. This use of standardized Indonesian reflects its role as the official language of governance and administration (Sneddon, 2003). The inclusion of logos adds a visual layer of authority, reinforcing the institutional identity of these buildings (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). The exclusive use of Indonesian in this category underscores the language's official status and its importance in maintaining bureaucratic clarity and uniformity across public institutions. Schools, comprising 5 instances (2.7%), primarily use Indonesian, supplemented by numbers. This pattern reflects the national education system's emphasis on Indonesian as the medium of instruction. The minimal use of Sundanese suggests a focus on formal education in the national language, which may limit the representation of regional languages in educational settings (Hornberger & De Korne, 2018). Health services are represented by only 3 instances (1.6%), with signage in both Indonesian and Sundanese. This bilingual approach ensures that health-related information is accessible to the entire community, promoting inclusivity in healthcare communication. Bilingual health signage is critical in rural areas where local languages may be more widely understood, ensuring effective dissemination of health messages (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Graffiti and inauguration stones each account for 1.1% of the dataset. Graffiti uses a mix of Indonesian, Sundanese, and English, reflecting diverse linguistic influences and possibly the expression of youth culture or artistic movements. Inauguration stones, by contrast, predominantly feature Indonesian, with symbols and numbers used to mark historical events or dates, signifying their ceremonial and commemorative purpose (Shohamy, 2006).

The linguistic and semiotic landscape of Desa Wisata Alamendah reflects a rich interplay between tradition, modernity, and multilingualism. The prevalence of Sundanese alongside Indonesian demonstrates a commitment to preserving local culture while embracing national and global influences. This multilingual environment not only enhances the village's cultural identity but also positions it as a dynamic tourism destination where linguistic diversity is celebrated. The integration of modern semiotic resources, such as QR codes and logos, indicates a shift towards digital engagement (Wong, 2019), aligning the village with broader technological trends. This evolution in public communication strategies highlights the adaptability of rural communities in navigating contemporary socio-cultural and economic landscapes.

4.2. Translanguaging in the Linguistic Landscape at the Rural Tourism Alamendah

This analysis examines the linguistic and semiotic landscape of Desa Wisata Alamendah, focusing on translanguaging and multimodal transposition across various public domains. The data reveals how different linguistic modes and semiotic resources intersect in public signage to reflect multilingualism and cultural dynamics. With 182 instances of signage categorized into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual displays, and 95% of the signage employing additional semiotic resources such as logos, maps QR codes, images, and so on (see Images 2 and 3).

Table 2. Translanguaging Patterns in the Public Signage

| Categories	Counts	Mono lingual	Bilingual	Multiliingual
Street names	52	8 (6,5%)	-	44 (24,1%)
Buildings	36	33 (18,1%)	3 (1,6%)	-
Businesses (permanent and non-permanent)	24	-	8 (4,3 %)	16 (8,7%)
Posters	66	7 (3,8 %)	47 (25,8%)	12 (6,5%)
Graffiti	2	1(0,5 %)	1 (0,5 %)	-
Inauguration stones	2	2 (1%)	-	-
Total	182 (100%)	51 (29,9%)	57 (32,7%)	72 (39,3%)

As can be seen in Table 2, the multilingual signage represents the largest category, with 72 instances (39.3%). This includes street names, businesses, and posters that incorporate two or more languages, often Indonesian, Sundanese, and occasionally English. The prevalence of multilingual signs reflects a commitment to inclusivity, addressing both local residents and visitors from outside the region.

Bilingual signage accounts for 57 instances (32.7%), with a significant presence in businesses and posters. This indicates an intentional strategy to balance local and national linguistic priorities. Business signage often alternates between Sundanese for local customers and Indonesian for broader communication, enhancing the commercial appeal of public spaces. Posters similarly integrate both languages to address local cultural norms while disseminating clear messages to non-local audiences (Blackledge & Creese, 2017). The bilingual practice in businesses also functions as a marketing strategy, blending cultural authenticity with broader market appeal. This fosters a welcoming environment for visitors while maintaining local linguistic practices, a hallmark of effective translanguaging (García, 2009). While monolingual signs represent 51 instances (29.9%), they are predominantly found in formal domains, such as government buildings and inauguration stones. These spaces often rely on Indonesian, reflecting the official status of the language in administrative and ceremonial contexts. The absence of Sundanese in these instances highlights a hierarchical use of language that privileges the national language for official purposes (Shohamy, 2006). However, even within monolingual signs, the use of visual elements such as logos and symbols suggest a degree of multimodal engagement that extends beyond pure linguistic communication.

The multilingual and multimodal signage can be seen in Images 1-5. All of these signage incorporated reflect signage written in Indonesian, Sundanese, Sundanese script, and English, demonstrating a dynamic interplay of linguistic and visual elements designed to convey meaning within a complex socio-cultural framework. These signage mediating artifacts that shape how locals and visitors navigate and understand their environment.

Multimodality refers to the integration of various semiotic resources, such as text, images, and color, to construct meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Bamboo texture and handwritten text in images 2 and 3 evoke a rural, traditional atmosphere, reinforcing local cultural heritage. The use of color schemes and official logos in image 1 conveys formality and endorsement of the local government, indicating the importance of the signage in public policy. These multimodal elements align with Activity Theory's understanding of how tools evolve to meet the needs of different users and contexts, enhancing their effectiveness and social relevance (Kress, 2009). This approach not only fosters inclusivity but also empowers communities to assert their cultural identity through signage in public space. Translanguaging, therefore, becomes a socio-cultural strategy that supports both local engagement and global communication (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017).
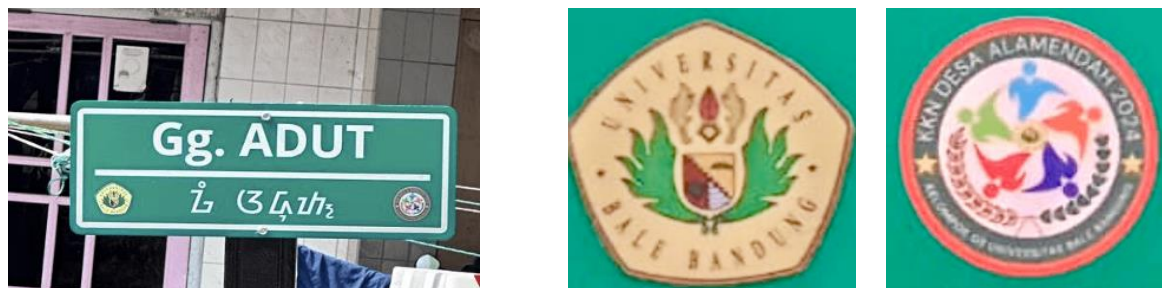
Image 1. The use of Sundanese, Indonesian, old Sundanese script and logos for street names

Image 2. The use of old Sundanese script, Indonesian, and English

Image 3. The use of Indonesian and old Sundanese script

One of the key roles of signage in rural tourism is the preservation and promotion of local identity. Through the use of local languages, symbols, and historical references, signage becomes a tool for cultural transmission. AT provides a framework for analyzing how these signs mediate between the past and present, linking traditional practices with contemporary tourism (Blommaert, 2013).

Image 4. QR Code to scan further information

Image 5. Sundanese Proverb with Indonesian translation

By blending languages, these signs cater to diverse linguistic audiences while showcasing the village's cultural richness. For instance, street names prominently feature Sundanese (see Image 1), highlighting the region's heritage while ensuring accessibility for non-Sundanese speakers. Image 2 also display the Sundanese proverb " *Tong cueut ka nu hideung, ponteng ka nu koneng"* which translated into Indonesian as "*Harus adil dan tidak memihak ke kelompok tertentu* (be just and impartial to all groups).*"*There are many Sundanese along with Indonesian translations displayed along the main road. Such signage not only enhances navigability but also reinforces the community's bilingual identity (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2015). During the interview, the village elder Pak Aceng's remarks about the selection of the proverbs and the particular one displayed in Image 5:

Excerpt 1:

> '[T]he youths discussed and decided on those [proverbs] to be displayed on the streets. This is also our concern that the proverbs serve as reminders to us [the community].... [Some of them] function as criticisms to rulers in our community, so they would govern with dignity and earn respect from the people.

The excerpt above (Excerpt 1) explicates the community roles and the relations to the different components (the youths, the community, rulers, and people) of the community in the LL at Desa Wisata Alamendah. From his perspective, the displays of the proverbs were not intended for tourism purposes, i.e. to attract visitors, rather, to preserve the Sundanese values and a means of social checks-and-balances of the local polity. However, as they were being displayed in public spaces, they nonetheless attracted the visitors' attention as something unique to the site.

4.3. The Collaborative Instigators as Cultural Mediators in the Linguistic Landscape at Alamendah

The LL in Desa Wisata Alamendah is collaboratively shaped by various stakeholders, making it a vibrant and creative communicative space. Local government agencies, tourism boards, community leaders, and businesses all contribute to the creation of signage, brochures, and digital marketing materials. This diverse input results in an LL that reflects both local identity and global engagement. Such a pluralistic approach enriches the village's cultural narrative, demonstrating how translanguaging can serve as a tool for both practical communication and cultural preservation (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015).

Referring to the activity system model, these actors are part of a collaborative system that negotiates the design, language choice, and placement of signs (Engeström, 2001). The instigators' roles in shaping the linguistic landscape crucially shape the linguistic landscape in Alamendah rural tourism. Government authorities play a crucial role in setting linguistic policies and standards for public signage and official materials. They often promote the use of Indonesian and local languages like Sundanese to preserve cultural heritage. This policy-driven approach ensures that the LL remains inclusive and accessible, catering to both local and foreign audiences. Additionally, government initiatives often involve funding and supporting community-driven projects that reflect local cultural narratives in the LL (Brown, 2012). This reinforces community empowerment through linguistic representation, supporting both economic development and cultural identity and advocacy.

Tourism boards of Alamendah are instrumental in designing promotional materials and wayfinding systems that blend multilingual text with visual elements. Their focus is on ensuring

that the LL serves as a welcoming and informational tool for visitors while highlighting the village's unique cultural identity. By incorporating English alongside Sundanese and Indonesian, these boards create an environment where linguistic diversity becomes a strategic asset for tourism development (Gorter & Cenoz, 2009). Community leaders act as cultural custodians, ensuring that local languages and traditions are prominently featured in the LL. Residents contribute by creating handcrafted signs, murals, and other visual elements that reflect traditional Sundanese aesthetics. This grassroots involvement fosters a sense of ownership and pride, making the LL a living representation of the community's identity (Shohamy, 2015). Additionally, entrepreneurs and business owners significantly influence the LL through shop signs, menus, advertisements, and digital marketing materials. Their use of translanguaging—mixing the Indonesian, local languages with global languages—demonstrates a pragmatic approach to communication that appeals to a broad customer base. For instance, blending Sundanese proverbs with Indonesian translation on signage (Image 5) not only draws attention but also creates a unique, culturally resonant brand identity (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014).

Image 6. University as one of the LL insigators at Alamendah rural tourism.

Other entities, such as academic institutions, especially those involved in tourism development, collaborated with Desa Wisata Alamendah to design signage, marketing materials, and tourist facilities that contribute to the LL (see Image 6). Such collaborations are often motivated by mutual interests: businesses seek to attract visitors, while the village administration aims to promote the area as a tourism destination that celebrates both local culture and multilingual engagement. companies help create an LL that reflects both local identity and the commercial needs of tourism (Coluzzi, 2009). Additionally, corporate sponsors may fund the production of educational materials or tourist guides that help to bridge linguistic divides and enhance the visitor experience. Based on the interview with the Desa Wisata Alamendah's manager, community service projects led by academic institutions often include research, language documentation, and outreach programs, all of which contribute to the linguistic landscape, he claimed:

Excerpt 2.

> We have managed and maintained collaborations with schools and universities over the years.
> Some have made us their regular partner to conduct community services, research, training, community buildings, and leisure activities.... [A]nd they would use some of the CSR (*Corporate Social Responsibility, note added*) funds to build these [informational] boards.

In excerpt 2, the manager highlighted the importance of maintaining collaboration with educational institutions as Desa Wisata Alamendah also served as educational and cultural tourism (e.g. Arcodia et al., 2021; Mir et al., 2024; Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011). Students and faculty explored the sites which offered authentic rural life experiences such as farming, strawberry picking, cowmilking, and coffee grinding. The LL of the site helped the visitors navigate the space and the activities. The observation showed that visitors are not passive recipients of information but active participants in the signage displayed, indicating that the subject-object-tool relationship helps us understand how visitors' interactions with signage mediate their experience of rural culture and heritage (García & Wei, 2014). Their engagement with signs—whether through reading, photographing, or sharing on social media—contributes to the broader social and cultural activity of rural tourism.

5. DISCUSSION

This study explored the role of translanguaging within LL and AT, highlighting the emerging themes to provide deeper insights into the language(s) used in tourism, especially in multilingual rural tourism settings (Hasni et al., 2022). This study showed that multilingual and multimodal signage is a powerful manifestation of how languages and semiotic resources are employed to communicate across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. In the context of rural tourism, the linguistic landscape assumes an even greater significance, as it embodies the interplay between language, culture, and the socio-economic dynamics of local communities. Rural tourism is often marketed as a gateway to authentic cultural experiences, drawing visitors to areas rich in tradition, history, and natural beauty (Lane, 2009; Sheng & Buchanan, 2022). In such settings, the linguistic landscape becomes a canvas where the community's cultural identity is visually expressed, playing a dual role: it provides practical information to visitors while simultaneously showcasing local heritage. As globalization and tourism increasingly bring diverse groups of people into rural spaces, the linguistic landscape becomes a site of negotiation between local and global identities (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Doering & Kishi, 2022; Lu et al., 2020; Ruzaite, 2017). The interplay of local languages with global lingua franca, such as English, along with advances in communication, technology, and culture creates a linguistic tapestry that reflects both cultural preservation and adaptation to global tourism demands (Hult, 2017; Lee & Lee, 2025). For rural communities, the linguistic landscape is not just a means of communication but also a cultural artifact, offering insights into the history, traditions, and values of the region (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009).

The visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) suggested that LL reflects societal language dynamics and power structures. Our study showed that LL is evident in the way multilingual and multimodal signs are crafted to reflect diverse and creative linguistic and semiotic resources to enhance visitors' leisure experiences

(Sun et al., 2024). Gorter and Cenoz (2015) emphasized that the use of multiple languages in signage demonstrates more than just translation; it reflects the blending of linguistic elements to convey meaning effectively. The Sundanese language and culture deeply rooted in traditions, values, and unique art forms, face significant challenges in the context of globalization and modernization (Shuhufi & Parkon, 2023). As communities recognize the potential for cultural erosion, there has been a growing emphasis on promoting Sundanese heritage and identity through education, public awareness, and tourism initiatives. Heightened community awareness of Sundanese heritage is a foundational step toward its preservation. This awareness is evident in the revival of traditional practices, local advocacy for Sundanese language education, and grassroots efforts to safeguard cultural landmarks (Nursanty et al., 2024; Nursanty & Susilowati, 2024). Otheguy et al. (2015) argued that when people see their languages represented in public spaces, it reinforces their identity and validates their cultural heritage. This validation can strengthen social cohesion, particularly in multicultural communities where language is a key marker of identity.

Community involvement is crucial in ensuring that signage reflects local identity and values while meeting the needs of visitors (Shohamy, 2015). The collaborative effort of various instigators, each playing a significant role in shaping the environment where language, culture, and tourism intersect. These instigators include local government agencies, the community, corporate collaborators, and academic institutions, each contributing from their own perspective and with unique resources to craft a dynamic multilingual environment. Local government agencies, including the village and neighborhood administration, are critical contributors to the LL, particularly as the extension of the official bodies to convey government-related information. Their roles are primarily concerned with ensuring effective communication with both the local population and visitors. In rural tourism settings, local government bodies ensure that both local and national identities are preserved and promoted (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015). The local community plays an equally important role in shaping the linguistic landscape. The residents of Desa Wisata Alamendah act as cultural custodians, ensuring that the village's language use reflects its cultural heritage. This is evident in the community-driven initiatives that incorporate Sundanese proverbs, local dialects, and traditional expressions into public signage. Through these contributions, local residents not only preserve the local language but also enhance the cultural narrative that visitors experience (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014).

By analyzing the signage through AT, we observe how different rules and norms govern the use of multimodal resources, reflecting the community's efforts to balance cultural preservation with globalization (Backhaus, 2007). As can be seen in the analysis of the study, one of the strengths of AT is its ability to identify nuances, paradoxes, and ambiguities within activity systems, which often serve as driving forces for change and development (Engeström, 2001). Lee and Lee (2025) for instance, looked at the use of language applications as mediating tools to enhance visitors' experiences in tourism sites, which expands the AT toolbox for understanding the human experience. In terms of language policy planning, this study observed contradictions that often arise between top-down policies and bottom-up community practices (Kallen, 2023). For instance, language policies mandate monolingual signage in official language(s), while local communities resist by incorporating minority languages or dialects in informal signage. Studies (e.g Gautam, 2022; Li, 2024; Raestrepo-Ramos, 2024; Rosendal & Ngabonziza, 2023) have indicated the complexity of language policy discourses and practices in LL in public spaces in different contexts that warrant further exploration.

6. CONCLUSION

Desa Wisata Alamendah, a rural tourism destination in Indonesia, exemplifies how a linguistic landscape (LL) is shaped by a combination of linguistic diversity, cultural plurality, and the active involvement of various stakeholders. The dynamic nature of the LL at Alamendah reflects the community's strategic use of multiple languages to facilitate communication with both local residents and international visitors. The LL demonstrates translanguaging, wherein individuals fluidly switch between different linguistic resources. This practice serves to enrich both cultural expression and accessibility to information for a broad audience. In addition to verbal communication, translanguaging practices in the village also incorporate a wide range of semiotic resources, including symbols, logos, images, and digital media. These multimodal elements complement the linguistic landscape by enhancing clarity and accessibility, ensuring that the village remains navigable and inviting for all visitors, regardless of their linguistic background. Such a multimodal approach create multiple ways of meaning-making, where various communicative modes work together to facilitate understanding in complex, multicultural contexts. The construction of the LL in Desa Wisata Alamendah is the result of collaborative efforts among a variety of stakeholders, including local government agencies, tourism boards, community leaders, and educational institutions. The instigators contributed to the signage, boards, brochures, and digital marketing materials, which are essential in promoting the village's tourism potential while preserving its cultural integrity. This collaboration ensures that the LL reflects both the local identity of the community and its engagement with the global tourism market. The diverse input from these stakeholders allows the village to craft a rich and nuanced cultural narrative that leverages the strategic use of translanguaging as a tool for both communication and cultural preservation. This one-site study offers unique insights into the translanguaging practices utilizing the LL and AT framework. As such, this study does not aim for generalization due to some inherent limitations of a case study. The findings highlighted above albeit not universally applicable, serve as valuable references for similar multilingual tourism settings. Thus, the study acknowledges its limitations while contributing nuanced and detailed perspectives on translanguaging practices in rural tourism contexts.

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