



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijemss.v7i5>
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Language Choice and Social Status in the Commercial Linguistic Landscape of Margonda Street, Depok

Supriatnoko¹, Anwar Mustofa², Mawarta Onida Sinaga³, Ni Made Widhi Sugianingsih⁴

¹Department of Business Administration, Politeknik Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia, supriatnoko@binis.pnj.ac.id

²Department of Business Administration, Politeknik Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

³Department of Business Administration, Politeknik Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

⁴Department of Business Administration, Politeknik Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: supriatnoko@binis.pnj.ac.id¹

Abstract: In contemporary urban societies increasingly integrated into the global economy, language in public spaces no longer functions solely as a means of communication, but also serves as a symbolic resource associated with economic value, social identity, and power relations. This study examines how language choices within the commercial linguistic landscape represent market values and social differentiation in urban public spaces. The research was conducted along Margonda Street, Depok, an urban commercial corridor characterized by intensive language commodification practices. Employing a qualitative approach grounded in critical sociolinguistics, the study utilized systematic observation of commercial signage and advertisements, semi-structured interviews with business owners and employees, and visual documentation as data collection techniques. The data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of linguistic representation and symbolic meaning. The findings demonstrate that English is strategically employed, both monolingually and bilingually, to construct images of modernity, prestige, professionalism, and global orientation associated with urban middle-class lifestyles. In contrast, Indonesian and local linguistic elements, including Betawi, Sundanese, and Javanese expressions, are used to emphasize cultural proximity, social intimacy, and authenticity. The interaction between global and local linguistic resources produces forms of contextual and market-oriented linguistic hybridity. The study concludes that language within the commercial linguistic landscape functions as symbolic and economic capital strategically mobilized to construct brand image, negotiate social identity, and reproduce symbolic stratification in urban public spaces.

Keywords: Commercial Linguistic Landscape, Language Choice, Language Commodification, Linguistic Capital, Social Differentiation.

INTRODUCTION

Language in contemporary society is no longer understood merely as a communicative tool used to convey messages, but has increasingly developed into a symbolic resource possessing social, cultural, and economic value. The rapid expansion of globalization, urbanization, and consumer culture has significantly transformed the function of language

within urban public spaces, particularly in commercial and creative industries. Within the context of the global economy, language is strategically utilized to construct brand image, shape consumer perception, and establish particular social identities in urban communities (Musonda & Siame, 2025). Furthermore, the development of visual media and digital culture has strengthened the role of language as a symbolic instrument capable of representing social status, lifestyle, and class orientation in contemporary public spaces (Qi et al., 2024).

This phenomenon is clearly visible in the commercial linguistic landscapes emerging across major cities worldwide. The use of foreign languages, especially English, increasingly dominates billboards, shop names, shopping centres, restaurants, and digital promotional spaces because it is commonly associated with modernity, professionalism, and prestige. Research conducted by Ramli (2025) demonstrates that the use of English within urban commercial spaces is frequently connected with symbols of social mobility and global orientation among middle-class communities. Likewise, Ali (2026) emphasizes that language choice in public spaces is never neutral, as it is always related to language ideology, power relations, and particular economic interests.

Within linguistic landscape studies, public space is conceptualized as a semiotic arena where languages, symbols, and identities are visually negotiated through commercial signage and promotional media. Linguistic landscapes not only reflect linguistic diversity within society, but also represent social structures and cultural dynamics embedded in modern urban life (Syam et al., 2023). The presence of language on shop signs, billboards, and commercial advertisements constitutes part of symbolic practices aimed at attracting consumers while simultaneously constructing particular social meanings. Therefore, language in commercial spaces can be understood as part of economic and identity strategies operating within urban consumer culture (Calisto Friant et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, the development of commercial linguistic landscapes has experienced significant transformation in recent years. The use of English in business names, cafés, service centres, and digital commercial spaces has increased substantially, particularly in urban areas characterized by high levels of social mobility. This phenomenon indicates that English is no longer positioned solely as an international communication tool, but also as a symbol of prestige and modernity within Indonesian urban society (Syafrony, 2024). Meanwhile, Indonesian and local languages continue to be employed to establish emotional closeness, local identity, and authenticity for local consumers (Pugra et al., 2025).

This condition is particularly evident along Margonda Street, Depok, which has developed into a centre of economic activity, education, and urban lifestyle. Margonda Street represents a commercial corridor filled with business signage, advertisements, restaurants, service centres, and visual promotional spaces utilizing combinations of Indonesian, English, and hybrid linguistic forms. The diversity of language choices reflects increasingly intensive practices of language commodification within urban public spaces. According to Nugraha and Mazzetto et al (2025), commercial spaces in metropolitan buffer cities tend to demonstrate the dominance of global languages as symbols of social class and modern urban lifestyle orientation.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital. Language is viewed as symbolic capital possessing different social values depending on the linguistic market and social context in which it is used. Within contemporary linguistic markets, certain languages are perceived as having greater legitimacy and economic value than others, thereby providing symbolic advantages for their users (Wang & Hatoss, 2023). Consequently, language choice in commercial public spaces is not solely related to communication, but also constitutes a social strategy for constructing image, prestige, and class positioning within urban society.

The expansion of global capitalism has further intensified the commodification of language in modern society. Language is no longer used merely to convey information, but is

increasingly produced and marketed as a symbolic commodity possessing exchange value. Fahmi (2026), explains that language in contemporary capitalist societies is frequently employed to construct social exclusivity and reinforce market segmentation. In this context, the use of English within urban commercial spaces becomes part of branding strategies intended to create impressions of global orientation, elegance, and professionalism among consumers.

At the same time, national and local languages continue to play important roles in constructing cultural proximity and social identity. Research conducted by Tumuju et al (2025), reveals that the use of local linguistic elements in commercial spaces can strengthen consumer familiarity and loyalty because such language is perceived as closely connected to local cultural identity. This indicates that language practices within commercial linguistic landscapes are not homogeneous, but often produce forms of linguistic hybridity combining global and local elements simultaneously. Such hybridity functions as a symbolic strategy for reaching diverse consumer segments within multicultural urban communities.

Several previous studies have examined linguistic landscapes within public and commercial spaces in Indonesia. Research by Grzegorzewski (2025) found that the use of English in shopping centres in Jakarta is closely associated with representations of modernity and urban middle-class lifestyle. Similarly, Hidayat and Lestari (2023) demonstrated that the combination of local and foreign languages on business signage in Bandung functions to construct unique branding while simultaneously strengthening local cultural identity. In the context of Depok, Supriatnoko et al (2023) examined the linguistic landscape of village parks and found that public signs and linguistic symbols reflected social identity as well as local cultural representation within urban recreational spaces. Furthermore, Supriatnoko (2024), revealed that linguistic signs in Depok City Square Park functioned not only as informational media, but also as symbolic markers shaping the cultural image and identity of urban public space. More recently, (Supriatnoko et al., 2025) demonstrated that commercial signage along Margonda Street strategically employed Indonesian, English, and bilingual forms to target different market segments and construct particular social images associated with prestige, modernity, and urban lifestyle orientation. Nevertheless, most previous studies still focus primarily on descriptive analyses of linguistic forms and have not sufficiently examined the relationship between language choice, social stratification, and symbolic commodification within urban public spaces.

Furthermore, studies specifically examining the relationship between language and social status within the commercial linguistic landscape of metropolitan buffer cities such as Depok remain relatively limited. Existing research has predominantly emphasized multilingualism and cultural identity without critically analysing how language functions as symbolic capital in constructing social hierarchies within urban consumer culture. Firdaus and Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias (2023) argue that linguistic landscape studies in Indonesia still require more critical approaches capable of linking language with power relations, symbolic economy, and urban capitalist practices. Therefore, a more comprehensive investigation is necessary to understand how language is strategically mobilized as an economic and social identity resource within commercial urban spaces.

The phenomenon of language use within commercial linguistic landscapes also carries important implications for consumer perception and contemporary marketing practices. The language displayed on business names and promotional media influences how consumers perceive product quality, market segmentation, and the social status of businesses. Clarissa (2025) found that the use of foreign languages in branding significantly enhances perceptions of exclusivity and premium value among urban consumers. Accordingly, language becomes an integral component of marketing strategies that function not only informatively, but also persuasively and ideologically in constructing business image within increasingly competitive urban economies.

Based on these phenomena and research gaps, examining language choice within the commercial linguistic landscape of Margonda Street is highly important. This study aims to analyse how language choices in commercial public spaces represent market values, social identity, and status differentiation within urban society. In addition, this research seeks to explain how language functions as symbolic and economic capital strategically utilized by business actors to construct brand image and target particular consumer segments. Employing a critical sociolinguistic perspective, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to linguistic landscape studies, language commodification research, and broader discussions concerning the relationship between language and urban consumer culture in Indonesia.

METHOD

Research Design and Critical Sociolinguistic Orientation

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a critical sociolinguistic design to examine the relationship between language choice, symbolic power, and social stratification within the commercial linguistic landscape of Margonda Street, Depok. A qualitative approach was selected because this study aimed not merely to describe linguistic forms appearing in public spaces, but also to interpret the social, ideological, cultural, and economic meanings embedded within those linguistic practices. According to Heller et al (2024), qualitative inquiry is particularly effective for investigating language as a socially situated phenomenon closely connected with identity construction and symbolic interaction. In addition, critical sociolinguistics enables researchers to analyse language not only as a communicative system, but also as a representation of ideology, market orientation, and social hierarchy operating within urban society (Sholihah et al., 2026).

The research design was constructed within the framework of linguistic landscape studies, which conceptualize public space as a multimodal semiotic arena where language, symbols, and visual representations interact dynamically in shaping social meaning. This perspective allows commercial signs, advertisements, and storefront displays to be interpreted as symbolic resources functioning simultaneously as communication tools and economic instruments. As argued by Santos Rovira (2025), linguistic landscape research is increasingly significant in understanding the intersection between globalization, urban consumer culture, and identity politics in multilingual societies. Therefore, this study positioned language within urban commercial space as a strategic symbolic practice shaped by market ideology and social aspirations.

Research Setting, Population, and Sampling Strategy

The research was conducted along Margonda Street Raya, Depok, Indonesia, an urban commercial corridor characterized by intensive economic activity, educational mobility, and multicultural interaction. The area was selected purposively because it represents one of the most dynamic commercial public spaces in the metropolitan buffer zone surrounding Jakarta, where Indonesian, English, and hybrid linguistic forms coexist intensively in business signage and commercial communication. The population of this study consisted of commercial linguistic signs displayed in public spaces, including shop names, restaurant signage, billboards, banners, advertisements, storefront displays, and promotional visual media located along Margonda Street. In addition, the social participants involved in this study included business owners, employees, and consumers interacting directly with commercial linguistic practices within the research area.

The sampling technique employed in this study was non-probability purposive sampling because the participants and linguistic signs were selected intentionally based on their relevance to the research objectives. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to identify participants possessing sufficient knowledge and practical experience related to language use within commercial public spaces. According to Ahmad & Wilkins (2025), purposive sampling is

appropriate in qualitative studies that emphasize depth of interpretation and contextual understanding rather than statistical generalization. A total of 40 participants were involved in this research, consisting of 14 business owners and 26 employees representing various business sectors such as cafés, restaurants, fashion stores, beauty services, and lifestyle-oriented commercial establishments. The participants were selected because they actively participated in naming practices, branding strategies, and promotional communication associated with commercial language use.

Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments

Data collection was conducted using three complementary techniques, namely field observation, semi-structured interviews, and visual documentation. These techniques were integrated to strengthen data triangulation and ensure comprehensive interpretation of linguistic phenomena within urban commercial spaces. Observation was carried out systematically along Margonda Street to identify linguistic forms appearing on commercial signs, advertisements, and visual promotional media. Particular attention was given to language types, bilingual and multilingual patterns, code-mixing practices, typography, visual arrangement, colour composition, and symbolic representation embedded in commercial signage. As emphasized by Malinowski et al (2023), visual observation in linguistic landscape research is essential for understanding how language interacts with spatial and semiotic elements in constructing social meaning.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended interview guidelines designed to explore participants' perceptions, motivations, and ideological considerations regarding language choice in commercial branding and communication. The interview instrument was developed adaptively based on conceptual indicators proposed in previous sociolinguistic and language commodification studies, including symbolic prestige, market orientation, modernity representation, and identity construction. Interviews were conducted directly with participants in their respective business environments to maintain contextual authenticity and natural interaction. According to Rowley (2024), semi-structured interviews provide flexibility for researchers to capture deeper ideological and symbolic dimensions of language practices within social contexts.

Visual documentation was utilized as the primary multimodal data source in this study. Photographs of commercial signs, banners, billboards, storefront displays, menus, and other linguistic signage were collected systematically to support semiotic and contextual interpretation. The visual documentation process enabled the researcher to analyse linguistic signs not only textually but also visually through spatial positioning, typography, layout, colour, and branding aesthetics. Supporting tools used during data collection included digital cameras, smartphones for geo-visual recording, voice recorders for interviews, field notes, and qualitative data organization software. The integration of these instruments strengthened the reliability and richness of qualitative interpretation throughout the research process (Lim, 2025).

Research Procedure and Data Analysis Technique

The research procedure was conducted systematically through several interconnected stages. The initial stage involved preliminary observation and mapping of commercial linguistic signs along Margonda Street to identify dominant language patterns and determine relevant observation points. Following this stage, the researcher conducted field observations and visual documentation simultaneously while recording linguistic forms and multimodal characteristics found in commercial spaces. The next stage involved conducting semi-structured interviews with selected participants to explore deeper insights regarding symbolic motivations, market strategies, and social meanings associated with language use. Subsequently, all interview

recordings, field notes, and visual data were transcribed, organized, coded, and classified into thematic categories relevant to the research objectives.

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis following the analytical procedures proposed by Braun and Clarke. This analytical technique was selected because it enables researchers to identify recurring themes, symbolic meanings, and ideological patterns emerging from qualitative data systematically and reflexively. The analysis process involved several stages, including data familiarization, initial coding, theme categorization, interpretation of symbolic meaning, and contextual explanation of findings. The identified themes included language commodification, symbolic prestige, social differentiation, branding strategies, cultural proximity, and linguistic hybridity within urban commercial space. According to Jean (2023), thematic analysis is highly suitable for sociolinguistic research because it facilitates nuanced interpretation of language practices and social representation within contemporary society.

The analysis was conducted inductively and interpretatively by considering both linguistic and multimodal dimensions of commercial signs. Visual and textual elements were interpreted simultaneously to understand how language functions as symbolic and economic capital within the urban marketplace. To support data organization and thematic coding, this study utilized NVivo qualitative analysis software, which enabled systematic categorization of interview transcripts, field observations, and visual documentation. In addition, the analysis also considered contextual aspects such as urban consumer culture, social class representation, and globalization dynamics influencing language choice practices in commercial public spaces (Al-Athwary, 2025).

Trustworthiness, Validity, and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were implemented throughout the research process. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from observations, interviews, and visual documentation to identify consistency across different forms of evidence. Second, member checking was employed by confirming selected interpretations and thematic findings with several participants to ensure the accuracy of meaning interpretation. Third, peer debriefing was carried out through academic discussions with sociolinguistic scholars and qualitative research experts to minimize subjective bias and strengthen analytical reflexivity. According to Nowell and Akbar (2026), these validation procedures are crucial for enhancing methodological rigour and interpretative transparency within qualitative inquiry.

Furthermore, ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process. All participants were informed regarding the objectives of the study and voluntarily agreed to participate through informed consent procedures. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were preserved by excluding sensitive personal information from the research findings. Visual documentation was collected exclusively within public commercial spaces without violating participant privacy or business confidentiality. Consequently, this study not only fulfilled methodological standards for qualitative research but also adhered to ethical principles required for publication in accredited international scientific journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion derived from the analysis of the commercial linguistic landscape along Margonda Raya Street, Depok, within the framework of critical sociolinguistics. The discussion focuses on how language choices displayed in commercial public spaces represent symbolic power, market value, social stratification, and identity construction in contemporary urban society. The findings are interpreted not only descriptively, but also analytically by connecting them with sociolinguistic theories, language commodification concepts, and previous linguistic landscape studies in both Indonesian and

international contexts. The results further demonstrate that language in urban commercial spaces functions simultaneously as a communicative resource, symbolic capital, and economic strategy embedded within broader processes of globalization, consumer culture, and urban identity formation.

Language as Symbolic and Economic Capital in Commercial Space

The findings reveal that language along Margonda Street functions not merely as a communicative medium, but also as symbolic and economic capital strategically utilized by business actors to construct prestige, professionalism, and urban social identity. The observation results indicate that English appears dominantly on commercial signboards, café names, restaurants, beauty services, and lifestyle-oriented businesses. Linguistic expressions such as Hello Bingsu, What's Up Café, and Beauty Lounge were frequently identified in commercial signage characterized by minimalist typography, modern visual aesthetics, and globally oriented branding imagery. These findings suggest that English is intentionally mobilized as a symbolic resource to create impressions of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and middle-class urban lifestyle.

The findings are strongly aligned with Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, which argues that language possesses unequal symbolic value depending on the social market in which it operates. In the commercial environment of Margonda Street, English appears to hold higher symbolic legitimacy than Indonesian or local languages because it is socially associated with educational prestige, global mobility, and contemporary lifestyle orientation. Similar findings were identified by Februandari (2023), who demonstrated that English in Asian urban spaces often functions as a symbolic marker of aspirational identity and social mobility. In Indonesia, comparable patterns were also observed by Gogazeh et al (2026), who found that English-dominant commercial branding in metropolitan areas is frequently associated with exclusivity and urban prestige among young consumers.

The interviews conducted with business owners and employees further revealed that the selection of English was rarely motivated by communicative necessity alone. Instead, English was perceived as more commercially attractive, visually appealing, and capable of increasing brand competitiveness within highly competitive urban marketplaces. Several participants explained that English-language branding was intentionally chosen to attract university students, urban professionals, and digitally oriented consumers who associate foreign language use with modern and premium lifestyles. These findings reinforce the argument proposed by (Smith, 2023) that language in late-capitalist societies increasingly functions as a marketable symbolic commodity rather than merely a communicative system.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate that linguistic choices in commercial public spaces are closely connected to market segmentation and symbolic consumer targeting. Businesses employing English-dominant signage tended to position themselves within premium or lifestyle-oriented market categories, while businesses using Indonesian or hybrid linguistic forms often projected affordability, familiarity, and cultural accessibility. This finding differs slightly from earlier linguistic landscape studies that primarily interpreted multilingual signage as representations of linguistic diversity. In the present study, language choices were found to operate more strategically as mechanisms of symbolic differentiation and economic positioning within urban commercial culture. This aspect constitutes one of the major contributions of this research because it demonstrates that language in public commercial space actively participates in reproducing class-based symbolic hierarchies in Indonesian urban society.



Figure 1. Strategic Use of English and Other Foreign Languages

Source: Author's Documentation, 2026

The visual findings presented in Figure 1 illustrate how English and foreign linguistic elements are integrated with modern visual layouts, typography, and branding aesthetics to strengthen symbolic prestige and commercial attractiveness. The strategic use of Pratiwi et al (2025) describes as the globalization of linguistic prestige, in which English becomes associated with internationalism, sophistication, and urban professionalism. However, unlike some previous studies conducted in purely global commercial centres, the findings in Margonda Street reveal that English usage is often localized and blended with Indonesian expressions to maintain social accessibility among local consumers. This localization process represents a distinctive characteristic of Indonesian urban linguistic landscapes that differentiates them from Western commercial language practices.

From a methodological perspective, the findings were strengthened through multimodal observation, visual documentation, and semi-structured interviews, enabling deeper interpretation of the relationship between linguistic form, visual aesthetics, and symbolic meaning. The integration of thematic analysis with visual semiotic interpretation allowed this research to uncover how language functions simultaneously as text, symbol, and economic strategy. This methodological approach extends the findings of Supriatnoko et al (2025), who primarily focused on language segmentation in commercial signage, by providing a more critical explanation of how symbolic capital and market ideology shape linguistic choices within urban public spaces.

Language Stratification and Market Segmentation

Further analysis demonstrates that language stratification within the commercial linguistic landscape of Margonda Street is strongly connected with market segmentation and social classification processes. Businesses targeting upper-middle-class consumers, digitally connected youth, and globally oriented urban communities predominantly employed English or bilingual signage. In contrast, small-scale local businesses tended to utilize Indonesian or

mixed-language expressions to emphasize affordability, familiarity, and emotional closeness with local consumers. These findings indicate that language in commercial public spaces functions as a subtle but powerful mechanism for classifying target consumers according to symbolic and economic distinctions.

This phenomenon supports the sociolinguistic argument proposed by (Mishra, 2024), who explain that language choices within urban commercial spaces often reflect broader class aspirations and consumer identities rather than purely communicative intentions. Similar findings were identified by Hidayat et al (2025), who observed that commercial signage in Indonesian metropolitan areas increasingly reflects symbolic divisions between globalized middle-class lifestyles and localized community-oriented consumption patterns. However, the present study provides a more nuanced interpretation by demonstrating how linguistic stratification operates simultaneously through visual design, branding aesthetics, and semiotic positioning within the commercial environment.

The findings also reveal that Indonesian and local linguistic elements are strategically utilized to construct authenticity and cultural proximity. Business names such as Ngopi Bareng, Rawone Ahlinya Rawon, and Es Buah Bang Ble demonstrate how local linguistic resources are mobilized to evoke emotional attachment, solidarity, and everyday familiarity among consumers. These findings are consistent with the concept of authenticity discussed by Tumuju et al (2025), who argues that local linguistic forms are frequently commodified to create emotional resonance and social belonging within consumer culture. In contrast to English-dominant signage associated with prestige and exclusivity, Indonesian and local languages in Margonda Street symbolize warmth, cultural familiarity, and social accessibility.

The coexistence of English, Indonesian, and hybrid forms further illustrates that language stratification within urban commercial landscapes does not operate through rigid separation, but rather through dynamic negotiation between global prestige and local legitimacy. This finding differs from earlier studies that tended to interpret bilingual signage simply as evidence of multilingualism. In this study, bilingual and hybrid linguistic forms functioned strategically as adaptive branding mechanisms capable of simultaneously addressing aspirational urban consumers and culturally grounded local communities. This adaptive hybridity represents one of the most distinctive findings of the present research.

Social and Cultural Functions of Language: Hybridity and Local Proximity

Beyond its economic function, language along Margonda Street also performs important social and cultural roles related to identity construction, emotional affiliation, and symbolic community belonging. The findings indicate that many business actors intentionally combined English expressions with Indonesian and local linguistic elements to create hybrid branding strategies capable of balancing global modernity with local familiarity. Hybrid expressions such as Satu Dental, Bulu Eyes, and Sepatuklin illustrate how linguistic resources are creatively blended to construct modern commercial images while maintaining cultural accessibility among local consumers.

The findings correspond with the concept of linguistic hybridity proposed by Stathopoulou (2024), who argue that multilingual practices in urban societies often emerge as adaptive strategies reflecting the fluidity of social identity in globalized contexts. Similarly, research conducted by Fauzan (2025), found that hybrid commercial language practices in Indonesian cities increasingly function as symbolic bridges connecting local cultural identity with transnational consumer aspirations. However, the present study reveals that linguistic hybridity in Margonda Street is not merely a reflection of multilingual interaction, but also a deliberate market-oriented strategy designed to maximize symbolic appeal and commercial flexibility.

Another significant finding concerns the social meaning attached to local linguistic expressions within commercial branding. Local language elements were frequently associated

with emotional warmth, social intimacy, and authenticity, particularly among consumers seeking culturally familiar experiences within increasingly modernized urban environments. This finding supports the argument proposed by Al-Athwary (2025), who explains that local languages in urban commercial spaces often function as symbolic markers of rootedness and community belonging amidst globalization pressures. In the context of Margonda Street, local linguistic elements became important symbolic resources for maintaining cultural identity within highly commercialized urban spaces.



Figure 2. Strategic Use of Hybrid Language

Source: Author's Documentation, 2026

Figure 2 illustrates how hybrid linguistic forms combine English and Indonesian elements within visually attractive commercial signage. The integration of multilingual expressions, typography, and modern visual aesthetics demonstrates that language in urban commercial landscapes operates multimodally through textual, visual, and symbolic dimensions simultaneously. The findings also indicate that consumers do not interpret language solely through its literal meaning, but also through the prestige, lifestyle orientation, and emotional associations attached to particular linguistic forms. Consequently, language hybridity in Margonda Street represents a socially strategic practice embedded within broader processes of urban consumerism and symbolic consumption.

Language, Identity, and Market Value in the Linguistic Landscape of Margonda Street

The findings further reveal that language choice in the commercial spaces of Margonda Street is deeply interconnected with identity construction and market value formation. English was predominantly employed to project images of sophistication, global orientation, educational prestige, and middle-class lifestyle identity, whereas Indonesian and local linguistic elements emphasized authenticity, locality, and social familiarity. This demonstrates that language within urban commercial spaces functions not merely as an informational medium, but as a symbolic mechanism through which businesses negotiate social positioning and consumer perception.

These findings are closely related to the concept of symbolic consumption developed by Emon et al (2026), which explains that consumers increasingly purchase products and services not solely based on utility, but also because of the symbolic identities attached to them. Similarly, Kusnawan & Rini (2025), found that branding language in Indonesian urban businesses significantly influences consumer assumptions regarding social status, lifestyle orientation, and product quality. The present study strengthens these findings by demonstrating that symbolic meaning in commercial signage is produced not only through language selection, but also through multimodal visual arrangements and branding aesthetics.

The findings also indicate that market value within the commercial linguistic landscape is shaped through ideological meanings attached to particular linguistic forms. English signage was frequently perceived as more modern, premium, and internationally connected, whereas Indonesian and local languages were interpreted as more grounded, familiar, and socially accessible. This unequal symbolic valuation reflects broader sociolinguistic hierarchies operating within urban Indonesian society. Unlike previous descriptive linguistic landscape studies, this research explicitly demonstrates how symbolic linguistic hierarchies contribute to the reproduction of class-based distinctions and urban social stratification.



Figure 3. Strategic Use of Bilingual Language

Source: Author's Documentation, 2026

Figure 3 demonstrates how bilingual commercial signage strategically combines English and Indonesian linguistic resources to maximize both symbolic prestige and local accessibility. The coexistence of these linguistic forms reflects adaptive branding strategies responding to increasingly diverse urban consumer identities. This finding expands the earlier observations of Supriatnoko (2024), which focused on symbolic representation within public urban spaces, by showing that commercial linguistic practices also function as mechanisms of market negotiation and identity commodification within consumer-oriented environments.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that consumers interpret commercial signs not merely through informational content, but through symbolic meanings associated with prestige, social aspiration, and lifestyle orientation. Language therefore becomes a performative social resource shaping how businesses are perceived, categorized, and valued within urban society. This

reinforces the argument proposed by Bibi et al (2024), that language in globalization contexts increasingly functions as a strategic instrument for constructing aspirational identity and symbolic distinction within consumer culture.

Sociolinguistic and Economic Implications

Overall, the findings of this study demonstrate that language within the commercial linguistic landscape of Margonda Street cannot be understood solely as a communicative system, but rather as a symbolic and economic resource possessing exchange value within urban society. Language functions simultaneously as branding strategy, symbolic capital, identity marker, and market segmentation mechanism shaping consumer perception and commercial positioning. These findings confirm that linguistic practices within commercial public spaces are deeply embedded within broader processes of globalization, symbolic economy, and urban consumer culture.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study contributes significantly to the development of linguistic landscape research in Indonesia by providing a more critical interpretation of the relationship between language, social class, and symbolic power. Unlike many previous studies focusing primarily on multilingual representation, this research demonstrates how language actively reproduces symbolic hierarchies and social differentiation within urban public spaces. This contribution is particularly important because it situates Indonesian linguistic landscape studies within broader international discussions concerning language commodification and symbolic economy.

From an economic perspective, the findings indicate that language has increasingly become part of strategic market practices aimed at enhancing visibility, competitiveness, and symbolic prestige. Businesses consciously select linguistic forms capable of attracting specific consumer groups and communicating particular lifestyle orientations. Consequently, language operates not only as a medium of communication, but also as a strategic economic asset integrated into broader branding and consumer culture practices. These findings provide valuable implications for future studies examining the intersection between language, globalization, urban identity, and symbolic consumption in multilingual societies.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that language choice within the commercial linguistic landscape of Margonda Street, Depok, functions not merely as a communicative medium, but also as symbolic and economic capital strategically utilized to construct market value, social identity, and symbolic differentiation in urban public spaces. The findings demonstrate that English is predominantly employed to represent prestige, modernity, professionalism, and globally oriented middle-class lifestyles, whereas Indonesian and local linguistic elements are utilized to construct cultural proximity, familiarity, authenticity, and emotional attachment with consumers. The coexistence of English, Indonesian, and hybrid linguistic forms further indicates that language practices within urban commercial spaces are shaped by dynamic negotiations between global prestige and local cultural legitimacy. These findings strengthen critical sociolinguistic perspectives by confirming that language in commercial public spaces operates simultaneously as a branding strategy, identity marker, symbolic resource, and mechanism of social stratification within contemporary urban consumer culture.

This study also contributes to the development of linguistic landscape research in Indonesia by providing a more critical interpretation of the relationship between language, symbolic power, and market ideology in multilingual urban society. Nevertheless, this research remains limited to one commercial corridor in Depok and primarily focuses on visible linguistic signs within offline public spaces. Future studies are therefore recommended to expand the research scope by examining digital commercial landscapes, consumer interpretation processes,

and comparative urban linguistic practices across different metropolitan regions in Indonesia in order to obtain broader and more comprehensive sociolinguistic insights.

REFERENCE

- Ahmad, M., & Wilkins, S. (2025). Purposive sampling in qualitative research: A framework for the entire journey. *Quality & Quantity*, 59(2), 1461–1479.
- Akbar, M. A. (2026). Trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry as a foundation for rigorous research. *Indonesian Journal of Health Services*, 3(1), 1–4.
- Al-Athwary, A. A. H. (2025). The Interplay of Globalization, Localization, and Translation in Shaping the Linguistic Landscape of Saudi Arabia. *Editorial Board*, 193.
- Ali, R. (2026). ‘We are still British or American colony, we are still a colony, we are not free’: language ideologies, policies in education in Pakistan. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 27(1), 67–90.
- Bibi, S. A., Irshad, H., & Khan, S. (2024). Globalization and English in advertising exploring how English is used as a global language in branding. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)*, 7(4), 1405–1418.
- Calisto Friant, M., Reid, K., Boesler, P., Vermeulen, W. J. V., & Salomone, R. (2023). Sustainable circular cities? Analysing urban circular economy policies in Amsterdam, Glasgow, and Copenhagen. *Local Environment*, 28(10), 1331–1369.
- Clarissa, L. A. (2025). Analysis of the Influence of the Use of Foreign Languages in Advertisements on Public Perception. *Acta Psychologia*, 4(1), 1–11.
- Emon, M. M. H., Chowdhury, M. S. A., Islam, M. S., & Nath, A. (2026). Value Perception, Digital Ownership, and Scarcity in Consumer-Brand Interactions Within Digital Payment Ecosystems. In *Impacts of Digital Payment Systems on Marketing* (pp. 231–270). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Fahmi, Z. (2026). The cultural politics of curriculum discourse: Cultural representations in Arabic as a foreign language (AFL) textbooks. *Linguistics and Education*, 92, 101518.
- Fauzan, A. (2025). The transformation of traditional culture in responding to the challenges of globalization in local Indonesian Communities. *The Journal of Academic Science*, 2(3), 1021–1030.
- Febriandari, A. (2023). *Power and discrimination in a space: the role of cultural built heritage in identity construction of Chinese Indonesians*. Newcastle University.
- Gogazeh, Z., Al-Afif, A., & Jarrah, M. (2026). Attitudes toward Spanish as Added Linguistic Capital in Jordan’s English-Dominant Higher Education Landscape. *Ampersand*, 100261.
- Grzegorzewski, M. J. (2025). Shopping mall city and escapism: Urban life and privatized comfort in Jakarta, Indonesia. *Cities*, 167, 106335.
- Heller, M., Pietikäinen, S., & Pujolar, J. (2024). *Critical sociolinguistic research methods: Studying language issues that matter*. Routledge.
- Hidayat, F., Anam, A. K., Rosadi, N., & Dinihari, Y. (2025). Toponymy, Space Commodification, and Local Identity, and Literacy Practices: A Study of Housing Names in Jatiasih, Bekasi. *IJLECR (International Journal of Language Education and Cultural Review)*, 11(2), 171–189.
- Jean, B. (2023). Sociolinguistics: Investigating Language Variation in Society. *Journal of International Social Research*, 16(107).
- Kusnawan, R. P., & Rini, Y. P. (2025). The influence of lifestyle, brand image, and consumer behavior mediated by marketing mix on fashion product purchasing decisions. *Primanomics: Jurnal Ekonomi & Bisnis*, 23(2), 179–198.
- Lim, W. M. (2025). What is qualitative research? An overview and guidelines. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 33(2), 199–229.
- Malinowski, D., Maxim, H. H., & Dubreil, S. (2023). Introduction: Spatializing language

- studies in the linguistic landscape. In *Spatializing language studies: Pedagogical approaches in the linguistic landscape* (pp. 1–17). Springer.
- Mazzetto, S., Furlan, R., & Hoblos, J. (2025). Transit-Oriented Development and Urban Livability in Gulf Cities: Comparative Analysis of Doha's West Bay and Riyadh's King Abdullah Financial District. *Sustainability*, 17(18), 8278.
- Mishra, S. (2024). The Linguistic Landscape of Urban Vellore: A Comprehensive Analysis of Language Distribution, Choice, and Implications in the Commercial Space Through Shop Signs. *Darnioji Daugiakalbystė*, 25, 196–225.
- Musonda, N., & Siame, P. (2025). The impact of language on branding: A comprehensive analysis. *Linguistic Exploration*, 2(1), 37–46.
- Pratiwi, A., Sinar, T. S., Rangkuti, R., & Rosa, R. N. (2025). Linguistic Landscape on Food and Beverage Signboards in Binjai City. *Jurnal Pemberdayaan Masyarakat*, 4(2), 314–325.
- Pugra, I. W., Kencanawati, A. A. A. M., & Kurniawan, I. G. W. A. (2025). The cultural significance of traditional foods in shaping Indonesian social identity: Challenges and preservation strategies. *Journal of Language, Literature, Social and Cultural Studies*, 3(1), 21–31.
- Qi, J., Mazumdar, S., & Vasconcelos, A. C. (2024). Understanding the relationship between urban public space and social cohesion: A systematic review. *International Journal of Community Well-Being*, 7(2), 155–212.
- Ramli, A. (2025). Dynamics of the Urban Middle Class, Consumerism, Social Mobility and New Identities. *Mahogany Journal De Social*, 2(3), 141–149.
- Rowley, T. (2024). *Appropriating and Resisting Language Ideologies in the Classroom: How Advanced Students Narrate Their Language Learning Experiences Through Participant Interviews*. State University of New York at Buffalo.
- Sakhiyya, Z., & Martin-Anatias, N. (2023). Reviving the language at risk: a social semiotic analysis of the linguistic landscape of three cities in Indonesia. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 20(2), 290–307.
- Santos Rovira, J. M. (2025). Beyond Words: Navigating Lisbon's Linguistic Landscape in the Era of Mass Tourism and Migration. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 44(6), 928–960.
- Sholihah, R. A., Bagea, I., & Agustina, S. (2026). Language, Identity, and Ideology: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Discourse in Multicultural Societies. *Journal of Humanities Research Sustainability*, 3(1), 28–41.
- Smith, C. (2023). Becoming inauthentic: capitalism, commodification, and performance in Wataya risa's Insutōru. *Japan Forum*, 35(4), 434–455.
- Stathopoulou, M. (2024). Cross-linguistic mediation and linguistic hybridity. In *Mediation as Negotiation of meanings, Plurilingualism and Language Education* (pp. 153–172). Routledge.
- Supriatnoko, S. (2024). Exploring linguistics landscapes in Depok City Square Park. *Interdisciplinary Social Studies*, 3(3), 108–116.
- Supriatnoko, S., Hasyim, N., & Hidayat, T. N. (2025). The Strategic Use of Language in Commercial Signage: A Linguistic Landscape Study on Jalan Margonda, Depok. *International Conference on Applied Science and Technology on Social Science 2025 (ICAST-SS 2025)*, 416–424.
- Supriatnoko, S., Mustofa, A., Sinaga, M. O., & Sugianingsih, N. M. W. (2023). Landscape linguistics in Depok City Village Park. *Interdisciplinary Social Studies*, 3(1), 34–41.
- Syafrony, A. (2024). Negotiating linguistic identities: The impact of globalization on English language use and Indonesian identity. *Open Society Conference*, 2, 94–103.
- Syam, C., Seli, S., & Abdu, W. J. (2023). Dynamics of language interaction in multicultural urban communities: Analysis of socio-cultural linguistic environment. *Society*, 11(2),

575–588.

- Tumuju, V. N., Mantau, M., & Siamando, T. (2025). THE LINGUISTIC CREATIVITY AND ITS IMPACT ON LOCAL ECONOMIC POTENTIAL AND GLOBAL INCOME. *SOSIOEDUKASI: JURNAL ILMIAH ILMU PENDIDIKAN DAN SOSIAL*, 14(1), 590–600.
- Wang, S., & Hatoss, A. (2023). When the linguistic market meets the tea business: language attitudes, ideologies and linguistic entrepreneurship in the Blang community in China. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 24(2), 160–178.