The Arabic Linguistic Landscape of Islamic Universities: Patterns, Strategies, and Pedagogical Practices in West Sumatra

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Abstract

This study investigates the Arabic linguistic landscape in Islamic universities across West Sumatra by examining its writing patterns, strategies, and related pedagogical practices. Employing a mixed-methods approach with an exploratory sequential design grounded in Creswell's framework, the research found that bottom-up patterns dominate text production, while the most frequently used strategy is Fragmentary Multilingual Writing. This strategy involves combining Arabic with other languages without complete translation, reflecting a natural yet underutilized linguistic environment in structured pedagogical contexts. Most respondents acknowledged that the presence of Arabic texts in campus public spaces contributes positively to the development of a rich linguistic environment (*bi'ah lughawiyah*) and can serve as an effective medium for Arabic language instruction. Practically, the findings provide strategic direction for institutions to manage the linguistic landscape as an authentic learning tool and a foundation for institutional language policy. Theoretically, the study broadens the scope of Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) research by highlighting the role of multilingual signage within formal Islamic university contexts as part of a dynamic and integrated learning ecosystem.

Keywords: *Arabic Linguistic Lanscape, Bi'ah Lughawiyah, Islamic Universities, Learning Media, Public signage.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji lanskap linguistik bahasa Arab di perguruan tinggi Islam di Sumatera Barat dengan menelusuri pola dan strategi penulisannya serta memetakan praktik pedagogis yang menyertainya. Menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran dengan desain eksploratori sekuensial berdasarkan kerangka Creswell, penelitian menemukan bahwa pola *bottom-up* mendominasi produksi teks, sedangkan strategi *Fragmentary Multilingual Writing* paling banyak digunakan. Strategi ini mencampurkan bahasa Arab dengan bahasa lain tanpa terjemahan utuh, mencerminkan lanskap yang alami namun belum dimanfaatkan secara maksimal dalam praktik pedagogis secara terstruktur. Sebagian besar responden menyatakan bahwa keberadaan teks Arab di ruang publik kampus berkontribusi positif terhadap pembentukan lingkungan bahasa (*bi'ah lughawiyah*) dan dapat digunakan sebagai media pembelajaran bahasa Arab. Secara praktis, hasil ini memberikan arahan bagi institusi untuk mengelola lanskap linguistik sebagai media belajar yang autentik dan dasar kebijakan bahasa bagi institusi. Secara teoritis, studi ini memperluas cakupan kajian *Arabic as a Foreign Language* (AFL) dengan memperkenalkan peran laskap multibahasa pada kampus-kampus Islam secara formal sebagai bagian dari ekosistem belajar yang dinamis.

Kata Kunci: *Lanskap Linguistik Arab, Perguruan Tinggi Islam, Lingkungan Berbahasa, Media Pembelajaran, Tanda bahasa di ruang publik*

Introduction

The Linguistic Landscape has become one of the interesting focuses in contemporary linguistic studies. The appearance of language in public spaces is important to be studied by referring to the phenomenon of visual representation of language that appears in public places. When viewed in terms of function, this linguistic landscape has 2 main functions, namely as information and syimbolic[1]. Shohamy and Ghazaleh-Majneh state that linguistic landscapes can be used as a tool to interpret the vitality of a particular language in an area for a particular group or community[2]. Linguistic landscapes can also measure the vitality of a language in a specific location or area, including school or educational institutions.[3]

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[1] "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study-Rodrigue Landry, Richard Y. Bourhis, 1997," landry, accessed September 29, 2024, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0261927x970161002.

[2] Elana Shohamy and Marwan Abu Ghazaleh-Mahajneh, "Linguistic Landscape as a Tool for Interpreting Language Vitality: Arabic as a 'Minority' Language in Israel," in *Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape*, ed. Durk Gorter, Heiko F. Marten, and Luk Van Mensel (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 89–106, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230360235_6.

[3] PETTERI LAIHONEN AND TAMÁS PÉTER SZABÓ, "Investigating Visual Practices in Educational Settings: Schoolscapes, Language Ideologies and Organizational Cultures," in *Researching Multilingualism* (Routledge, 2016).

The linguistic landscape refers to the visual appearance of language in public spaces, such as signs, banners, and institutional websites, which reflect language policy, collective identity, and social interaction.[4] More than just a marker of linguistic diversity, the linguistic landscape also serves as an authentic and contextual medium for language learning. In Arabic education, exposure to these visual texts can strengthen contextual reading skills, broaden daily-use vocabulary, and deepen cultural awareness. Such landscapes contribute to a literacy-based learning environment where learners interact with real texts embedded in their socio-cultural context,[5] aligning with modern pedagogical approaches that emphasize the use of authentic materials. Linguistic landscapes may be intentionally or unintentionally utilized in the learning process, particularly through digital platforms like Youtube[6] that simulate Arabic speaking evaluation.

Other innovations, such as pop-up books using the qirā'ah jahrīyah method[7] and Arabic-based board games, have been shown to boost student interest, motivation, and interaction. These examples illustrate how linguistic landscapes can be integrated into instructional strategies. Moreover, using linguistic landscapes within specific institutional settings allows learners to document, analyze, and discuss authentic text forms in their environment. Research by Muslimah and Huda confirms that combining this approach with project-based learning improves writing and critical thinking skills. Similarly, findings by Zulfa and colleagues show that visual mapping techniques support memory retention and structural comprehension of Arabic, reaffirming the

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[4] Sébastien Dubreil David Malinowski Hiram H. Maxim Editors, *Spatializing Language Studies Pedagogical Approaches in the Linguistic Landscape*, n.d.

[5] Awad ALshehri, "Exploring Attitudes, Identity, and Linguistic Variation among Arabic Speakers: Insights from Acoustic Landscapes," *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, accessed May 21, 2025, https://doi.org/10.33806/IJAES.V24I2.587.

[6] Rahmat Satria Dinata and Musalwa Musalwa, "Yutub Kawasilati Taqyimi Maharati Al-Kalami al-Lughati al-'Arabiyyati," *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 12, no. 1 (2020): 95–111.

[7] Nur Fitriyani et al., "The Application of the Loud Reading Strategy (Al Qira'ah Al Jahriyyah) Based on Pop-Up Books in Enhancing Arabic Reading Skills," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 1 (January 31, 2025): 23–41, https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v6i1.15978.

linguistic landscape's potential as an effective and engaging learning media.[8]

As one of the identities of Islamic universities, Arabic certainly plays an important role, not only for students from the Arabic Language Education study program, but also for students from other study programs. The large number of scholarly sources at Islamic universities written in Arabic creates a strong attachment between Arabic and Islamic universities.[9] In addition, the existence of the linguistic landscape at Islamic universities is also an easy phenomenon. However, the current condition of the Arabic linguistic landscape within Islamic universities is quite concerning, especially in terms of its use as a means to support Arabic learning in higher education[10]. Where, it should be possible to interact with this linguistic landscape to increase a person's pragmatic and semantic awareness of language.

There are many studies that discuss the linguistic landscape related to Arabic in a particular location, both schools and other educational institutions. This study of the linguistic landscape can be divided into several main trends. Firs, studies that analyze the presence or absence of linguistic lanscapes, and then compare them with other languages outside the field of education or educational institutions associated with Arabic speaking communities or with location around the Arabian-peninsula[11]. Another study that is also in line with this topic is a study on the comparison of Arabic language representation with other languages. This study observed several objects such as signs, posters, signage in public spaces and campus administration. This study

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[8] Zulfa Tsalitsatul Muna et al., "Mind Mapping as an Innovation in Reading and Writing Learning: A Study of Understanding Arabic Texts," *Alibbaa': Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab* 6, no. 1 (January 31, 2025): 120–37, https://doi.org/10.19105/ajpba.v6i1.15963.

[9] Rahmat Satria Dinata et al., "Arabic Hidden Crisis at West Sumatran Islamic Universities: Vulnerable Vitality and Potential Utility for Learning," *Al-Ta'rib: Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Arab IAIN Palangka Raya* 13, no. 1 (2025): 165–80.

[10] Muhammad Husni Shidqi and Adam Mudinillah, "PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA ARAB DENGAN MEMANFAATKAN LINGKUNGAN BERBAHASA BAGI MAHASISWA DI PERGURUAN TINGGI," *JURNAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT* 9, no. 3 (July 22, 2021): 170–76, https://doi.org/10.37081/ed.v9i3.2807.

[11] Omar Ibrahim Salameh Alomoush, "Arabinglish in Multilingual Advertising: Novel Creative and Innovative Arabic-English Mixing Practices in the Jordanian Linguistic Landscape," *International Journal of Multilingualism* 20, no. 2 (April 3, 2023): 270–89, https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2021.1884687.

concluded that the visual representation of Arabic is very limited when compared to other languages.

The second study describes the Arabic linguistic landscape in educational institutions, but does not specifically discuss the Arabic linguistic landscape in higher education[12]. Sartini's research discusses the mapping of the linguistic landscape in universities but does not specifically address specific languages[13]. Third, research that discusses Arabic in Islamic educational institutions such as madrassas and Islamic boarding schools, especially regarding its use in learning Arabic[14]. In essence, many approaches and perspectives have been applied in previous research that discusses the Arabic linguistic landscape in educational and non-educational settings, but has not specifically discussed the Arabic linguistic landscape in Islamic universities and its use in Arabic language learning.

This study differs fundamentally from previous reserch on Arabic linguistic lanscapes in several key aspects. First, while earlier studies often compared Arabic with other languages, this study focuses exclusively on Arabic. Second, prior research typically examined linguistic lanscapes in generalpublic spaces on in primary education contexs, whereas this study is situated within Islamic Universities or Islamic higher education institutions. Third, previous investigations tended to focus on general signage such as posters and public notices, this study in contrast specifically analyzes Arabic linguistc elements present in ampus public spaces. Fourth, whereas earlier works primarily addressed representational comparisons, this research emphasizes the pedagogical function of the Arabic linguistic lanscapes as a learning medium. Finally, unlike previous studies that rarely connected their findings to Arabic language instruction, this study explicitly contributes

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[12] PÉTER SZABÓ, "Investigating Visual Practices in Educational Settings"; Kate Menken, Vanessa Pérez Rosario, and Luis Alejandro Guzmán Valerio, "Increasing Multilingualism in Schoolscapes: New Scenery and Language Education Policies," *Linguistic Landscape* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 2018): 101–27, https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.17024.men.

[13] Ni Wayan Sartini, "PEMETAAN LANSKAP LINGUISTIK DI UNIVERSITAS AIRLANGGA SURABAYA," *Kongres Internasional Masyarakat Linguistik Indonesia*, 2021, 265–68, https://doi.org/10.51817/kimli.vi.61.

[14] Akhmad Sofyan et al., "Islamic Boarding School Linguistic Landscape in The Development of Arabic Language Skills and Islamic Knowledge," *International Journal of Educational Research & Social Sciences* 3, no. 6 (December 27, 2022): 2178–85, https://doi.org/10.51601/ijersc.v3i6.563; Kamal Yusuf et al., "LANSKAP LINGUISTIK PADA MASJID DI PANTURA JAWA TIMUR" 7 (2022).

to the development of Arabic language learning within Islamic university environments trough the strategic use of linguistic lanscapes elements.

This study aims to examine how the Arabic linguistic landscape contributes to the formation of the language environment in the Islamic universities of West Sumatra. The main focus is to identify patterns, strategies, and the use of the landscape in the learning process, namely as a learning medium, as well as how its presence can enliven a campus atmosphere that supports contextual mastery of the Arabic language as *bi'ah lughawiyah*.

Method

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, employing an exploratory sequential design as outlined by Creswell.[15] This design involves two interrelated phases: an initial qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase, where insights from the former inform the development of instruments for the latter. The qualitative component aimed to explore the distribution and characteristics of Arabic linguistic landscapes and to identify patterns and strategies evident in public spaces at one Islamic university. Meanwhile, the quantitative component sought to assess broader perceptions and pedagogical implications across a wider academic community.

The qualitative phase involved observations of Arabic writings across various faculties at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia, the designated initial research site. It also included focus group discussions (FGDs) with 22 students from these faculties. The initial findings generated key themes that formed the basis for designing a closed-ended questionnaire using a Likert scale. To establish content validity, the draft questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in Arabic language education and sociolinguistics. Feedback from these experts led to the revision of several ambiguous or unclear items to ensure conceptual clarity and contextual relevance.

For the quantitative phase, the finalized questionnaire was distributed to a total of 100 respondents drawn from both public and private Islamic universities in West Sumatra. The public institutions included UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, UIN Syech Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, and UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, while the private institutions comprised the University of Muhammadiyah West Sumatra

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[15] John W Creswell and J David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Sage publications, 2017).

and STAI Darul Quran Payakumbuh. Each institution contributed 20 respondents representing diverse segments of the academic community. The data provided broader insights into perceptions of the Arabic linguistic landscape, its patterns and writing strategies in public campus spaces, and its potential as a language environment and learning medium. The subsequent quantitative phase measured the prevalence and consistency of these themes across a broader sample. The results were then compared to the initial qualitative findings to validate, elaborate, or refine interpretations. This sequential integration strengthened the depth and generalizability of the findings by combining rich, contextual understanding with measurable trends.

Results and Discussion

Writing Patterns in the Arabic Linguistic Landscape

The results of the qualitative phase, obtained through observation, revealed that the Arabic linguistic landscape at Imam Bonjol State Islamic University Padang is distributed widely across all faculties and various campus spaces, indicating a pervasive presence throughout the institutional environment. Based on observational data, a total of 1,737 instances of Arabic language display were recorded across the university setting. These displays include posters, banners, signage, wall texts, and other public texts written fully or partially in Arabic.

The following image represents the coexistence of top-down signage that issued by institutional authorities, and bottom-up elements created by individuals or campus communities:

Figure 1. Bottom-Up Pattern

Figure 2. Top-Down Pattern

Figure 1 is a student research proposal in the Arabic language education study program and uses a Bottom-Up pattern. The Bottom-Up pattern refers to the production of linguistic landscape texts produced by private institutions or individuals. And in Figure 2, the Top-Down Pattern uses a landscape text production pattern made by the government or

official institutions. Analysis of the patterns reveals two primary orientations: bottom-up and top-down. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), this distinction is crucial, as it indicates not only who is producing the language but also what kinds of ideological, functional, and educational purposes the language serves in public space.[16] The coexistence of both patterns at UIN Imam Bonjol illustrates a multi-layered language ecology[17], where Arabic functions both as a formal institutional language and a cultural-symbolic tool mobilized by students. From the perspective of *language policy and planning*,[18] the strong presence of bottom-up elements suggests a participatory model of language promotion, where Arabic is not merely imposed from above but is also sustained by internal community engagement. In West Sumatra, where Minangkabau culture is closely tied to Islamic values[19]. Particularly, many Arabic words have been absorbed or borrowed by the Minang language[20] so there is great potential to build a strong Arabic-speaking environment.

The findings on Arabic language landscape patterns, derived from the quantitative phase of this study, indicate that the bottom-up pattern slightly dominates with 52 percent, compared to 48 percent for the top-down pattern. This data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 respondents across five Islamic universities in West Sumatra. The results show that Arabic writing on campus is often initiated by individuals or communities rather than formal institutional directives. The bottom-up pattern is particularly evident in student assignments and papers at 76 percent, PowerPoint presentations and blackboard explanations at 68 percent, and campus-based social media such as WhatsApp and Instagram at 68 percent. This suggests that Arabic is actively used by students and lecturers in informal

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[16] "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study - Rodrigue Landry, Richard Y. Bourhis, 1997."

[17] Richard B Baldauf and M Obaidul Hamid, "Language Planning 'Schools' and Their Approaches and Methodologies," *The Language Management Approach: A Focus on Methodology. Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang*, 2018, 43–66.

[18] David Cassels Johnson, "Critical Empirical Approaches in Language Policy and Planning," in *Epistemological and Theoretical Foundations in Language Policy and Planning* (Springer, 2023), 15–40.

[19] Prof Azyumardi Azra CBE Ph D. , M. Phil , M. A., *Surau: Pendidikan Islam Tradisi dalam Transisi dan Modernisasi* (Kencana, 2017).

[20] Akhyar Hanif, "Studi Terhadap Kosakata Bahasa Arab Dalam Bahasa Minangkabau," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 1, no. 2 December (December 29, 2017): 119–38, https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v1i2.174.

and academic contexts outside formal regulation. In contrast, top-down usage is more dominant in building names at 70 percent, official information boards and road signs at 63 percent, and formal documents such as decrees and seminar invitations at over 60 percent.

These results highlight a dual pattern of Arabic language presence in the campus environment. Top-down displays reflect institutional authority and formal language policy, while bottom-up displays reflect grassroots engagement and the agency of campus actors in using Arabic. According to Landry and Bourhis, this distinction is important as it reveals how linguistic landscapes are shaped both by official structures and by the language practices of communities[21]. The strong bottom-up presence across academic and social domains indicates a dynamic use of Arabic that goes beyond formal instruction. Viewed from the perspective of language ecology[22], this balance demonstrates how Arabic adapts to its environment, functioning as both a formal and informal tool for communication, learning, and identity-building. Therefore, the quantitative data affirm that Arabic maintains both symbolic and functional value within the multilingual and culturally embedded setting of Islamic universities in West Sumatra.

Writing Strategies in the Arabic Linguistic Landscape

In linguistic landscapes, writing strategies are typically classified as either monolingual, involving a single language, or bilingual or multilingual, involving two or more languages. For bilingual or multilingual texts, Reh (2004) offers a foundational typology for multilingual writing,[23] there are five main writing strategies, each with its own characteristics:

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[21] Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y Bourhis, "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study," *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16, no. 1 (1997): 23–49.

[22] Nancy H Hornberger and Francis M Hult, "Ecological Language Education Policy," *The Handbook of Educational Linguistics*, 2008, 280–96; Imam Syafiq Arrizal, Abu Yazid al-Bustomi, and Naufal Robbiqis Dwi Asta, "ISLAM PROGRESIF ABDULLAH SAEED DAN RELEVANSINYA TERHADAP ISU GENDER DAN EKOLOGI DI INDONESIA," *Millatuna: Jurnal Studi Islam* 2, no. 01 (2025): 176–92.

[23] Mechthild Reh, "Multilingual Writing: A Reader-Oriented Typology—with Examples from Lira Municipality (Uganda)," 2004.

Table 1: Bilingual or Multilingual Writing Strategies

No.	Strategy Name	Description
1	**Duplication** (Duplicating Multilingual Writing)	The same message is repeated in two or more languages.
2	**Fragmentation** (Fragmentary Multilingual Writing)	Text includes fragments from different languages, often without full translation.
3	**Overlapping** (Overlapping Multilingual Writing)	Two or more languages are mixed within a single sentence or phrase.
4	**Complementary** (Complementary Multilingual Writing)	Different languages are used to present different parts of the information.
5	**Mimicry** (Writing System Mimicry)	A language is written to imitate the script or style of another language.

The classification at table 1 provides insight into how various languages, particularly Arabic, are employed both visually and functionally in public signage. The identified strategies reveal different degrees of language awareness, communicative intent, and audience orientation within the campus linguistic landscape.

The image below illustrates the presence of both monolingual and bilingual or multilingual writing strategies as they appear across faculties and spaces at Imam Bonjol State Islamic University Padang:
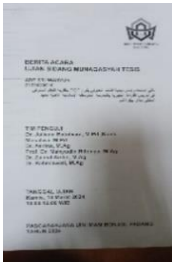

Figure 3. Monolingual Strategy

Figure 4. Duplicating Multilingual Writing Strategy

Figure 5. Fragmentary Multilingual Writing Strategy

Figure 6. Overlapping Multilingual Writing Strategy

Figure 7. Complementary Multilingualism Writing Strategy

Figure 8. Writing System Mimicry Strategy

The diverse writing strategies illustrated in Figures 3 to 8, including monolingual, duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping, complementary, and mimicry forms, reflect not only the functional use of Arabic in academic and institutional settings at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang but also the sociolinguistic dynamics embedded in its cultural context.[24] Arabic appears across fifteen domains such as teaching materials, banners, formal documents, calligraphy, digital platforms, and physical signage, signaling both official and community-driven language practices. This widespread distribution demonstrates how Arabic serves as a medium of education and a marker of Islamic identity[25] within a multilingual environment that includes Indonesian and local Minangkabau elements[26]. The observed writing strategies indicate varying degrees of intentionality and audience orientation, revealing a layered linguistic ecology as described by Haugen and aligning with

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[24] PÉTER SZABÓ, "Investigating Visual Practices in Educational Settings."

[25] Dinata et al., "Arabic Hidden Crisis at West Sumatran Islamic Universities: Vulnerable Vitality and Potential Utility for Learning."

[26] Budi Darmawan, Ahmad Taufik Hidayat, and Yulfira Riza, "Local Content Dalam Naskah Keagamaan Minangkabau: Naskah Kitab Sifat Dua Puluh Dan Undang-Undang Minangkabau," *Nusa: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Dan Sastra* 18, no. 2 (n.d.): 45–57.

Shohamy's concept of linguistic landscapes as implicit language policy.[27] The use of Arabic across formal and informal spaces also illustrates Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital, showing how language functions in shaping institutional identity, power relations[28], and the lived experience of Arabic in a culturally embedded academic setting.

Quantitative data show that Arabic language use in public spaces at Islamic universities in West Sumatra is predominantly shaped by bottom-up initiatives, accounting for 52 percent. This reflects the active role of individuals and campus communities in contributing to the linguistic landscape[29]. Bilingual and multilingual forms dominate the scene at 74.77 percent, while monolingual use stands at 25.23 percent. Of the multilingual strategies identified, fragmentary multilingual writing is the most common at 51.12 percent, showing that Arabic is often blended with other languages in partial and unstructured ways[30]. The presence of Arabic varies in frequency, from frequent to moderate and rare, depending on the communicative function, target audience, and specific campus context.

This pattern illustrates a vibrant and complex linguistic environment shaped not only by institutional policies but also by student and faculty engagement[31]. The dominance of bottom-up and fragmentary bilingual strategies reflects a localized adaptation of Arabic, where language use serves both communicative and symbolic functions. It also aligns with language ecology theory,[32] suggesting that Arabic evolves in response to its social context, and with linguistic landscape theory, where

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[27] Elana Shohamy and Marwan Abu Ghazaleh-Mahajneh, "Linguistic Landscape as a Tool for Interpreting Language Vitality: Arabic as a 'Minority'Language in Israel," in *Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape* (Springer, 2012), 89–106.

[28] J.M. Hess, "Innovative Participatory Bilingual Data Analysis with Latinx/@ Immigrants: Language, Power, and Transformation," *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 28, no. 3 (2022): 389–401, https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000481.

[29] Alejandro S Bernardo, "The Position of Languages in the Schoolscape: The Case of the Oldest University in the Philippines and in Asia," *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 32, no. 1 (2024): 97–124; Sheryl Bernardo-Hinesley, "Linguistic Landscape in Educational Spaces," *Journal of Culture and Values in Education* 3, no. 2 (2020): 13–23.

[30] Rahmat Satria Dinata, "Language Society and Social Interaction: Language Choice of Arabic Society at Imam Bonjol Islamic State University," *Lughawiyyat: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Arab* 4, no. 2 (2021): 110–26.

[31] Dinata et al., "Arabic Hidden Crisis at West Sumatran Islamic Universities: Vulnerable Vitality and Potential Utility for Learning."

[32] Hornberger and Hult, "Ecological Language Education Policy."

the spatial display of language reflects power, identity, and educational priorities[33]. In Islamic universities, this dynamic landscape not only supports Arabic learning but also reinforces its cultural and religious significance within the academic sphere.

Arabic Landscape as a Linguistic Environment

The Arabic linguistic landscape in West Sumatran Islamic universities contributes significantly to the development of a linguistic environment or *bi'ah lughawiyah*. Its widespread presence in daily academic and non-academic settings, including textbooks, signage, calligraphy, social media, and student work, supports incidental learning and reinforces language familiarity. This environment encourages learners to engage with Arabic beyond formal instruction, allowing for repeated exposure and contextualized practice[34]. The coexistence of Arabic with Indonesian and sometimes Minangkabau in these landscapes reflects a multilingual context in which Arabic maintains its symbolic and educational relevance.[35] As such, the linguistic environment functions as a complementary medium that supports both structured learning and informal acquisition processes.
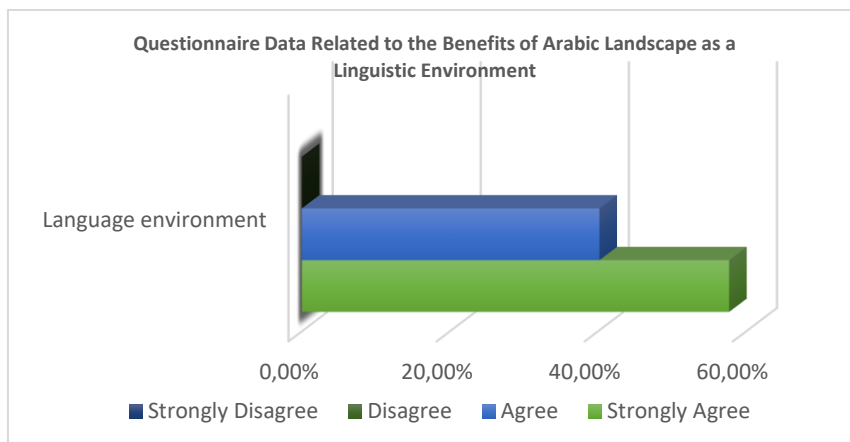

Figure 9. Questionnaire Data

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[33] Hess, "Innovative Participatory Bilingual Data Analysis with Latinx/@ Immigrants: Language, Power, and Transformation."

[34] Sitti Hasnah, Mohamad Idhan, and Muh Jabir, "Contextual Teaching Strategies in Arabic Language Education: Bridging Theory and Practice for Enhanced Learning Outcomes," *At-Ta'dib* 19, no. 2 (2024): 281–90.

[35] Dinata, "Language Society and Social Interaction: Language Choice of Arabic Society at Imam Bonjol Islamic State University."

The chart above shows data that 57.7% of respondents strongly agree, 40.20% agree, and 2.10% of respondents disagree that the linguistic landscape is beneficial to the linguistic environment. These quantitative results were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 100 respondents in five Islamic universities in West Sumatra (UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumbar, dan STAI Darul Quran).

The resulting data is in line with Landry & Bourhis' argument that the linguistic landscape is not only a reflection of the vitality of language, but can also be an effective educational tool. A language-rich visual environment contributes to the creation of a language-rich environment that is essential in second/foreign language learning[36]. The results of this study are also strengthened by the findings of Hazaea and Qassem about the study of café signage in Saudi Arabia and also further strengthen the results of this study, that the linguistic landscape not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a means of forming a narrative of national identity. He further stated that in the context of learning, the existence of linguistic landscapes strengthens the sociolinguistic dimension and increases cross-cultural empathy and sensitivity to the inherent values of the Arabic language[37].

It can be concluded that in the linguistic environment, the linguistic landscape makes a real contribution to foreign language learners of Arabic as a linguistic environment, both in pedagogical and social approaches. The Linguistic Landscape allows language learners to be exposed to real use of language outside of the classroom. Huang et.al stated that the existence of linguistic landscapes in public spaces can stimulate cultural empathy and intercultural understanding, especially when associated with experiential learning[38]. This makes the linguistic landscape a link between language learning and social practice.

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[36] "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study - Rodrigue Landry, Richard Y. Bourhis, 1997," landry.

[37] Abduljalil Nasr Hazaea and Mutahar Qassem, "On the Road to Mecca: Branding Discourses and National Identity on Coffee Shop Signage," *PLOS ONE* 20, no. 2 (February 4, 2025): e0309829, https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0309829.

[38] Yanqin Zeng et al., "Exploring the Mechanism of Empathy on Lens Language and Linguistic Landscape on Movie-Induced Tourism: The Moderating Effect of Cultural Differences," *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (February 2, 2023), https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1109328.

Arabic Language Landscape as a Learning Media

The Arabic linguistic landscape within Islamic universities in West Sumatra holds great potential as a learning medium that supports Arabic language acquisition in authentic and meaningful ways.[39] As observed in various campus settings, Arabic texts appear in a wide range of forms such as course syllabi, student assignments, PowerPoint slides, posters, banners, social media content,[40] and building signage. These real-life language displays provide contextual exposure that can enhance students' comprehension, vocabulary development, and functional use of Arabic.[41] By incorporating the linguistic landscape into the learning process, educators can move beyond textbook-based instruction and introduce students to naturally occurring language use. This aligns with communicative and experiential learning principles,[42] where learners interact with language in relevant and practical contexts. While many of these language displays arise from spontaneous or student-led initiatives, their presence offers valuable opportunities to be integrated as instructional materials, language observation tasks, or reflective activities that link formal instruction to the surrounding environment.
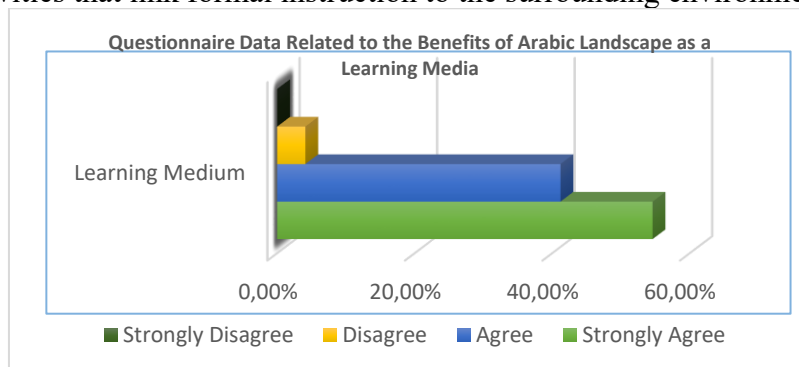

Figure 10. Questionnaire Data

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[39] Sultan Almelhes, "Enhancing Arabic Language Acquisition: Effective Strategies for Addressing Non-Native Learners' Challenges," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 10 (2024): 1116.

[40] Anatoliy Gruzd, Drew Paulin, and Caroline Haythornthwaite, "Analyzing Social Media and Learning through Content and Social Network Analysis: A Faceted Methodological Approach," *Journal of Learning Analytics* 3, no. 3 (2016): 46–71.

[41] Agus Riadi and Fransiska Way Warti, "Linguistic Landscape: A Language Learning Media in an Underdeveloped Region," *Indonesian TESOL Journal* 3, no. 1 (2021): 46–67.

[42] Sonja Knutson, "Experiential Learning in Second-Language Classrooms," *TESL Canada Journal*, 2003, 52–64.

The chart above shows data that 54.6% of respondents strongly agree, 41.2% of respondents agree, and 4.10% of respondents disagree with the usefulness of Arabic landscapes as a learning medium. These quantitative results were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 100 respondents in five Islamic universities in West Sumatra (UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, UIN Sjech M. Djamil Djambek Bukittinggi, UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumbar, dan STAI Darul Quran).

The data shows that 54.6% strongly agree and 41.2% agree that the Arabic linguistic landscape can be used as a medium for learning Arabic. Malinowski stated that the linguistic landscape in the public space can be used as a pedagogical space that strengthens the active involvement of language learners[43]. Linguistic landscapes can also improve cultural literacy and understanding[44]. This data is also relevant to the statement that the existence of linguistic landscapes can help improve visual and metacognitive literacy among multilingual learners. Where language exposure in the form of a language landscape allows language learners to actively develop language awareness[45]. The results of the questionnaire above also confirm that the existence of the linguistic landscape can be an alternative media for Arabic language teachers. Utilizing existing ones or making them part of a learning project is very helpful for Arabic language learners. This statement is strengthened by the results of the research of Muslimah and Huda, that the use of linguistic landscapes with project-based learning methods can improve students' writing and critical thinking skills[46]. Thus, the Arabic linguistic landscape can be used as an option as one of the Arabic learning media with various real contributions such as adding vocabulary, honing the ability to analyze sentence structures, and so on.

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[43] David Malinowski, Hiram H Maxim, and Sébastien Dubreil, "Language Teaching in the Linguistic Landscape," 2020.

[44] David Malinowski, Hiram H Maxim, and Sébastien Dubreil, *Language Teaching in the Linguistic Landscape: Mobilizing Pedagogy in Public Space*, vol. 49 (Springer Nature, 2021).

[45] Barbara Hofer and Birgit Spechtenhauser, "Theoretical Considerations on the Literacy-Metacognition Nexus: Exploring the Linguistic-Cognitive Landscape of Young Multilingual Minds," *Brain Sciences* 14, no. 10 (October 2024): 979, https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci14100979.

[46] Kiki Cahya Muslimah et al., "Linguistic Landscape in Arabic Writing Skills Learning: Project-Based Learning Approach," *Izdihar : Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature* 7, no. 2 (September 4, 2024), https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v7i2.31848.

Conclusion

This study shows that the Arabic linguistic landscape in Islamic campuses in West Sumatra is quite diverse and widespread, especially with the dominance of *bottom-up* patterns that show that initiatives come from individuals or campus communities. The most common writing strategy is *Fragmentary Multilingual Writing*, in which Arabic is combined with other languages without a full translation. This shows that this landscape is naturally present but has not been fully optimized as a learning medium. Most of the respondents also considered that the existence of Arabic writing in campus public spaces was useful as a language environment and learning facility.

This study offers both practical and theoretical insights into Arabic language learning in Islamic universities. Practically, it highlights how Arabic linguistic landscapes can be used to enrich *bi'ah lughawiyah*, develop authentic learning media, and inform supportive language policies. Theoretically, it broadens Arabic as a Foreign Language (AFL) research by introducing the role of multilingual signage within formal Islamic education. By framing the campus as a dynamic language environment, the study shows how Arabic exposure through visual texts supports literacy, identity, and learning beyond the classroom.

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