



## MULTILINGUALISM IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AT GRANADA ISLAMIC HERITAGE SCHOOL AND IMPACT ON THE SCHOOL'S LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the multilingual practice of Granada Islamic Heritage School from the point of view of linguistic landscape. It utilizes a qualitative research approach. Its primary focus is probing the existence and dissemination of three languages (English, Indonesian, and Arabic) in the public realms in the school such as information boards, motivational signs, and visual instructional aids. Data were gathered through participatory observation and visual documentation of language signs in the school environment. A description of language code use was constructed through analysis to determine the representation of religious, national, and global identity in the school. Results indicate that the simultaneous presence of three languages creates a dynamic language environment that can support both formal language acquisition and informal social communication. Arabic supports religious identity, while English and Indonesian support global communicative competence and local identity. Most importantly, the integration of the linguistic landscape becomes an extra value to students, linguistic capacity making their reading, writing, and speaking skills robust in all three languages and developing multilingual awareness and positive attitudes towards linguistic diversity. Thus, the language environment of Granada Islamic Heritage School functions as a rich pedagogical resource, establishing a rich, multicultural learning culture that significantly facilitates students' language learning.

**Keywords:** *linguistic landscape, multilingualism*

### INTRODUCTION

In today's interconnected world, language plays a crucial role in education not just for achieving academic goals, but also for shaping our identities, fostering social connections, and building intercultural understanding. Language is more than just a way to communicate; it carries with it cultural values, historical stories, and different viewpoints. The linguistic environment that students find themselves in greatly influences their learning experiences and how they see themselves. The idea of a linguistic landscape (LL), which looks at the visible use of languages in public and semi-public areas (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), is a valuable tool for exploring how language functions in educational settings. This is particularly important in multilingual environments where different languages exist, compete, and interact in the same spaces and social contexts. The linguistic landscape of schools often called schoolscape mirrors the language beliefs, policies, and teaching goals of educational institutions. As Shohamy and Waksman (2009) point out, schoolscape are far from neutral; they reflect the values and priorities of the school community, acting as subtle yet powerful instruments of language policy.

These landscapes, made up of posters, signs, banners, classroom materials, and other visual elements, play a significant role in shaping students' linguistic and cultural identities. They also act as teaching tools that can enhance language learning, encourage multilingual awareness, and support inclusive educational practices (Gorter, 2013).

In Indonesia, a country known for its incredible linguistic diversity, the blending of various languages in schools reflects both the nation's identity and the demands of a globalized education system. Bahasa Indonesia serves as a unifying force among its many ethnic and linguistic groups. Meanwhile, the presence of English as a global lingua franca and Arabic for Islamic education adds layers of complexity to the language dynamics in many schools, especially those with an Islamic focus. The way national, religious, and global identities intersect through language in educational settings creates both challenges and opportunities for educators and policymakers (Zein, 2017).

Take Granada Islamic Heritage School in Tangerang, for example. It provides a fascinating look at how multilingualism and language landscapes operate within Islamic education. The school actively encourages the use of three languages: Arabic for religious teachings and identity, English for fostering global skills, and Indonesian for the national curriculum and everyday communication. These languages are not just subjects in the classroom; they are also prominently displayed and symbolically represented throughout the school. This intentional approach to language use makes the school a vibrant hub of multilingual practice and ideological exchange..

The presence of Arabic in the school's linguistic landscape underscores the institution's commitment to Islamic values and religious education. Arabic is often featured in Qur'anic verses, Hadith, and Islamic expressions displayed on posters, banners, and classroom walls. This use of Arabic reinforces religious identity and creates an immersive environment for learning religious texts. According to Al Zidjaly (2009), the integration of Arabic in Islamic educational settings serves both communicative and symbolic functions, affirming the sacred status of the language and its central role in shaping religious consciousness.

English, on the other hand, is prominently used in motivational posters, informational signs, and instructional materials, reflecting the school's emphasis on preparing students for participation in global academic and professional arenas. The use of English in the school's visual environment not only supports language acquisition but also signals alignment with global norms and aspirations. As Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) argue, English in linguistic landscapes often functions as a marker of modernity, prestige, and upward mobility, especially in postcolonial and developing contexts. Bahasa Indonesia remains the dominant language for administrative communication, official notices, and curricular content. Its presence in the linguistic landscape reinforces national identity and ensures accessibility for all members of the school community. The balanced use of these three languages in the schoolscape reflects a nuanced approach to multilingual education, one that respects religious traditions, embraces national unity, and engages with global opportunities.

This study aims to explore the linguistic landscape of Granada Islamic Heritage School by analyzing how Arabic, English, and Indonesian are represented, distributed, and interpreted in the school's public spaces. The research seeks to understand how the visual presence of these languages contributes to language learning, identity formation, and the creation of a culturally responsive educational environment. By employing a qualitative methodology that includes visual documentation and participatory



observation, the study offers insights into the ways in which schools function as both reflections and instruments of multilingual education.

Theoretically, this research draws on the frameworks of linguistic landscape studies (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), sociolinguistic theory on language ideologies (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007), and educational theories on multilingual pedagogy (García & Wei, 2014). These perspectives allow for a comprehensive analysis of the symbolic, pedagogical, and ideological dimensions of language use in the school's visual environment. The study also engages with literature on Islamic education and the role of language in religious schooling (Zein, 2020; Rosidin, 2021), situating the findings within broader discussions on faith-based multilingual education.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the growing body of work on linguistic landscapes in educational settings, with a specific focus on Islamic schools in multilingual contexts. It highlights the potential of schools to serve as pedagogical tools, identity markers, and spaces of ideological negotiation. By examining the linguistic landscape of Granada Islamic Heritage School, the study sheds light on how language policies and practices are materialized in everyday school life, offering practical implications for educators, school administrators, and language policy makers committed to fostering inclusive and effective multilingual education.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the multilingual landscape of Granada Islamic Heritage School in Tangerang. Qualitative methods were chosen to allow for a deep, contextual understanding of how languages are visually and symbolically represented across the school environment. The methodology is grounded in the interpretive paradigm, which emphasizes the importance of understanding meaning-making processes from the perspectives of participants and within their real-life contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Granada Islamic Heritage School is a private Islamic school located in Tangerang, Indonesia. The school caters to students from kindergarten to high school and emphasizes a trilingual education policy, integrating Arabic, English, and Indonesian into its curriculum and communication practices. The school's physical layout, including hallways, classrooms, bulletin boards, and outdoor signage, serves as the primary site for linguistic landscape analysis.

Data were collected through two primary methods: participatory observation and visual documentation. The researchers conducted field visits over a period of four weeks, observing and recording the use of language in visual signs within the school. These included motivational posters, directional signs, classroom labels, banners, and religious texts displayed in public spaces. Digital photographs of these signs were taken systematically across different school zones.

To supplement the visual data, informal interviews and conversations with teachers and staff were conducted. These interactions provided contextual insights into the rationale behind language use, school policies regarding language, and perceptions of multilingualism among educators.

The visual data were analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach. Each sign was coded based on language(s) used, placement, purpose, and symbolic meaning. Analytical categories included the function of the sign (informational, instructional, motivational), the target audience, and the interplay of languages in multilingual displays.

These categories were used to identify patterns and themes that illustrate how language practices and ideologies are materialized in the school's physical space.

This study also incorporated principles of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010) to examine how power, identity, and ideology are embedded in the school's linguistic landscape. Particular attention was paid to how Arabic is used to construct religious authority, how English reflects aspirations for global citizenship, and how Indonesian anchors national and educational identity.

In conducting the study, ethical standards were maintained by ensuring the anonymity of the school community members who contributed informally to the research. Photographs of signs did not include identifiable images of students or staff. The school administration granted full permission for observational and photographic data collection. This methodological approach enabled the researchers to interpret the school's linguistic landscape not merely as a collection of signs but as a dynamic system of pedagogical and ideological communication. The use of multiple languages in Granada's visual environment serves as a reflection of its educational values and a resource for cultivating multilingual competence and intercultural awareness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings derived from the linguistic landscape at Granada Islamic Heritage School, focusing on multilingual practices as observed through signage and other visible language displays within the school environment. A total of 100 samples of language signs were collected from various sources, including hallways, classrooms, offices, laboratories, and public areas within the school premises.

### Linguistic Landscape Features

From the analysis, the languages used in the signs were primarily Arabic, English, and Indonesian. These languages appeared independently or in combination, reflecting the school's trilingual approach. The frequency and types of signs reveal patterns in how each language is functionally and symbolically employed.

Below is a table summarizing the linguistic composition across 100 samples:

**Table 1. Data Analysis**

Language Composition	Number of Instances	Examples	Functional Domain
Indonesian only	25	"Ruang Guru", "Kelas 9B"	Administrative, Instructional
English only	5	"Library", "Science Lab"	Instructional, Motivational
Arabic only	8	Qur'anic verses, religious quotes	Religious, Symbolic
Indonesian + English	30	"Ruang Lab MIPA / Laboratory MIPA Room"	Academic, Informative
Arabic + Indonesian	10	"Kantor Pondok / مكتب المدرسة الداخلية"	Religious-Administrative
Arabic + English	2	"Pondok Office / مكتب المدرسة الداخلية"	Institutional
Arabic + English + Indonesian	20	School banners, mission posters	Symbolic, Multimodal

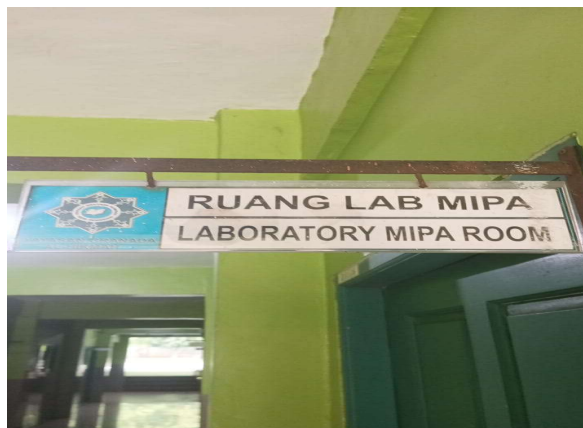


Image 1. "Ruang Lab MIPA / Laboratory MIPA Room"

This sign is another example of Indonesian-English bilingual signage. While functionally informative, the phrase "Laboratory MIPA Room" is syntactically redundant. A better formulation might be "Science Lab" or "MIPA Laboratory." Nevertheless, this represents the integration of academic terminology in dual languages.



Image 2. "Pondok Office / مكتب المدرسة الداخلية"

This trilingual sign (Arabic–English–Indonesian) epitomizes the school's ideological and linguistic inclusivity. Arabic symbolizes religious affiliation, English for global communication, and Indonesian for national identity.

The findings illustrate that Granada Islamic Heritage School strategically utilizes its linguistic landscape to construct a multilingual environment that supports pedagogy, identity, and communication. The co-occurrence of languages on signs reinforces the school's ideological commitments: Arabic for religiosity, Indonesian for national belonging, and English for global engagement.

Such multilingual practices align with Shohamy and Gorter's (2009) assertion that schoolscapes can reflect and enforce language ideologies. The trilingual compositions found in school signage function as silent language policies (Shohamy, 2006), subtly shaping students' perceptions of language hierarchies and values.

From a pedagogical perspective, these signs serve as real-life language input, contributing to incidental language learning. As argued by Cenoz and Gorter (2015), linguistic landscapes can act as educational resources when integrated into formal instruction, thus enriching students' multilingual awareness and competence.

The presence of Arabic-only signage highlights the symbolic sanctity of the language in religious contexts, while the prevalence of Indonesian-English combinations reflects functional communication priorities. Overall, the linguistic landscape at Granada is both reflective and constitutive of the school's educational vision: one that is grounded in Islamic teachings, rooted in national identity, and open to global discourse.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined the multilingual landscape of Granada Islamic Heritage School in Tangerang, focusing on how Arabic, English, and Indonesian are visually represented within the school environment. Through a qualitative analysis of 100 signs and visual language displays, it is evident that the school employs a deliberate trilingual approach that reflects its religious values, national identity, and global aspirations.

Arabic signs underscore the institution's Islamic foundation, promoting religious identity and cultural authenticity. English language elements highlight the school's orientation toward international standards and communication, while Indonesian maintains its role as the primary medium of national cohesion and instructional clarity. The coexistence of these languages within the schoolscape serves not only a communicative function but also a symbolic and pedagogical one.

The linguistic landscape of Granada School thus acts as an active site of ideological negotiation, where languages are deployed to educate, symbolize authority, and construct identities. These findings reinforce the notion that schoolscape are not merely decorative but are vital tools for shaping linguistic awareness and promoting multilingual competence. This research contributes to the broader discourse on multilingualism in Islamic educational settings and offers practical insights for educators and policy-makers aiming to foster inclusive, culturally responsive, and globally aware school environments.

Future studies could expand on this research by exploring student and teacher perceptions of the school's linguistic landscape or by comparing linguistic landscapes across different types of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

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