

## Exploring The Linguistic Landscape of Public Elementary Schools in Medan: Understanding Forms and Functions

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### ABSTRACT

The linguistic landscape, or "schoolscape," in public elementary schools in Medan, Indonesia, is a relatively new area of study in linguistics. This descriptive qualitative research explores language use within the school environment, considering its social and cultural aspects. The study aims to analyze the linguistic forms, usage, and functions present in the linguistic landscape of these schools. Data from photographs capturing linguistic units was collected from four public elementary schools in Medan. This study employed systematic sampling, specifically purposive sampling, to select public elementary schools in Medan based on criteria related to the city's main areas with diverse linguistic units. The findings reveal various linguistic forms, including acronyms, words, phrases, sentences, and monolingual and bilingual texts. Language within the linguistic landscape serves informational and symbolic functions, providing information to readers and reflecting the relationship between language and power through linguistic signs associated with local leaders. While Indonesian is the dominant language used, there is a lack of representation of specific ethnic or cultural identities. The findings have global implications, revealing language's role in education and its impact on social and cultural dynamics. Understanding linguistic forms, usage, and functions provides valuable insights for education policies promoting language diversity, skills, and cultural inclusivity. The study suggests enriching the linguistic landscape by considering the use of local or minority languages existing in the region. This study contributes to understanding linguistic landscapes in Indonesian schools and highlights the importance of incorporating diverse languages to promote language proficiency and cultural preservation.

**Keywords:** Schoolscape, linguistic landscape, public elementary school, Medan



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### 1. Introduction

The school environment is considered a public space where various linguistic units are presented differently. The presence of language units in the school's public space is not without reason; it is influenced by various factors such as anthropology, social dynamics, culture, and others. The study examining the linguistic landscape in school environments is called "schoolscapes." The term "schoolscapes" was initially mentioned in research that explored the phenomenon of revitalizing local languages within the school environment, such as gate signage and signboards (Brown, 2012). From this perspective, it can be argued that this study can uncover the role of language in public spaces for preserving local languages and enhancing students' language proficiency (Scarvaglieri, 2017).

In this study, the linguistic landscape of *Sekolah Dasar Negeri* (SDN), or Public Elementary Schools in Medan, was chosen as the focal point due to its connection with the multicultural background of the Medan community (Agustono et al., 2020). This suggests the potential influence on the manifestation of the linguistic landscape within the elementary education context. In public or government schools, there are typically two distinct forms of linguistic landscape: one shaped by the school community, including students and teachers, and another influenced by external authorities, specifically the government. (Gorter, 2018a).

In the linguistic landscape, language is used differently and conveys different meanings (Erikha, 2018; Sahril et al., 2019). Within the school environment, the linguistic landscape exhibits distinct characteristics compared to public spaces. For instance, there are variations in monolingualism and multilingualism, with

proportions that may not always be equal. Furthermore, the production of signs is often less professional, as students create many signs. Signs created by students possess specific characteristics that differ from those produced by external authorities or other sign makers. This study also reveals different communicative intentions school signs convey (Ferdiyanti, 2016; Gorter, 2018a; Gortre & Cenoz, 2014).

Two reasons make this study necessary to conduct. First, to advance the education field in Indonesia, various aspects, including the language situation within educational environments, need to be explored. Specifically, the elementary school environment serves as the starting point for education and character development in children. Second, the language situation within Public Elementary School environments can indicate the quality of educational activities. This is because the forms of linguistic landscape found in schools also reflect the creativity of teachers and students. Therefore, this study contributes to developing sociolinguistics and language policy in education.

So far, schoolscape studies have been predominantly conducted by many researchers, mainly focusing on the relationship between linguistic landscapes and social issues such as ethnic diversity, minority communities, and educational quality. For example, Biró's study (Biró, 2016) examines the linguistic landscape in Hungarian schools in Romania. The study describes the visual manifestations of differences and similarities in the languages taught to minority children and the collaborative efforts of teachers and students to meet the challenges of language learning and teaching. Similarly, the research explores the linguistic landscape in a school of a minority community in southern Thailand, considering its historical aspects and political policies (Aya & Savski, 2023). Meanwhile, schoolscape studies in Indonesia are still relatively limited, and there is a lack of research on schoolsapes outside of Java Island. For instance, Widiyanto's study (Widiyanto et al., 2021) examines explicitly advertising texts in the linguistic landscape of schools in Jakarta, and Sari's (2020) investigates the linguistic landscape in Islamic high schools in Surakarta. These studies have made valuable contributions to the field, shedding light on the visual manifestations of language differences and similarities, collaborative efforts in language learning and teaching, and historical and political aspects of linguistic landscapes in various contexts.

However, the current research aims to address the gaps in existing research by exploring the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan, Indonesia. This study contributes to the literature by providing insights into schoolsapes outside of Java Island, which has been relatively limited in previous studies. Additionally, by examining the forms and functions of the linguistic landscape in Medan's public elementary schools, this study offers a unique perspective on the linguistic diversity and educational context of this specific region.

Furthermore, this study has potential global implications as it expands our understanding of linguistic landscapes in diverse educational settings. By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the linguistic study, this study aims to contribute to the broader conversation on linguistic landscapes and their significance in promoting language learning, cultural understanding, and educational policies.

This study not only adds to the quantity of research and the advancement of knowledge in the linguistic landscapes in Indonesia but also serves as a foundational study that can be further explored concerning the linguistic landscape of school environments in Indonesia. For example, comparative studies of linguistic landscapes between different school environments, investigations into the social and cultural aspects influenced by schoolsapes, and the impact of schoolsapes on education, such as learning motivation, the functions, and moral and ideological messages conveyed through the linguistic landscape.

Some novelties that can be achieved include depicting the schoolsapes of public elementary schools in Medan, revealing the relationship between schoolsapes and the multicultural conditions of the community in Medan, examining the influence of external authorities on the manifestation of the linguistic landscape, and uncovering the communicative intentions of the signs in schools.

Therefore, based on the background provided, it is necessary to conduct a study on schoolsapes within the public elementary school environment in the city of Medan.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What are the forms of language in the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan?
2. How are the forms of language used in the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan?
3. What are the functions of the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan?

The global significance of linguistic landscapes underscores the importance of understanding their specific relevance in the context of public elementary schools in Medan. By examining the linguistic landscape of these schools, this study contributes to our understanding of language use, cultural diversity, and educational policies in a local Indonesian setting. The findings can shed light on how language is employed and the functions it serves within the school environment, thereby enriching the broader academic discourse on linguistic landscapes.

This study aims to address a specific research gap by focusing on the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan. While previous studies have explored schoolscape in various contexts, research in Indonesia, particularly outside Java Island, remains limited. By investigating the forms, usage, and functions of language in Medan's public elementary school environment, this study fills a crucial gap in the literature and provides valuable insights into the linguistic diversity and educational context of this specific region.

In conclusion of the introduction, this study seeks to contribute to the field of linguistic landscapes by examining the specific context of public elementary schools in Medan. By analyzing the forms, usage, and functions of language within the linguistic landscape, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the cultural, social, and educational aspects influenced by schoolscape in this Indonesian setting. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader conversation on linguistic landscapes, language policies, and educational practices, ultimately highlighting the significance of linguistic diversity and promoting cultural understanding in public elementary schools.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Linguistic landscape

Landry and Bourhis first defined the Linguistic Landscape by publishing an article in 1997 (Yendra & Artawa, 2020). The Linguistic Landscape is described as the visibility and distinctive features of language on public and commercial signs in a particular area. It further refers to the language found on street signs, billboards, street names, place names, commercial store signs, and public information boards in government buildings that collectively form the Linguistic Landscape of a specific region or urban agglomeration (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Gorter (2006, p. 2; Muriungi & Mudogo, 2021) later summarized and provided another concise definition, stating that it is the use of language in written form in public spaces.

### 2.2. Study of schoolscape

The field of Linguistic Landscape is diverse, complex, and continuously evolving with the shifting of various approaches. To enrich the studies of Linguistic Landscape, an alternative proposed is adding the term "scape" to the Linguistic Landscape terminology. This concept has emerged in various Linguistic Landscape literature, and the list of possible uses is almost limitless (Yendra & Artawa, 2020).

Furthermore, other approaches that employ the suffix "-scape" have also been proposed as variations within the approaches encompassed under the umbrella discipline of Linguistic Landscape studies. One example is "schoolscape" (Biró, 2016; Brown, 2012; Gorter, 2018a). The term "schoolscape" was first introduced by Brown in 2005, and research in this field has been developing since then. This concept connects schools and their landscapes, acknowledging that schools are students' primary loci of learning.

In the context of "schoolscape," the importance of the school environment as an ideal learning space takes center stage. A good school environment should be able to support education and learning. Therefore, the linguistic landscape aspects within the school environment become equally important to discuss in studying linguistic landscape. Through understanding and analyzing how language and communication occur within the school environment, we can gain deeper insights into the influence of the linguistic landscape on the learning process, social interactions, and the development of students' identities.

In schoolscape study, aspects such as the use of language in interactions among students and teachers, the influence of cultural backgrounds on the language used, and the role of language in creating an inclusive and supportive learning climate become the main focus. By understanding the linguistic landscape within the school environment, we can identify existing challenges and opportunities and design appropriate strategies to enhance students' learning experiences.

Thus, developing the schoolscape concept in Linguistic Landscape studies significantly contributes to understanding the relationship between schools and their environments and how the linguistic landscape within them can influence students' learning experiences. By expanding the scope of linguistic landscape studies and considering various other "scapes," we can enrich our understanding of the role of language in diverse social and cultural contexts.

### 2.3. Functions of language in public spaces

Language serves various functions in public spaces that are closely related to its role as an informational and symbolic medium (Gorter, 2018b). Firstly, language functions as a means of communication that enables the exchange of information and understanding between individuals or groups in society. Through language, people can convey messages, exchange thoughts, and express their opinions on various social, political, and cultural issues (Yendra & Artawa, 2020).

Language also plays a role in conveying symbolism and cultural identity in public spaces (Fitria & Mulyono, 2023). Language choices, dialects, accents, and speaking styles can reflect a person's identity, including their origin, ethnicity, or social group. Language also preserves and conveys cultural heritage, traditions, and societal values.

The function of language in public spaces is also related to its role in shaping public opinion. Language is used in mass media, speeches, writings, and public discussions to influence the public's perception and views on relevant issues. Language is also used to shape and convey political messages, mobilize support, and influence voters in the context of political participation (Nasution, 2007).

Furthermore, language plays a role in education and knowledge dissemination in public spaces. Language is used to transfer knowledge, convey information, and support the education process. Through language, concepts, ideas, and discoveries can be effectively communicated to the public (Revita et al., 2023).

In entertainment and the arts, language is a medium to entertain, inspire, and convey artistic messages to the audience or listeners. Through poetry, stories, songs, theater, and other performances, language creates symbolic experiences that influence our emotions and understanding of the world.

Lastly, language also plays a role in trade and business in public spaces. Language establishes business relationships, conveys product information, and negotiates prices and contract terms (Hardini et al., 2018).

Language has many functions in public spaces as an informational and symbolic medium. Its functions include communication, cultural identity, shaping public opinion, education and knowledge dissemination, entertainment and the arts, social coordination, political participation, trade, and business. Through these roles, language is vital in shaping social interactions, influencing thoughts and actions, and reflecting identity and culture in public spaces.

Previous studies on Linguistic Landscapes have explored various aspects of language use in public spaces, including urban areas, neighborhoods, and commercial districts. However, limited research focuses explicitly on the Linguistic Landscape of public elementary schools. By examining the Linguistic Landscape of public elementary schools in Medan, this study aims to fill this research gap and provide a comprehensive understanding of the forms and functions of language in these educational settings.

The visible language features in and around public elementary schools, such as signage, bulletin boards, posters, and other linguistic displays, will be investigated in this study. By examining the Linguistic Landscape of public elementary schools, we can gain insights into the role of language in shaping the learning environment, promoting inclusivity, and supporting students' language development.

## 2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate the linguistic landscape objects in elementary schools in Medan, Indonesia. The research methodology focused on utilizing photography and visual analysis to document and analyze the texts found on signs within the school environment (Yendra & Artawa, 2020).

To ensure a representative sample, five public elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar Negeri*, abbreviated SDN) were purposively selected from different areas of Medan, including the northern, southern, western, and eastern regions. These schools were chosen based on their representativeness of the main areas in Medan and the similarity and consistency of linguistic forms observed in their linguistic landscapes. It is worth noting that Medan has a total of 383 SDNs (*Jumlah Sekolah Dasar Menurut Kecamatan Dan Status Sekolah (Jiwa)*, 2013, 2013).

Table 1. School Location

No	School Names	Address
1	SDN 064972	Jl. Tuar No.17, A M P L A S, Kec. Medan Amplas, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20226
2	SDN 060899	Jl. Brigjend Katamso Gang. Perbatasan, Kampung Baru, Kec. Medan Maimun, Kota Medan Prov. Sumatera Utara 20217
3	SDN 064007	Kapten Rahmad Buddin, Terjun, Kec. Medan Marelan, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20256
4	SDN 064988	Jl. Karya Jaya No. 48, Pangkalan Masyhur, Kec. Medan Johor, Kota Medan Prov. Sumatera Utara 20143
5	SDN 064027	Jl. Karang Sari Kelurahan No.171, Sari Rejo, Kec. Medan Polonia, Kota Medan, Sumatera Utara 20217

Data collection involved capturing photographs of the linguistic landscape in the school environment from four selected public elementary schools in Medan. The selection of school photographs followed a purposive sampling technique, considering the representativeness of linguistic landscape manifestations in each district of Medan. The data collection period for the photographs took place between June 18th and 24th, 2023.

The data analysis in this study was conducted using the framework proposed by Landry and Bourhis (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). This framework encompassed a micro-linguistic analysis, language code types, as well as psychological and sociological behaviors. The micro-linguistic analysis and language code types aimed to address the study's research questions related to language forms and usage. The analysis of psychological and sociological behaviors sought to understand the functions of language usage in public spaces, particularly within the school environment. The analysis followed a progressive approach to reveal various aspects present in the linguistic landscape of schools.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, several measures were taken. The selection of schools aimed at capturing a diverse representation of linguistic landscapes in Medan. Additionally, the data collection process involved careful documentation of the linguistic landscape objects through photography. The analysis followed an established framework, which provided a systematic approach to examine the data. The use of multiple methods for data presentation, including informal descriptions and formal symbols, added to the robustness of the study's findings.

It is important to acknowledge potential biases in the research approach. Purposive sampling may introduce some degree of subjectivity in selecting the schools. However, efforts were made to mitigate this bias by considering the representativeness of linguistic landscape manifestations in different areas of Medan. Additionally, the researchers were mindful of their perspectives and biases during the data collection and analysis process, aiming for objectivity and a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic landscape in elementary schools in Medan.

### 3. Result and Discussion

The findings of this study highlight that the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan comprises micro-linguistic and macro-linguistic forms of language. Micro-linguistic forms include acronyms, words, phrases, and sentences, while macro-linguistic forms encompass monolingual and bilingual manifestations of Indonesian and English languages.

Table 2. Linguistic form

	Forms	Examples
<b>Micro Lingual</b>	Acronym	UPT; SD; 5S
	Word	<i>JUJUR, TOLERANSI</i>
	Phrase	<i>Satuan Pendidikan Formal; Sapta Pesona Sekolah; Profil Pelajar Pancasila</i>
	Sentence	<i>Mari kita jaga kebersihan lingkungan sekolah, Melonggarkan Zonasi</i>
<b>Macro Lingual</b>	Monolingual	Bahasa Indonesia
	Bilingual	Bahasa Indonesia and English
	Spatial Design varies	Various colors and letter shapes

The usage of linguistic forms within the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan is observed in informative sentences, directives, invitations, prohibitions, slogans, and proverbs. Specific examples include+

Table 3. Usage of Linguistic Forms

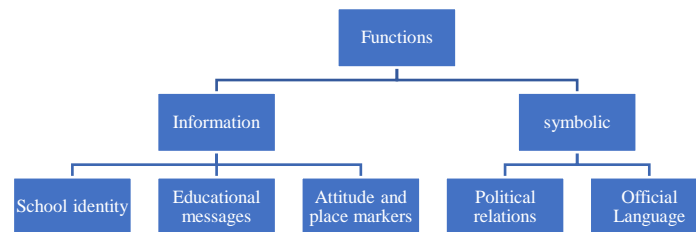
Language Usage	Examples
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Information	- <i>Penerimaan peserta didik baru</i> (Acceptance of new students)
	- <i>Tugas dan fungsi</i> (Job and function)
	- <i>Budayakan 5S</i> (Cultivate 5S)
Appeals	- <i>Sayangilah dan lindungilah lingkungan hidupmu</i> (Love and protect your environment)
	- <i>Cegah kekerasan dengan sekolah ramah anak</i> (Prevent violence with child-friendly schools)
Invite	- <i>Mari kita biasakan</i> (Let's get used to it)
	- <i>Mari budayakan hidup bersih dan sehat</i> (Let's cultivate a clean and healthy life)
	- <i>ayo tingkatkan semangat belajarmu</i> (let's increase your enthusiasm for learning)
Prohibition	- <i>Kawasan dilarang merokok</i> (No Smoking Area)
	- <i>Stop dan cegah narkoba</i> (Stop and prevent drugs)
Slogan	- <i>Kecerdasan dan karakter adalah tujuan utama Pendidikan</i> (Intelligence and character are the main goals of education)
	- <i>Aku sehat, kuat dan cerdas</i> (I'm healthy, strong and smart)
	- <i>Lebih banyak membaca dari pada banyak bicara</i> (Read more than talk a lot)
Proverbs	- <i>Buku adalah jendela dunia</i> (Book is a window to the world)
	- <i>Dengan membaca kutemukan dunia</i> (By reading I discovered the world)
	- <i>Belajar adalah harta karun yang mengikuti pemiliknya sepanjang masa</i> (Learning is a treasure that follows its owner throughout time)
	- <i>Rajin pangkal pandai</i> (Diligence is the mother of good luck)

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Moreover, the functions of the linguistic landscape in public elementary schools in Medan are informational and symbolic. The informational function emphasizes the information provided to the readers, while the symbolic function indicates the relationship between language and power, as seen through images of local leaders accompanying linguistic signs. The official language, Bahasa Indonesia, is predominantly used, but no specific ethnic or cultural identities were found in the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan.



**Figure 1.** Functions of Linguistic Landscape in Public Elementary Schools in Medan

In analyzing the results, it is important to provide more direct quotes and detailed examples from the photographic analysis to substantiate the findings. A deeper analysis of the linguistic forms and their functions within the schoolscape should be presented. Additionally, discussing the implications of these findings in the context of language use and education in Medan would further enrich the research. The following subsection explains several examples of image capture analysis based on the abovementioned findings.

### 3.1. Micro-level linguistic forms

The micro-linguistic forms found in public elementary schools in Medan exhibit consistency in using acronyms on school name boards. These acronyms include UPT, SD, JL, NPSN, and NSS. There are also acronyms with multiple syllables (Anwariyah, 2023; Khoirunnisa et al., 2023; Mufrida & Zultiyanti, 2023), such as *Pemprov* (Provincial Government) and *Kec* (Sub-District).



**Figure 2.** The form of the acronym in the public elementary schools in Medan

Some acronyms on school name boards use widely known acronyms such as SD (*Sekolah Dasar*, in English "Elementary School") and JL (*Jalan*, in English "Street"). There are also acronyms in the form of jargon explained in full, such as 5S, which stands for *Senyum* (smile), *Salam* (greet), *Sapa* (salutation), *Sopan* (polite), and *santun* (courteous), as shown in Figure 3.





**Figure 3.** Form of the acronym "5S"

"5S" is an example of an acronym formed using the initials or initial letters of the words it represents. This type of acronym is commonly called an initialism or acronym initial. In this case, each initial letter of the words is combined to form the acronym "5S".

On the other hand, some acronyms such as UPT (*Unit Pelaksana Teknis*, in English "Technical Implementation Unit"), NSS (*Nomer Statistik Sekolah*, in English "School Statistical Number"), and NPSN (*Nomor Pokok Sekolah Nasional*, in English "National School Identification Number") are acronyms that are not commonly known by the general public. This assumption is also supported by the question posed by the researcher to the surrounding community, where these abbreviations are unfamiliar to many people.

Furthermore, micro-linguistic forms in the schoolscape of SDN in Medan are presented as words and phrases. Words describe specific contexts, such as explanations of extracurricular activities presented in the word "*Pramuka*" (Scouts). Some words describe commendable student characteristics, such as "honesty," "tolerance," and "independence." Phrases are a linguistic form commonly found in the linguistic landscape of elementary schools in Medan City. There are nominal phrases, verbal phrases, and adjectival phrases. For example, as shown in the figure below.



**Figure 4.** Use of word forms and phrases





Figure 5. Noun phrase form

Some of the noun phrases in Figure 5 are as follows.

(1) Profil Pelajar Pancasila

N N N

(2) Seni Tari

N N

(3) Drum Band

N N



NP

The phrases "*Profil Pelajar Pancasila*" (Pancasila Student Profile), "*Seni Tari*" (Dance Art), and "*Drum Band*" can be categorized as nominal phrases (NP). Nominal phrases consist of a noun (nominal) and other words that follow it to provide further information about the noun (Gapur & Mulyadi, 2018; Maharani, 2019; Restyana, 2016).

In the phrase "*Profil Pelajar Pancasila*," the main noun is "*Profil Pelajar*" (Student Profile), while "*Pancasila*" functions as an adjective that describes the type of profile being referred to. Thus, this phrase depicts a profile of students who adhere to or practice Pancasila values.

The phrase "*Seni Tari*" consists of the noun "*Seni*" (Art), which represents a general category, and the noun "*Tari*" (Dance), which refers to the specific type of art, namely dance. This phrase refers to the field of art that involves expressive movements in the context of dance.

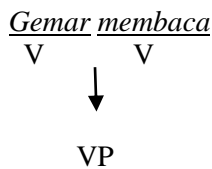
The phrase "*Drum Band*" comprises the noun "*Drum*," which refers to the musical instrument, and the noun "*Band*," which refers to a musical group. This phrase depicts a type of music group that prominently features the drum instrument in its performances.

Therefore, these three phrases, namely "*Profil Pelajar Pancasila*" (Pancasila Student Profile), "*Seni Tari*" (Dance Art), and "*Drum Band*," can be categorized as nominal phrases because they consist of a noun and other words that provide additional information about the noun.



Figure 6. Noun phrase form

In Figure 5 there is a verbal phrase, "*gemar membaca*."



The phrase "*gemar membaca*" (enjoy reading) is a verbal phrase (VP). A verbal phrase consists of a verb and other words that follow it to form a more specific meaning (Harahap & Cucu Gina Cahyani, 2023; McManus, 2023; Zubizarreta, 2022). In this case, the verb is "*gemar*" (enjoy), which expresses a tendency or pleasure towards a specific activity. Then, the word "*membaca*" (reading) functions as a noun that becomes the object of the enjoyed activity. Therefore, overall, the phrase "*gemar membaca*" depicts someone's tendency or pleasure towards the activity of reading.

Furthermore, the linguistic form of sentences can also be observed from the linguistic landscape of schools. Sentence structures are commonly used in informational boards, announcements, prohibitions, and instructions.



Figure 7. Sentence Form

Figure 7 shows the use of the sentence's lingual form to explain the school's vision and mission.

### 3.2. Macro-linguistic forms

The linguistic landscape in Schoolscape in Public Elementary School Medan is presented with a dominant of monolingual forms in the Indonesian language, as depicted in Figure 8.



**Figure 8.** Schoolscape is monolingual in Indonesian

Monolingual forms in the Indonesian language are commonly used in the front part of the school, such as the gate and outdoor areas that are visible to anyone.

There are also bilingual forms in both the Indonesian and English languages.



**Figure 9.** Schoolscape is bilingual in Indonesian and English

These bilingual forms are not commonly found in specific areas within the school, such as corners near or inside classrooms. The bilingual English linguistic landscape is also not prominently displayed in the school environment and is sometimes not consciously noticed.

The spatial design of the presented language forms is diverse and colorful within the school, particularly for informational linguistic forms aimed at students or language forms created by students, such as notice boards and classroom walls.





Figure 10. Linguistic Landscape in Mading and Classrooms

In contrast, the spatial design of school name boards placed in front of the gate or at the entrance of schools is primarily uniform and monotonous in terms of font type and color.

### 3.3. Language use in the linguistic landscape of schools

The use of linguistic forms in the schoolscape of public elementary schools in the city of Medan is presented through information, directives, invitations, prohibitions, slogans, and proverbs. For example, in the figure below:



Figure 11. Linguistic landscape in its use as information

Figure 11 contains "*Penerimaan peserta didik baru*" (New student admissions). Using informative sentences like this is essential in communication as it helps convey facts, news, or information to others. In the context of new student admissions in elementary schools, this sentence informs parents or prospective students about the ongoing admission process. What is interesting about Figure 11 is that it can also be observed that the informative function is accompanied by images of regional leaders, namely the mayor and deputy mayor, as well as the Head of the regional education office.

Schools can communicate important information to the community or stakeholders using informative sentences. This helps ensure that the necessary information for parents or prospective students is conveyed clearly and transparently.

Therefore, the use of informative sentences like "*Penerimaan peserta didik baru*" (New student admissions) in the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools plays a crucial role in providing the information needed by the community regarding the process of admitting new students to the school.

Furthermore, the use of directives can be seen in the example figure below.





**Figure 12.** Linguistic landscape in its use as a prohibition

The sentence "*Cegah kekerasan dengan sekolah ramah anak* (Prevent violence with child-friendly schools)" in Figure 12 is an appeal or message to prevent violence in the school environment by promoting a child-friendly school approach.

This sentence reflects a problem faced by primary education in Indonesia regarding school violence. School violence is a serious issue that can affect the well-being and development of children. Many cases of physical, verbal, or even psychological violence occur in school environments, which can harm students' mental and emotional health.

In this context, the sentence "*Cegah kekerasan dengan sekolah ramah anak* (Prevent violence with child-friendly schools)" depicts efforts to prevent violence by prioritizing a more child-friendly approach. This approach includes creating a safe and inclusive environment, developing anti-violence programs, and raising awareness of respecting children's rights.

Thus, the appeal sentence in the "Public Elementary School Schoolscape in Medan" relates to the significant problems faced in primary education in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the use of linguistic forms in the form of invitations can be seen in the following figure.



**Figure 13.** Linguistic landscape in its use as an invitation

In Figure 13, the word "*Mari*" is used. "*Mari*" is an introductory word inviting others to engage in a specific action or behavior.

In this context, the sentence invites the reader or listener to cultivate a culture of cleanliness and health. This invitation is based on the importance of maintaining cleanliness and health in daily life, especially in the school environment.

Using the word "*Mari*," the sentence provides a persuasive touch that invites others to build a culture of cleanliness and health. This invitation aims to inspire and motivate people to take positive action in creating a clean and healthy environment.

Such invitation forms are often used in educational contexts to encourage students, teachers, and other school community members to actively participate in promoting desired behaviors, such as maintaining cleanliness and health.

Furthermore, the use of linguistic forms for prohibitions can be seen in the image below.



**Figure 14.** Linguistic landscape in its use as a prohibition

In Figure 14 above, the phrase "*Kawasan dilarang merokok*" uses a linguistic form indicating a prohibition or restriction on smoking in that area.

In this linguistic form, the phrase "*Kawasan dilarang merokok*" uses the word "*dilarang*" which signifies a prohibition or the disallowance of a specific action or behavior. In this context, the prohibition is directed at anyone in the area, prohibiting them from smoking.

The word "*dilarang*" in the phrase provides a firm and clear message that smoking is not permitted in that area. This linguistic form is used to reinforce the prohibition message and provide clear instructions to the readers or visitors of the area.

In the context of a school environment or other public places, using linguistic forms for prohibitions like this is important to assert rules and policies that all parties must follow. This aims to maintain cleanliness, health, and the comfort of the environment and protect people from the negative effects of smoking.

Furthermore, the use of linguistic forms such as slogans and proverbs is also present. For example, the slogan "*Lebih banyak membaca dari pada banyak bicara*" (Read more, speak less) and the proverb "*Rajin pangkal pandai*" (Diligence is the key to success).



**Figure 15.** Linguistic landscape in the use of proverbs and slogans

The slogan "*Lebih banyak membaca dari pada banyak bicara*" is used to convey a message to students and the school community. This slogan teaches the importance of reading more than speaking. In this linguistic form, the slogan compares reading and speaking to emphasize the significance of reading to acquire knowledge and improve language proficiency.

On the other hand, the proverb "*Rajin pangkal pandai*" is a linguistic form that contains moral messages or advice conveyed concisely and patterned. This proverb teaches that a person's success or intelligence begins

with the habit of diligence. In the context of school, this proverb emphasizes the importance of discipline, hard work, and perseverance in learning to achieve good academic performance.

Using linguistic forms such as slogans and proverbs in the linguistic landscape of schools aims to deliver important messages concisely and memorably. These linguistic forms can provide inspiration, motivation, and positive values to students, teachers, and the school community.

#### 3.4. *Functions of language in schoolscape medan public elementary schools*

The functions of the linguistic landscape in Public Elementary Schools in Medan include informational and symbolic functions. The informational function emphasizes the information provided to the readers of the texts, which may be more important than the information exchanged between the parties involved. This function conveys important messages to students, teachers, and the school community.

Additionally, the symbolic function in the linguistic landscape demonstrates a strong relationship between language and power. This is reflected in the linguistic signs accompanied by images of local leaders, such as the Mayor and Vice Mayor (see Figure 11). This symbolic function signifies recognition of the authority and power of the local leaders, as well as the status of the majority language used as the official language.

However, in the linguistic landscape of Public Elementary Schools in Medan, no specific ethnic or cultural identities were found. The conception of Landry & Bourhis (1997) suggests that the linguistic landscape can also reflect ethnic and cultural identities within a community. However, in this context, no signs indicate any specific ethnic or cultural identity in the linguistic landscape.

In addition to the informational and symbolic functions, the linguistic landscape of SDNs in Medan also provides information about the school's identity and its units. Units such as scouting, educational messages, appeals, and regulations are of primary concern in educational issues in Indonesia, such as violence, cleanliness, drugs, and literacy improvement. This function aims to provide relevant and important information to students, teachers, and the school community regarding the school's identity and matters to be considered in the educational context.

In the linguistic landscape, the images of the Mayor and Vice Mayor (see Figure 11) can also function as symbols of power and recognition of local government authority. These images can inspire and motivate students while demonstrating the connection between the school and the local government.

Thus, the linguistic landscape serves informational and symbolic functions. The informational function reflects the importance of providing information to the readers of texts, while the symbolic function signifies the relationship between language and power. Although no specific ethnic or cultural identities were found, the linguistic landscape also functions as information about the school's identity and its units and features images of local leaders to inspire and demonstrate the connection with local governance.

#### 3.5. *Discussion*

The study of schoolscape, explicitly focusing on the form and function of language in public spaces, holds wide significance. In this context, it is crucial to understand how language is used in the public spaces of schools and how its forms and functions contribute to communication and social interactions in the school environment. Through this study, one can explore the various forms of language, ranging from acronyms, words, and phrases to sentences. Additionally, it is important to comprehend the communicative functions of language, such as providing information, giving instructions, prohibiting, inviting, displaying slogans, and expressing wise sayings. By understanding the forms and communicative functions of language in the public spaces of schools, researchers can gain deeper insights into how language plays a crucial role in conveying messages, constructing identities, and influencing social interactions in an inclusive and multicultural school setting.

The research findings revealed various linguistic forms in the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan, encompassing micro- and macro-linguistic elements. Micro-linguistic forms consist of acronyms, words, phrases, and sentences, while macro-linguistic forms include monolingual and bilingual manifestations in Indonesian and English. The usage of these linguistic forms in the linguistic landscape of Medan's elementary schools appears in informative sentences, instructions, invitations, prohibitions, slogans, and proverbs. The linguistic landscape functions observed in Medan's elementary schools are primarily informational and symbolic. The informational function emphasizes what information is conveyed to the readers of the texts, surpassing the information provided by both parties involved. The symbolic function highlights the strong relationship between language and power, manifested through signs accompanied by local leaders' images, emphasising the official language's dominant usage.

The findings of this study raise several noteworthy points. The discovery of unfamiliar acronyms known only to a few individuals raises doubts about the true usefulness of government policy formats for school



signage. If only a few people are familiar with these acronyms, it can complicate communication and understanding among education stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary to consider using more common and widely understood acronyms.

The variations in monolingual language forms found in public elementary schools in Medan reinforce the importance of the national language. Additionally, Ayae and Savski's (2023) research is noteworthy and relevant to this study, as it considers the influence of language policies on the linguistic landscape within schools. Their study emphasizes the complex dialogical relationship between the semiotics of public signs in educational spaces and policies that attempt to uphold dominant ideologies.

However, it is also important to pay attention to the representation of Indonesia's diverse national character within the linguistic landscape of schools. This can be connected to previous studies, such as Biró's (2016) research that highlights the importance of understanding visual manifestations in the school environment as reflections of language learning and teaching in formal education. It is crucial to understand the differences and similarities between the languages taught to minority children and the collaborative efforts of teachers and students in addressing fundamental challenges in language learning and teaching. In Medan, a city inhabited by various ethnic groups, the use of linguistic and non-linguistic elements that pertain to specific ethnic entities should be incorporated to promote diversity education among students from an early age. This has implications for the recognition and involvement of ethnic identities within education.

Regarding the study's findings of various English and Indonesian language forms, it is interesting to note that the classroom environment is one of the five factors influencing student motivation, as observed in Batubara et al.'s (2020) research. This indicates that the linguistic landscape within the classroom, including English and Indonesian languages, can contribute to student motivation and engagement in language learning. However, the dominance of the Indonesian language presented in the linguistic landscape of public elementary schools in Medan, while it reinforces national language identity, is deemed inadequate in providing an environment supportive of English language development for students. Concurrent with this, Widiyanto's (2021) study also connects to this research by examining advertisements in the school environment. Although the focus is different, Widiyanto's (2021) research examines school advertisements' social function, text structure, and linguistic characteristics. In this study, the author also finds that advertisements in schools can have implications for the classroom learning model, or students' mastery of advertisements can be utilized in developing advertisements displayed in schools. This highlights the importance of understanding the role of specific texts within the school landscape and how these texts affect the learning environment.

Furthermore, Sari's research (2020) is also relevant to this study on the phenomenon of Linguistic Landscape in Islamic schools. Although the context and focus are different, the study includes language analysis of signs in schools and the categorization of language functions in those signs. This research shows the variation in the use of language forms in Linguistic Landscapes in these schools. Similarly, Islamic schools emphasize linguistic and non-linguistic symbols related to religious ideology (Islam), and in public elementary schools in the city of Medan, religious symbols can still be seen in slogans displayed in the school landscape. This demonstrates consistency with the foundation of the Pancasila state ideology, which upholds the values of divinity.

Observations of the linguistic landscape in public elementary schools in the city of Medan in this study also found a significant display of linguistic landscape in the form of motivational slogans and proverbs in the school environment. This may contrast schools in developed countries where such written expressions are rare. This is due to different educational approaches. In developed countries, education focuses more on developing critical, analytical, and problem-solving skills, as well as emphasising active and collaborative learning. Therefore, using slogans and proverbs as linguistic units may be considered less relevant in an educational context focusing on conceptual understanding and practical skills.

However, it is important to note that writings and linguistic units such as slogans and proverbs can play a significant role in education by helping improve students' comprehension and retention of values, ethics, and important principles. Slogans and proverbs can also enrich vocabulary, sharpen cultural understanding, and strengthen national identity.

In the Indonesian context, using motivational slogans and proverbs in education is quite common. This is due to the strong traditions and culture in Indonesian society. Slogans and proverbs are often used to convey moral messages, advice, or cultural values. These writings can help reinforce cultural identity, enhance understanding of local values, and promote local wisdom.

Nevertheless, it is important to ensure that using slogans and proverbs in education goes beyond mere decoration and is well integrated into the curriculum and learning process. Their usage should be relevant, effective, and supportive of broader educational goals. Using written expressions or linguistic units, such as

slogans and proverbs, can impact education. However, it is important to consider different educational contexts and ensure that their usage aligns with desired educational goals.

Furthermore, consideration should be given to using images of local leaders in school banners related to the symbolic function and information of the linguistic landscape. The placement of these images can have political implications, as it send specific messages and can influence the educational environment. Therefore, it should be ensured that the use of images of local leaders remains neutral and non-partisan and does not disrupt the objective learning climate in schools.

In conclusion, these findings demonstrate that studying and implementing Linguistic Landscapes in public elementary schools in Medan provides a deeper understanding of language conditions and their influences in an educational context. However, a broader perspective and careful arrangement are necessary to ensure optimal language usage that is responsive to the unique characteristics of the local community and maintains neutrality in conveying information in the educational environment. Continuity and variation in linguistic landscape studies in schools with different contexts and focuses can be understood by examining previous research.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The study on the linguistic landscape in Public Elementary Schools in Medan reveals that the linguistic landscape consists of both micro and macro linguistic forms, including acronyms, words, phrases, sentences, and bilingual signs. The use of language in the linguistic landscape serves various communicative functions such as providing information, issuing directives, extending invitations, imposing prohibitions, conveying slogans, and presenting proverbs.

Functions of the linguistic landscape in Medan's public elementary schools can be categorized into informational and symbolic functions. The informational function focuses on providing information through text and images while the symbolic function demonstrates the relationship between language and power, often associated with regional leaders. Indonesian is the dominant official language, but specific ethnic and cultural identities are not prominently represented in the linguistic landscape.

This study highlights the significance of the linguistic landscape in Medan's public elementary schools, shedding light on its micro and macro linguistic forms, communicative functions, and the absence of specific ethnic and cultural identities. It fills a gap in the literature by examining the role of the linguistic landscape in a multicultural society like Medan. Future research should explore the influence of the linguistic landscape on social and cultural aspects, as well as its impact on interactions and intercultural integration in schools.

In light of these findings, it is recommended to further investigate the influence of the linguistic landscape on social and cultural aspects within the school environment, particularly in a multicultural context like Medan. This research could delve deeper into how the linguistic landscape affects interactions and promotes intercultural integration in schools.

To enhance language diversity and cultural inclusivity in Medan's public elementary schools, several specific actions and policies can be implemented. These include promoting the use of multiple languages in the linguistic landscape to reflect the linguistic diversity of the community. Additionally, supporting teachers in incorporating diverse languages and cultures into their teaching practices can foster a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. Collaborating with local communities and cultural organizations can help develop and display signage that represents the ethnic and cultural identities of the students and their families. Organizing cultural events and activities that celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity can foster mutual understanding and respect among students from different backgrounds. Finally, facilitating language and cultural exchange programs or initiatives can encourage interactions and promote intercultural learning among students.

By implementing these actions and policies, Medan's public elementary schools can create an environment that values and embraces language diversity and cultural inclusivity, benefiting both students and the broader community.

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