Negotiating Space through Names: A Linguistic Landscape Perspective on Toponymic Practices in Shah Alam, Selangor

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ABSTRACT

Background: Language plays a vital role in human interaction and has evolved beyond direct communication to convey messages through public spaces, known as the Linguistic Landscape (LL). The presence of LL varies across regions, from being highly visible to nearly absent.

Aims: This study aims to analyse the conceptual and functional aspects of public space naming in Shah Alam, Selangor, using a linguistic landscape approach to understand how language shapes identity and social function in urban settings, employing a landscape linguistics perspective.

Methods: This study used a qualitative descriptive method, where researchers directly describe the concept of naming in public space in Shah Alam city, Selangor, Malaysia, using the theoretical framework of Linguistic Landscape. The data were collected through direct field observation without involving interviews or informants. The analysis process involved data reduction, categorisation, contextual interpretation, and inductive drawing of conclusions. Visual triangulation and comparative site observation were employed to enhance the validity of the data.

Results: The findings in this research reveal that the naming of public spaces can be classified based on informational functions. Symbolically, street naming reflects dynamics of power, cultural relationships, and language policy; office signage indicates aspects of language policy and status, while public signs expose elements of linguistic imperialism. The collected data include diverse types of linguistic signage: three instances of street naming, one city motto, two public information boards, two examples of office naming, two prohibition signs in public transport, and two signs designated for specific user groups.

Implications: The implications of this research are twofold. Theoretically, these findings enrich the study of Linguistic Landscape. Practically, they offer insights into language planning and naming policies in multilingual public spaces.

Keywords: Cultural relationship; dynamics of power; linguistic landscape; language policy; public space; toponymic

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a key role in human social interaction in the context of social life. Language in public signs serves as a sign to know the system of the place, either from direct sign access or image access. However, language has now evolved into a means of public signs that convey a clear message to everyone (Munawarah & Come, 2019). The urban landscape is filled with various forms of written language, such as billboards, store signs, traffic signs, posters, announcements, and other types of visual displays (Munishi, 2018). This study of how language is used and presented in public spaces is known as linguistic landscape (LL) research (Peng et al., 2022). However, in some areas, the presence of LL can be very abundant, while in others its existence is limited or even non-existent due to a visible public sign (Munishi, 2018).

Public signs in Kuala Lumpur emphasise that the use of language in public spaces is not only influenced by government policies but also by economic factors and ethnic identity (Manan et al., 2015; Albury, 2017; Andaya & Andaya, 2017). Therefore, the study of LL in Malaysia is important to understand how language is used as a tool to negotiate identity, power, and policy in multicultural societies (Coluzzi & Kitade, 2015; Coluzzi, 2017; Coluzzi, 2022). Barni & Bagna (2010) state that urban spaces are suitable locations for observing linguistic landscapes (LLs). In Indonesia, especially in Bali, such selection is based on the fact that diverse linguistic practices can be reflected through the presence, use, and visibility of language in various public markers in urban areas (Rastitiati & Suprastayasa, 2022). In Malaysia, the study of LL is particularly important given that the country has a high ethnolinguistic diversity, with its main population consisting of Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Although Malay is established as the national language, the use of other languages, such as English, Chinese, and Tamil, remains dominant in various contexts, especially in the private sector and commercial spaces (Mansoor et al., 2023). S. Manan & David (2016) point out an interesting contradiction: despite official policies on which languages to use, businesses in the field often take a different approach. To attract customers, many choose to use English—or even a mix of several languages on their stores and signs. It's a practical decision, indeed, but one that reveals a deeper conflict between government-imposed language rules and the everyday multilingual reality on the streets.

The study of Linguistic Landscape (LL) is a field of research that emphasises the use of language in the context of public spaces, both in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual contexts (Ardhian & Soemarlam, 2024). In this study, multilingual signs were defined as signs that display three or more languages, while single signs were defined as signs that display only one language. Bilingual signs feature two languages (Han & Wu, 2020). The language used in public space signs is often associated with contextual marketing and advertising, where the goal is to draw attention to a business or product (Izar et al., 2021). Shohamy (2006) notes that the existence of language in public spaces conveys a symbolic message about the importance, strength, significance, and relevance of a particular language compared to others.

Research by Sari & Savitri (2021) shows that store names in Sidoarjo not only reflect business identity but also convey local cultural values that are meant for the public. Similar studies examining landscape studies Linguistics related to public signs is also carried out by (Amer & Obeidat, R, 2014), (Shang & Guo, L, 2017), (Tang, 2018), (Octaviani, 2019) (Dong, et.al, 2020), (Karam, Warren, & A.K. ve Shweiry, 2020) (Profile, 2022) in different countries. Therefore, the linguistic landscape of other regions can be investigated further to recognise the diversity of languages used and their functions that may reflect the intentions of certain groups/individuals. The naming of public spaces plays an important role in organising and identifying an area. In the study

of linguistic landscapes, the way places are named can actually provide valuable insights. These names don't just label a location; They reveal something about the people behind them, and how those names are received or interpreted by the communities that live around them daily. Text producers, including government entities or developers, consider the production aspects of the text and the audience that will interpret it, as well as how the text interacts with the surrounding environment. Text consumers, made up of residents and visitors, interpret and give meaning to these signs, thus influencing their collective perception and identity of the space.

Research on landscape linguistics has a growing interest among researchers in researching the language used in public spaces, known as Linguistic Landscapes (LL). The field revolves around two central ideas: how language appears visually in public settings and what this visual display communicates, both functionally and symbolically. First, Linguistic Landscape, as a subject, is a concept in the field of sociolinguistics that refers to the use of language in public spaces (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991; Gorter, 2006; Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Second, Landscape Linguistics, as a study or field, was popularised by Studies in Sociolinguistic and Ethnolinguistic Development, as examined by Landry & Bourhis (1997), which investigated the use of written language in public and specific areas. This suggests that there are two aspects involved in the use of the term Linguistic Landscape.

From the perspective of the linguistic landscape, the signs present in a region, such as texts that indicate or describe something that can be photographed and analysed linguistically, as well as contextually in the cultural field (Gorter, 2006; Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). These signs are usually used to spread general messages to the public, such as information, directions, warnings, and the like. LL's main focus is to uncover the visibility and meaning of written language that is important to use in public spaces. Through the interaction of language in public spaces, we can trace how the symbols of an environment are formed and how language is used in building social and political relationships. Therefore, linguistic landscapes also play a role in processing the visual cues they encounter in public, and the language used in signs can shape their perception of privilege in a language that can influence social attitudes and behaviour of public signs in society (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

1.1 Research Gap and Novelty

Numerous studies on linguistic landscapes have been carried out in different contexts. For instance, Sahril et al. (2019) examined the linguistic landscape of Medan, while Wulansari (2020) focused on multilingual signs in Bali. Similar studies have also explored street names (Erikha, 2018), urban landscapes in Sidoarjo (Sari & Savitri, 2021), Surakarta (Purnanto et al., 2022), and Probolinggo (Mauliddian et al., 2022). Other researchers have highlighted symbolic messages in tombs (Ardhian et al., 2021), linguistic signs in public transportation such as airports (Widiyanto, 2019), and signs in places of worship (Wafa & Wijayanti, 2018; Ardhian et al., 2021). Studies on the dignity and status of language within linguistic landscapes have also been conducted in Indonesia (Jahdiah, 2019; Karim et al., 2022; Sirait, 2021; Hasan, 2021; Solikhan, 2013). Beyond Indonesia, research has expanded to Malaysia, particularly Kuala Lumpur, with a focus on Malaysia–China and Malaysia–Dubai multilingual interactions (Gu, 2023; Gu & Coluzzi, 2024). However, these studies have not specifically addressed public signage in Malaysia, particularly in Shah Alam, Selangor. This is noteworthy since Selangor functions as both an educational hub and a popular destination in Malaysia. Thus, a significant research gap remains in examining public signs in Shah Alam, especially in relation to the multilingual dynamics and linguistic identity of the region.

In addition, other functional aspects can give rise to behaviours, such as texts regarding language policy, language imperialism, language marginalisation, language

discrimination, and social factors that contribute to societal phenomena (Ardhian & Soemarlam, 2024). The social phenomena in question include cultural relations, group identities (such as ethnicity, gender, and social status), power dynamics (both in economic, political, and demographic contexts), and language positions (both official and non-official) (Backhaus, 2006; Backhaus 2007). The language landscape in public spaces is often associated with the expression of ethnic or group identity (Barni & Bagna, 2008). This perspective is in line with the idea that space is not only physical, but also social, where people gather, interact, and participate in cultural life (Blommaert, 2012). Such an approach helps us understand not only the distribution of texts in a given area but also the social dynamics and power relations that take place within it (Blommaert, 2013).

1.2 Research Question

Language research plays an important role in preserving the values, norms, and ethical foundations embedded in the use of language. This study focuses on Shah Alam, particularly in the Selangor region, and aims to explore how public spaces are named both conceptually and functionally. Building on that foundation, the research was driven by several key questions: (1) How does the concept and role of naming reflect in the different types of public signage in Shah Alam? This aims to provide a detailed explanation of the activities of the concept and the role found by this naming concept, either as information or as a symbol, and using the basis of the conceptual and functional aspects of space naming.

2. METHODS
2.1 Research Design

This research employs a descriptive, qualitative approach, drawing on elements of ethnography to gain a deeper understanding of the context and meanings behind language use in public spaces. The Linguistic Landscape framework, originally proposed by Landry & Bourhis (1997) and further developed by Gorter (2006), is applied to analyse how signs function both informatively and symbolically in urban settings.

The Linguistic Landscape framework is employed to analyse how language appears and functions in signage found across the city of Shah Alam, Selangor (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). The researcher employs this approach to investigate the sociolinguistic significance of language use in urban public settings.

2.2 Research Objects

The study did not involve human participants or informants. The research objects consisted of visible linguistic objects, including street name signs, office nameplates, business signage, and transportation-related boards. The site selection follows the framework proposed by Cenoz & Gorter (2006), which emphasises urban spaces with diverse ethnolinguistic representation to facilitate comparative and contrastive analyses. In line with this approach, we selected Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, as the field site, as it offers rich cultural and linguistic diversity and reflects the urban linguistic dynamics central to the research focus.

2.3 Research Procedures

The study started with on-the-ground observations in several public areas around Shah Alam. During this phase, the researcher carefully recorded examples of language use on signage by observing and taking photographs directly. Each sign was examined not

just for its language and visual design but also for the social and spatial context in which it appeared. After gathering the data, the signs were categorised based on their type and the roles they played, using the framework developed by Landry & Bourhis (1997).

2.4 Research Instruments

In this study, the primary instruments used were observation sheets and a mobile phone equipped with a camera. The observation sheets served as a systematic guide to record the linguistic features found in signs, billboards, posters, and other forms of public display. Meanwhile, the mobile phone functioned as a supporting instrument to capture visual documentation in the form of photographs, ensuring that each object was recorded accurately in its actual condition. The combination of these instruments enabled objective, consistent, and verifiable data collection, as the researchers relied not only on descriptive notes but also on visual evidence that could be re-examined during the analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data gathered were carefully examined through analysis to uncover common patterns in naming practices and to gain a better understanding of their social and linguistic meanings. The study followed a visual ethnography approach, which interprets linguistic signs within their social and cultural contexts (Blommaert, 2013).

The analysis process was carried out through several interrelated stages. First, data reduction was conducted by selecting only relevant signage that met the study's criteria, specifically multilingual public signs with clear textual content found in major public spaces. Unclear, damaged, or redundant signs were excluded. Next, categorization was performed by grouping the signs into thematic categories based on function (e.g., informational, regulatory, commercial) and setting (e.g., parks, government offices, transportation areas) Following this, contextual interpretation was applied by analyzing how language use reflected social, cultural, and institutional patterns in each site, guided by the principles of linguistic landscape theory.

Finally, inductive conclusion drawing involved identifying emerging patterns and interpreting them in relation to broader sociolinguistic dynamics in Shah Alam. To enhance the validity of the analysis, visual triangulation was applied by cross-checking photographic data across multiple visits and comparing similar signs in different locations. Comparative observation across several sites ensured that the interpretations were not site-specific but reflected broader tendencies.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
3.1 Findings

This section presents the results of the study on the concept of naming in public spaces in Shah Alam, Malaysia, using the framework of Linguistic Landscape. The findings are organized thematically based on the types of public signage observed and the socio-cultural factors influencing naming practices. Through field observation and interviews, several patterns and symbolic meanings behind the names used in public spaces have been identified.

Table 1 Table of Linguistic Landscape Findings in Shah Alam, Selangor

Category of Signage Linguistic Landscape	Concept	Location
Highway	Street Balai Raya A	Bumi Marina
	Street Balai Raya C	Amban Permai Complex
Public Places	Motto	Shah Alam City Park
	Public Place Advisories Musholla	Public Areas
	Storage Room	Office areas
Places Of Public Transport	No food/drinks	Public transportation areas
	No smoking	
	Policies for special needs/parents	Public spaces

Based on Table 1, the researcher found various forms of linguistic landscape signage in public spaces in Shah Alam, Selangor. The data includes three examples of street naming, one motto, two public signage items, two office naming examples, two public transport prohibition signs, and two signs designated for special user groups. These findings reflect both informational and symbolic functions of language in public spaces.

Concept of Signage Linguistic Landscape Syah Alam highway in Selangor City

Figure 1. Street Name – Jalan Balai Raya A

The signboard "Jalan Balai Raya A" located in Shah Alam, Selangor, exemplifies a public space naming practice that merges both informational and symbolic functions. Conceptually, the term Jalan (Road) denotes a traffic-related space. At the same time, Balai Raya (Community Hall) refers to a cultural and social institution commonly used in Malay communities for public meetings and neighbourhood events. The addition of the letter A functions as a spatial categorisation marker, reflecting an organised zoning system within the housing area. This naming reflects a structured spatial order and corresponds to the informational function of linguistic landscapes. Symbolically, this sign also conveys values of social order and collective identity. By using Malay as the primary language on the sign, it highlights its role as the national language in public spaces, reflecting official language policies. At the same time, the Chinese characters (Mandarin) displayed at the top show the strong presence and cultural influence of the local Chinese community. The sign not only serves a practical function as a street identifier but also acts as a marker of multicultural coexistence and language policy implementation in Malaysian public space.

Figure 2. Street Name – Jalan Balai Raya C

The signboard "Jalan Balai Raya C" in Shah Alam similarly represents an organized naming convention in public signage, yet conveys distinct symbolic meanings. From a conceptual perspective, the use of the term Jalan identifies the type of space, while Balai Raya highlights a community-based facility that reflects Malay cultural practices. The letter C at the end functions as a zone identifier within a larger environmental planning system, facilitating navigation and spatial orientation. What makes this sign stand out is its symbolic design. The Chinese (Mandarin) characters placed at the top are quite striking and represent the cultural and linguistic identity of the local people, the majority of whom are likely of Chinese descent. This highlights the multilingual nature of the region and shows how ethnic diversity is acknowledged through urban Therefore, this sign functions beyond spatial identification; it stands as a cultural marker and a form of linguistic citizenship.

Figure 3. Street Name – Jalan Balai Raya C

The street name "Jalan Amban Permai" located in the Amban Permai Complex, Shah Alam, Selangor, is an example of a linguistic landscape that combines informational and symbolic functions. From an information perspective, the name is taken from a main road (Jalan Besar) and reflects the presence of the majority Chinese ethnic community in the area. This supports the idea that street naming serves as a spatial orientation tool, emphasising that linguistic signs in public spaces provide environmental cues that are important for navigation and social recognition. The inclusion of abbreviated labels such as "R7/R" indicates an internal zoning system; however, ideally, this should be standardised to be clearer, for example, written as "Section 7" in line with linguistic norms on public information boards. Symbolically, street names reflect the power relations and local cultural values of a community. The name "Amban" may have historical and environmental connotations associated with recognition of Malaysia's natural resources and urban cleanliness, in line with the city's image as an award-winning municipality. Thus, this street name functions not only as a location identifier but also as a public discourse of recognition and social identity within the multicultural context of Shah Alam.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 use the term bilingual. Figure 1 is bilingual Indonesian-Chinese and Indonesian-Arabic. Picture taken from a section of a public road in Shah Alam. The functions of the use of the two languages as a pointer for the public, visitors, or tourists. The use of Malaysian, followed by Chinese, can be said to be a form of language identity where many ethnic Chinese, as well as Malays, use Malaysian as the unitary language of the State of Malaysia, and Chinese as a language companion. Therefore, the foreign languages are above Malay because ethnic Chinese dominate. In Figure 2, the usage of the two languages is also Indonesian, with the language Chinese. There is a choice of language used in the board as A form of identification of the research location. Picture 2 was obtained in the Shah Alam area, which is still thick with Chinese culture. Figure 2 is bilingual between the Malaysian and Chinese Ethnic Languages. The Malaysian language is a form of information for visitors in the Area of Jalan Balai Raya. At the same time, the selection of quotations in Chinese is a form of reflection, Chinese concepts used by the faithful in China, located in Shah Alam, Malaysia. Last, in Figure 3, there is a combination of the Pegon, Arabic, and Malay scripts. Pegon Arabic here only uses the word "جلان فلومبوم" as a form of information for visitors who have just entered the area. This was followed by the use of the written Malaysian "Jalan Plumbun", which served as a form of identification indicating the area's heritage.

Linguistic Landscape Sign Public Places in Shah Alam, Selangor

Figure 4. Motto in the Garden

Shah Alam Park is more than just a patch of greenery; it functions as an ecological classroom that encourages visitors to take part in protecting the city's environment. This role is communicated not only through its official name but also through existing signage, which presents the park as Shah Alam's green lung, a community sports hub, and a gathering place for different generations. Yet, despite this intent, the absence of clear directions and the frequent use of very small lettering often make navigation difficult for visitors. The symbolic dimension of signage further underscores the park's identity, as the naming of national parks typically reflects local language choices and branding strategies. In Shah Alam Park, Malay remains the dominant language on regulatory boards, affirming the status of the national language. At the same time, English translations on promotional materials signal the city's international orientation and tourism agenda. Taken together, both the presence and absence of certain signs reveal how the park's name and signage do more than provide directions; they construct a public narrative about community identity and the environmental values embraced by its residents.

Figure 5. Advisory Students

Figure 6. Encourage Students to Use Bicycles

Based on Figures 5 and 6, the information function of signs on naming public signs has been published on the official website of the Malaysian government's policy on the use of public signs. The "P" sign featured in Figure 5 serves as a common informational marker typically found in urban areas like Shah Alam. The letter "P" in this context can generally be interpreted as referring to "Pelajar" (student) or "Parking," depending on the spatial and environmental context in which the sign is placed. In this case, the interpretation that the zone is designated for students may derive from its proximity to educational institutions or student residential areas. The use of a single capital letter reflects a semiotic practice aimed at visual efficiency and quick interpretation in public spaces. Below the letter, the use of standard Malay as an explanatory label indicates local government efforts to uphold national language policies in public signage, aligning with broader strategies of linguistic standardisation and visual identity in urban settings. Although no official guideline explicitly confirms that "P" denotes "student" in the Garis Panduan Papan Tanda Awam, such symbols highlight how the linguistic landscape encodes cultural cues that must be interpreted through their social context.

Symbolically, the exclusive use of Malay without English or Mandarin translations reinforces the official language policy and reflects the agreed linguistic hierarchy in Malaysia's public space. At the same time, the "P" label carries an ideological undertone: it brands Shah Alam as a student-friendly city that prioritises safety, discipline, and academic responsibility. So, the sign not only guides people, it also conveys a message about Shah Alam's dedication to education, all within the context of the national language policy.

Figure 7. In Woman Toilet

Figure 8. In the Bilik Store

Figures 7 and 8 illustrate linguistic landscape practices through bilingual and trilingual signage displayed in everyday public facilities. The Women's Toilet sign (Figure 7) and the Store Room sign (Figure 8) provide information in Malay and English, accompanied by Arabic script, forming a layered linguistic representation. Malay, as the national language, fulfils the role of asserting local identity and ensuring accessibility for the majority population. English, on the other hand, functions as a lingua franca, catering to international visitors and reflecting Malaysia's colonial history and its present role in globalisation. The presence of Arabic script adds a further dimension: it is not only functional for individuals literate in Arabic but also carries a strong symbolic meaning tied to Islam as the state religion and to the cultural values of Muslim communities. From a semiotic perspective, these signs do more than guide individuals to facilities; they visually negotiate identity, authority, and belonging in shared spaces. The choice to use three linguistic codes signals inclusivity, demonstrating sensitivity to both local and global audiences. At the same time, the prioritisation of Malay in positioning and font size reinforces its official and unifying status. The Arabic script, while often not necessary for basic comprehension, introduces a sacred and cultural layer, reminding viewers of the country's Islamic heritage and embedding religious symbolism in daily life. These examples highlight how linguistic landscapes are not neutral. Still, they are instead carefully constructed texts that mirror wider socio-political arrangements, government policies on language, and community values in Muslim-majority contexts.

Figure 9. No Beverages and Food

Figure 10. Smoking ban

The prohibition signs shown in Figures 8 and 9, featuring the icons "no smoking, no food, no drinks" in three languages (Malay, English, Chinese), serve a clear informational function. By combining universal symbols (a cigarette, a glass, and crossed-out food) with tri-lingual text, the LRT operator ensures that the message is understood by both local passengers and tourists, in line with Selangor's smoke-free and no food or drink regulations in public transportation. From a symbolic function perspective, the language order places English and Mandarin alongside Malay; this arrangement indicates a compromise between national language policy and the needs of a multilingual market, while simultaneously opening space for accusations of "linguistic imperialism" Phillipson) Due to the relatively dominant presence of foreign elements. This design decision reflects *Prasarana*/Rapid KL's strategic approach as a private commercial actor, prioritising international readability to enhance user comfort.

Within the framework of Blommaert's linguistic landscape theory, the station functions as a space for multicultural social interaction; the presence of three languages on the information boards confirms the cosmopolitan practices of Shah Alam's residents in daily life. Although there is no text in local languages, the use of easily understood cross-linguistic icons acts as a "neutral visual language," allowing prohibition rules to be accepted without cultural friction. Therefore, these prohibitive signs not only function as regulatory markers but also reflect ongoing negotiations regarding language identity, public health policy, and branding strategies for the city as a tourist-friendly destination.

Figure 11. Policies for People with Special Needs

Figure 12. Policies for parents

The signs "Seating Priority – Elderly & Disabled" and "Priority Zone" depicted in Figures 11 and 12 embody Shah Alam's commitment to people with special needs. From an informational function standpoint, the bilingual use of Malay and English, alongside universal visual symbols, ensures that the message is communicated to both local users and international visitors. The pairing of universal icons, an elderly person with a cane, a wheelchair, and bilingual text (Malay–English) ensures that the idea of "priority seating" is instantly clear to both residents and visitors. The practice borrows from long-established European transit standards that prioritise the needs of the elderly and disabled while aligning with Selangor's own inclusive space guidelines.

3.2 Discussion

The concept of multilingualism involves how language is used, received, and influences communication in broader contexts, such as mass media, politics, culture, and social interaction. The important role of the use of language in public signs in Shah Alam can be classified as on the street, public places (prayer rooms, public place facilities, storage rooms, both in institutions and stations). The use of language in the Shah Alam region plays a crucial role in preserving history, culture, and knowledge. The use of language on highways or places of transportation is essential because it allows visitors to understand and appreciate the rules, culture, and knowledge on display. Language is the main communication tool in conveying information and stimulating the curiosity of visitors. Additionally, the use of diverse languages can improve accessibility and inclusion for diverse populations.

Based on the images obtained, the focus of this research includes concepts and roles in the linguistic landscape. The results and discussions were taken from linguistic landscape images that were randomly selected and described according to the focus of the discussion. Therefore, bilingual forms dominate in their use, which includes Malay, English, Chinese, and Arabic. In addition, bilingual signs consist of a combination of

languages, namely Malay with Arabic or vice versa, Malay with Chinese or vice versa, and Malay with English. In comparison, in the form of bilingualism in a language consisting of the use of more than one language (Ardhian et al, 2018; Gu & Coluzzi, 2024). Examples of images obtained include using Malay with English or Malay with Arabic, and using English. The images obtained show that the use of language in public spaces is divided into two categories. First in the information category is dominated by the use of monolingual, advanced bilingual, and multilingual languages that are the least used. The second is in the category of naming places, where the concept is used in public places in Malay, English, Chinese, and Arabic.

This strongly gives rise to the concept of linguistic landscape as a sub-branch of sociolinguistics that focuses on analysing the representation of language seen in public spaces, exploring socio-cultural and political concepts within a region (Gorter et al., 2012). Language visibility is a key concept of LL, referring to the physical presentation of language in public spaces in Shah Alam (Wang & Xu, 2018). The visibility of a language indicates its status, strength, and identity with social groups in a multilingual environment (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Wong, 2018; Woo & Nora, 2022). Research in this area is triggered within countries, regions, or world cities, or regions where different languages and cultures meet, because Shah Alam is ideal for examining the interplay between language policy, social, political, and historical factors. Thus, phenomena in public places often provide insight into the differences and conflicts between official language policies, identities, and social change (Backhaus, 2007; Wu & Chang, 2022; Yao et.al, 2022).

Through the lens of symbolic function (Blommaert, 2013), the concept of language on the board places Bahasa Melayu as the first national language: it tops the ranks, uses a larger font size, and is striking in colour. English follows below in a smaller size, offering accessibility to an international audience without compromising national identity. The use of English in highly visible spaces can be a cause for concern if it dominates the national language. This can be interpreted as a form of linguistic imperialism (Manan et al, 2015), in which the dominance of foreign languages, especially global languages such as English, has the potential to marginalise local linguistic identities. Fortunately, the signs follow Malaysia's visual language policy: Bahasa Melayu is placed at the top, with larger font sizes and more striking colours, while English appears below it in smaller sizes, serving as a supporting communication tool (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009).

The use of language in public spaces is very interesting and varied (Ong & Ben-said, 2022). Multilingual or multilingual situations mark the use of language in public spaces. The language used in the sign of the linguistic landscape in public places is not only monolingual or bilingual. Data in the form of multilingual text was also found. In addition to being the centre of Malaysian culture, Shah Alam also has closeness to Chinese and British Islamic cultures. The Maghul Empire, which was based in Shah Alam, greatly influenced the culture and traditions of the people of Shah Alam and Selangor. Therefore, in addition to English as an international language, Arabic is also often used in public spaces in Selangor City. Along with the era of globalisation, the linguistic landscape is undeniable, as many language policies appear on other public signs that promote foreign languages in public places or for tourists from abroad. The linguistic landscape of naming concepts on public signs found in Shah Alam has influenced their language attitudes everywhere, including in public spaces. This shows that multilingualism is very useful for a city that is an international standard, often choosing to use foreign languages rather than Malay in public spaces. People are not prohibited from using foreign languages, but prioritising the language of the country in public spaces is a must.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that naming practices in public spaces in Shah Alam, Selangor, tend to favour the use of foreign languages, particularly English, rather than Malay. This is especially evident in nameplates owned by individuals or private entities, while government-run nameplates generally comply with national language policies. Through the Linguistic Landscape approach, this study shows that naming functions not only as an informational function but also as a symbolic, reflecting power relations, language ideologies, and socio-cultural dynamics in Malaysia's urban society. Then, the categorisation of this naming concept consists of the fields of public places, places of worship, and academic places. These three factors turned out to be the dimensions of the conversation text in the public space of the speakers. Language markers and identities in Shah Alam are built into the LL form, which includes textual content entities, populations, and groups.

The authors understand that this study has not explored all the problems related to the concept of naming in public places based on the linguistic landscape. Many aspects and elements still need further explanation. Issues associated with this linguistic landscape stem from a variety of foreign languages, social backgrounds, ages, and education levels that have not been fully identified in depth. The authors hope that the limitations of this study will encourage other authors to conduct similar research, including finding out why Arabic and Malay are used more often than English, Chinese and other languages, as well as how passers-by react to cues to policies that are encouraged to formulate stronger regulations on the practice of naming concepts in public spaces to prevent the marginalization of Malay as a national language.

Authors' Contributions
First Author drafted the introduction, conducted the analysis, and revised the manuscript. The Second Author developed the methodology, performed the analysis, revised the manuscript, and adjusted it to the journal template. The Third Author carried out documentation, data collection, and analysis.

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