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Linguistic Landscape in Braga Street, Bandung: Multilingual Practices and Cultural Identity

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Abstract

This study investigates the linguistic landscape of Jalan Braga, Bandung, a heritage street rich in historical and cultural significance. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through photographic documentation, field observation, and secondary sources, resulting in 60 signage items analyzed. Findings reveal that monolingual signage dominates (68.3%), particularly in English and Indonesian, followed by bilingual (23.3%) and multilingual signs (8.4%). The results demonstrate that English functions both as a global lingua franca and a branding tool, while Indonesian serves as a marker of national identity. Dutch signage symbolizes colonial heritage, whereas Sundanese, though limited in number, reflects local cultural identity. Multilingual signs, though fewer, strategically integrate languages such as Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin to project cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridity. The study highlights how language use in Braga reflects not only practical communication but also symbolic functions tied to identity, history, and globalization. This research contributes to linguistic landscape studies by emphasizing the interplay of colonial, national, local, and global languages in urban heritage spaces.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape; Multilingualism; Cultural Identity; Heritage Street; Bandung.

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Introduction

Braga Street in the city of Bandung is an iconic area rich in historical, architectural, and cultural values. Originating as a muddy cart path during the colonial era, Braga evolved into an elite shopping and entertainment center, earning the title “*De meest Europeesche winkelstraat van Indie*” (Bagaskara, 2025) as well as the legendary epithet “*Paris van Java*” (Brighton, 2025). This transformation positioned Braga not merely as a commercial space but also as an urban heritage destination that embodies Bandung’s transition from a colonial city to a cultural heritage city with strong historical appeal and cultural identity. Over time, Braga’s landscape has become adorned not only with colonial-style architecture but also with diverse shop signs, restaurants, cafés, hotels, murals, billboards, and public signage.



These visual elements constitute what is known as the *linguistic landscape* (LL), namely the presence of language in public spaces functioning as both informational markers and symbolic identifiers of a community (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The coexistence of Dutch, Indonesian, Sundanese, and English on shop signs and public notices reflects the interplay of historical and cultural values, making Braga a compelling site for LL research.

Research on LL in Indonesia has developed considerably, particularly in relation to tourism, language policy, and economic interests. However, studies focusing on heritage urban streets remain relatively scarce. Most prior investigations have concentrated on commercial tourist areas such as South Central Timor, Lembang, or Bali, emphasizing the role of language as both a tourist attraction and an engine of economic growth (Mubarak et al., 2024; Nenotek et al., 2025). In contrast, iconic streets such as Braga in Bandung or Kota Lama in Semarang have received limited scholarly attention, despite the fact that heritage areas carry symbolic, historical, and cultural values distinct from purely touristic spaces. Furthermore, existing LL studies in Indonesia have predominantly highlighted the dominance of Indonesian and English (Atmawati et al., 2024; Sudarmanto et al., 2025), while local languages such as Sundanese and colonial languages like Dutch have been largely overlooked. This gap raises critical questions regarding how these languages function as markers of historical identity while simultaneously reflecting the socio-cultural dynamics of urban life.

Moreover, the tendency of previous studies to emphasize the instrumental role of language in supporting tourism and economic activities has often led to the neglect of its symbolic and cultural dimensions (Silviyanti et al., 2024). The phenomenon of multilingualism in heritage areas has seldom been explored comprehensively, as most studies have focused only on bilingual signage. Yet, the simultaneous interaction of four linguistic layers—local, national, foreign, and colonial—within a heritage space constitutes a unique phenomenon that has scarcely been examined (Rohmah & Wijayanti, 2023). While urbanization and globalization have been frequently discussed in relation to language shifts in urban settings (Rohmadi et al., 2023), there is still a lack of research specifically addressing their implications for the linguistic landscapes of historically rich heritage sites.

A number of international and national studies have demonstrated the role of multilingual signage in shaping cultural identity. For instance, a study in Gorontalo City revealed that the presence of Arabic alongside Indonesian and English reflects both religious identity and cultural diversity (Napu, 2024). Similarly, in Seochon Village, Seoul, multilingual signage is regarded as a strategy to preserve local identity while responding to globalization (Lee & Lee, 2025). Conversely, research in Villány, Hungary, showed the dominance of English as a consequence of tourism, while Romani was nearly invisible, illustrating social marginalization (Mambetaliev, 2025). A comparable case was observed in Luang Prabang, Laos, where English was prioritized to support economic growth and cultural exchange (Wang & Gao, 2025). Nevertheless, these studies tend to foreground the economic and practical dimensions, leaving the symbolic role of multilingual signage in shaping cultural identity underexplored.

Building upon these considerations, the present study offers novelty by examining Braga Street as a heritage public space that embodies the interaction of colonial, modern, and local elements through the use of language in various forms of signage official, commercial, and cultural. This approach provides a new perspective by conceptualizing heritage streets not merely as economic spaces but also as symbolic arenas reflecting Bandung's cultural identity. Another point of novelty lies in analyzing the integration of Sundanese, Indonesian, English, and Dutch, as well as the distribution of their usage within Braga's linguistic landscape. In doing so, this study moves beyond simply describing multilingual practices to uncovering the symbolic meanings embedded within them.



Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to capture naturally occurring linguistic phenomena within the public space of Braga Street, Bandung. A qualitative approach was chosen as it enables an in-depth exploration of both the communicative and symbolic functions of language displayed on public signage, and how these functions contribute to the construction of cultural identity in an urban heritage context.

The research site was Braga Street, one of the most iconic areas in the heart of Bandung, West Java. This location was selected due to its strong historical and cultural significance as a former colonial district and a contemporary heritage tourism destination. The presence of colonial-style buildings, modern commercial centers, and cultural spaces makes Braga a representative site for examining the interaction between local (Sundanese), national (Indonesian), colonial (Dutch), and global (English) languages in shaping symbolic identity.

Data collection was carried out systematically through visual documentation, field observation, and secondary data review. Photographic documentation served as the primary method, involving the photographing of all visible linguistic items in Braga's public space—including shop signs, billboards, street signs, murals, graffiti, banners, and public announcements. The documentation process was conducted comprehensively on both sides of the street to ensure representativeness of the data. Secondary data, such as books and prior studies, were also utilized to provide historical context and strengthen the analysis of language practices in Braga.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted, whereby all publicly accessible written signs were collected as research samples. The dataset comprises approximately 60 signage items documented across the research site, with the exact number to be finalized upon completion of the data collection process. Each signage item was subsequently categorized according to three key dimensions: (1) the language(s) employed, (2) the function of the signage, and (3) its semiotic type. Language categorization included Indonesian as the national language, Sundanese as the local language, English as the global language, and Dutch as the colonial heritage language, alongside bilingual, trilingual, and multilingual combinations. The functional analysis followed the framework of Landry and Bourhis (1997), distinguishing between informational functions (e.g., conveying practical messages such as directions, services, names, or advertisements) and symbolic functions (e.g., representing cultural identity, historical values, or sociolinguistic positioning).

To ensure the validity and reliability of findings, several systematic strategies were employed. First, triangulation was conducted by comparing photographic documentation, field notes, and secondary data, thereby allowing cross-verification and minimizing researcher subjectivity. Second, peer debriefing sessions with academic colleagues were undertaken to test the consistency of interpretations emerging from the data, providing critical feedback to strengthen objectivity. Third, the study applied *thick description* by presenting detailed contextual accounts, enabling readers to grasp not only the presence of languages in public spaces but also the social and cultural rationales underlying their use. Through these strategies, the credibility of the data was maintained while enriching the interpretative depth of the research findings.

Results and Discussions

The findings indicate that a total of 60 signs were documented along Braga Street, which can be categorized into three main groups: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual, as illustrated in Table 1 below.



Table 1:
Table 1. Distribution of Public Signage on Braga Street

No	Category	Number of Signs
1	Monolingual	41
2	Bilingual	14
3	Multilingual	5
Total		60

The results show that among the 60 documented signs on Braga Street, the monolingual category is the most dominant, with 41 signs (68.3%). This indicates that the use of a single language remains the most common practice, primarily represented by English (20 signs) and Indonesian (16 signs). The predominance of these two languages reflects a tension between the function of internationalization (English as a global lingua franca) and the function of national identity (Indonesian as the national language).

The bilingual category accounts for 14 signs (23.3%), with the most frequent combination being Indonesian–English. This phenomenon illustrates a dual communication strategy, whereby Indonesian is employed to address the local community, while English is added to enhance appeal to international visitors. Other combinations, such as Indonesian–Sundanese, Indonesian–Dutch, or even Indonesian–Makassarese, represent the diversity of cultural identities and historical legacies still present in the Braga area.

The multilingual category is relatively limited, comprising only 5 signs (8.4%). Nevertheless, these signs demonstrate more complex symbolic functions, as they combine three or more languages, such as Indonesian–English–Japanese or Indonesian–English–Mandarin. Such practices are typically found in restaurants, cafés, or commercial products targeting cosmopolitan markets. Thus, despite their small number, multilingual signs carry significant strategic value in positioning Braga as an urban space with an international character.

Overall, at least 12 languages were identified in the linguistic landscape of Braga Street: Indonesian, English, Dutch, Sundanese, French, Italian, Makassarese, Japanese, Thai, Javanese, Chinese, Korean, and Mandarin. This linguistic diversity indicates that Braga Street functions not only as a commercial public space but also as an arena of language exchange, cultural interaction, and identity formation, reflecting its colonial heritage, modern economic development, and the influence of globalization.

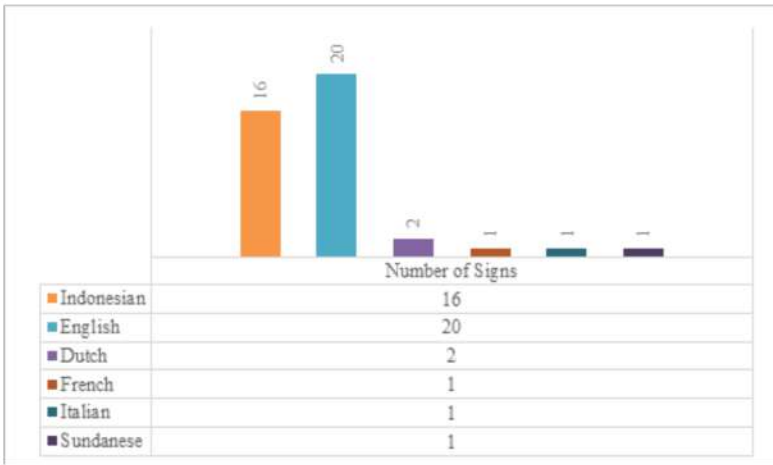


Figure 1. Recapitulation of Monolingual Signs on Braga Street
Source: Author Fieldwork, 2025

Observations of monolingual signage along Braga Street reveal the dominance of specific languages that reflect both social and symbolic functions. English emerges as the most prominent language in monolingual signs, particularly in the commercial sector, including cafés, restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues. Clear examples include *Leather Palace*, *The First Shop*, *Braga Art Café*, *Wendy's*, *Cascara – Cherry Coffee Tea*, and *Sweet Cantina*. The prevalence of English in these contexts serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a branding strategy that emphasizes global, modern, and cosmopolitan impressions, thereby appealing to both domestic and international visitors.



Figure 2. Dominance of English on Monolingual Signage in the Commercial Sector Along Braga Street

From an informational perspective, English is used primarily to convey business names and services, as illustrated by signs such as *REST AREA* and *Stop Here – Free Valet Service*. However, its symbolic function is even more prominent, as English is employed to construct a modern, cosmopolitan, and global image, evident in examples such as *Braga Art Café*, *Sweet Cantina*, and *Leather Palace*. The dominance of English reflects Braga's orientation as a tourist district targeting both international visitors and the urban middle class seeking to project a modern identity.

In contrast, Indonesian is more commonly found in monolingual signs associated with local culinary businesses and traditional enterprises, such as *Baso Ceker Braga*, *Warung Bu Tris*, *Mie Kocok Boedjang Braga*, *Belikopi*, and *Rumah Hantu Braga*. This pattern demonstrates the enduring role of the national language as a medium of public communication as well as a marker of local identity. Indonesian thus performs a dual function: serving as a practical tool of communication while simultaneously symbolizing attachment to national culture amid the forces of globalization.



Figure 3. Dominance of Indonesian on Monolingual Signage of Local Culinary Businesses and Traditional Businesses on Braga Street

In addition, Indonesian appears as the primary medium in monolingual signage serving informational functions, particularly in indicating the type of business or service offered. Examples include *Baso Ceker Braga*, *Ayam Geprek Pangeran*, *Warung Bu Tris*, and *Belikopi*. These names underscore the role of the national language in delivering practical messages that are easily understood by the wider public, thereby ensuring accessibility of information in the urban space. However, the use of Indonesian extends beyond mere communication to encompass symbolic functions. This is evident in the employment of archaic spelling conventions in names such as *Restoe Boemi*, *Kopi Toko Djawa*, and *Mie Kocok Boedjang Braga*. The deliberate use of forms such as “oe” and “dj” functions not merely as linguistic ornamentation but as a strategy to evoke historical nuance and nostalgia. Such practices reinforce the heritage image of Braga as a space imbued with distinctive cultural and historical values. Thus, Indonesian signage operates not only as a practical communicative tool but also as a symbol of cultural identity and a repository of Bandung’s collective memory.



Figure 4. Informative and Symbolic Functions of Indonesian in Monolingual Signage on Braga Street

Although limited in number, Dutch also appears in monolingual signage, particularly on heritage buildings such as *Indische Caf *, *Braga Weg*, and *N.V. Hellerman*. Its presence serves a primarily symbolic function, marking the legacy of Dutch colonialism while simultaneously reinforcing Braga’s historical image as one of the prominent colonial centers of the past.



Figure 5. Use of Dutch as a Colonial Heritage Marker on Monolingual Signage of Cultural Heritage Buildings on Braga Street

Dutch appears as a marker of colonial memory and as part of Braga’s heritage rooted in the Dutch East Indies era. The use of the word *Weg* (“street”) functions not merely as a directional indicator but also as a reminder of the urban historical legacy that continues to be preserved. Thus, while its informational function remains present, the symbolic function of Dutch is far more dominant, as its presence is maintained to safeguard the historical value and cultural identity of the Braga district.

In contrast, Sundanese, the local language of Bandung, rarely appears in monolingual signage, with one notable example being *C’MAR BRAGA*, derived from the local expression *Ceu Emar*. Informationally, this functions as a recognizable business name for local residents. However, its symbolic value is much deeper. The word *Ceu* in Sundanese is a respectful form of address for an older woman, derived from *eceu* or *euceu*, which is commonly used in daily interactions (Pooc, 2022). In this sense, the use of *C’MAR* does not merely serve as a business identifier but also conveys a distinct cultural nuance. This phenomenon reflects a symbolic rivalry between the local language and the more dominant languages (Indonesian and English), in which Sundanese is increasingly marginalized in commercial and touristic spaces. Nonetheless, despite its very limited presence, Sundanese carries a powerful symbolic function as a representation of Bandung’s cultural identity and as a reminder of the continuity of local traditions within an increasingly cosmopolitan public sphere.

In addition to dominant languages such as Indonesian, English, and Dutch, other foreign languages also appear in the Braga area, though in smaller numbers—for instance, French (*Maison Bogerijen*) and Italian (*Gino Feruci Braga*). The presence of these languages serves not merely an informational purpose, identifying restaurants and hotels, but more prominently a symbolic one. French is employed to evoke associations with class, luxury, and classical European culture that align with the image of colonial-era restaurants, while Italian conveys elegance, architectural refinement, and luxurious design, thereby strengthening the branding of hotels as upscale destinations. Thus, the use of these languages functions primarily to construct prestige, exclusivity, and exoticism within Braga, underscoring a commercial strategy that capitalizes on European imagery to attract consumers.



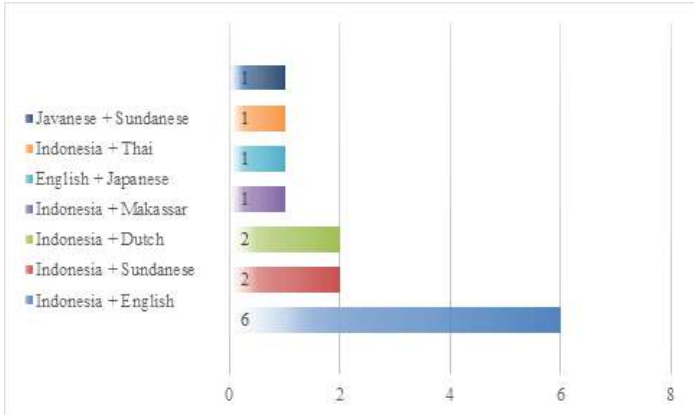


Figure 6. Recapitulation of Bilingual Signs on Braga Street

The chart clearly indicates that the Indonesian–English pairing is the most dominant, represented by six signs. English thus emerges as the primary companion language to Indonesian. This combination is not merely decorative but reflects a deliberate communication strategy to broaden the reach of messages to international audiences. It is particularly relevant for foreign tourists, international students, and urban communities familiar with global terminology. This is evidenced by tourism visit data showing that in 2023 the number of tourists visiting Bandung reached 7.7 million (Alhamidi, 2024; Zulkhairil, 2024). In addition, the Bandung City Culture and Tourism Office recorded an increase in visits in 2024 to 8.5 million tourists, which represents a rise of approximately 20% from the previous year (Al Farisi, 2025). In this way, the use of English alongside Indonesian embodies a dual orientation: maintaining national identity while simultaneously enabling more universal communication.

The next most notable pairings are Indonesian–Dutch and Indonesian–Sundanese, each appearing in two signs. The use of Dutch serves to evoke historical nuance and colonial heritage, while Sundanese represents local cultural identity and ethnolinguistic pride.

Other combinations, such as Indonesian–Makassarese, Indonesian–Thai, English–Japanese, and Javanese–Sundanese, occur only once. Although marginal in number, these minority pairings highlight an additional layer of linguistic diversity, even if they do not dominate the overall landscape of public signage. The use of local languages such as Makassarese or Javanese in public signage can serve as a symbol of cultural identity and pride. Signs that employ local languages also signal that the public space is inhabited by diverse groups. This reflects multicultural values, particularly the coexistence of various ethnicities and languages within a single area, especially in the Braga district. Moreover, Makassarese or Javanese-language signage may indicate patterns of population movement, such as migrants, traders, or labor communities from those regions who have settled and engage in daily activities around the signage location.

In several cases, bilingualism is used primarily to deliver clear and practical information that can be understood by a wider audience. A concrete example is found on *Jl. Suniaraja*, where the street name is displayed in Indonesian alongside Sundanese script. This combination provides formal locational information while simultaneously affirming local cultural identity. A similar case is observed in the *Braga inscription*, where the historical Dutch form *Braga Gids van Bandoeng (Braga-Weg)* is displayed alongside its Indonesian equivalent *Jalan Braga*, enabling visitors to engage with both historical and modern layers of information simultaneously.



Figure 7. Bilingual Signage as a Practical Information Media and Representation of Cultural Identity in the Braga Area

In addition, the informational function is also evident in the commercial domain. For example, in service advertisements such as “*Terima Lukis ...*” (Indonesian) displayed alongside “*Accept Painting ...*” (English), both local visitors and foreign tourists are able to understand the service being offered.

The use of bilingual formats for functional purposes is also evident in signage such as *SIN SIN – Souvenir & Antique Shop – Since 1943 – Jl. Braga 59*, where English is employed to enhance recognition among international customers, while Indonesian ensures readability for local patrons. Another example is *Noi Nam Pat Chawanadee*, a Thai-language business sign that nonetheless includes the address in Indonesian, thereby facilitating location identification within the local context.



Figure 8. Bilingual Signage as an Information Accessibility Strategy for Local and International Visitors on Braga Street

In contrast to the informational function, which emphasizes message clarity, the symbolic function of bilingual practices in Braga highlights aspects of identity, image, style, and cultural values. In this context, language is no longer used solely to ensure practical comprehension but rather to convey additional meanings associated with social status, modernity, and cultural affiliation.

A clear example can be seen in *Warunk Upnormal*, where the choice of the English word “*Upnormal*” serves not merely as a descriptor but as a symbol of an urban and modern lifestyle. The inclusion of this foreign-language element projects a trendy, cosmopolitan image that resonates with the tastes of younger generations. A similar case is found in *Feel Matcha*, which combines English with a Japanese term. This bilingual blend not only facilitates understanding of the product but also symbolizes global consumer trends and the authenticity of flavors associated with Japanese culture.



Figure 9. Use of Foreign Language Elements in Signage as a Symbol of Urban Lifestyle and Global Image in the Braga Area



Symbolism is also strongly reflected in the use of local languages. For instance, *Mih Kocok “Mang Dadeng”* combines Indonesian and Sundanese to emphasize cultural proximity while reinforcing Sundanese local identity. Similarly, *Selamat Datang + Konro Daeng* blends the national language with Makassarese, highlighting cultural pride and distinctive ethnic identity. In the case of *Angkringan Teteh*, the combination of Javanese and Sundanese serves as a symbol of acculturation and interethnic familiarity in Bandung.



Figure 10. Use of Regional Languages in Signage as a Representation of Ethnic Identity and Cultural Acculturation in the Braga Area

Other foreign languages also play symbolic roles. In *Toko Kue Lakker*, the use of the Dutch word “*Lakker*” evokes colonial nostalgia while differentiating the shop’s image to appear more unique and upscale. Meanwhile, the sign *[LB] Bar & Resto – Heineken* combines English and Indonesian, foregrounding international terminology alongside a global beer brand, thereby projecting a modern, cosmopolitan, and prestigious impression.

Thus, the symbolic function of bilingualism in Braga demonstrates that language operates not only as a medium of information but also as a tool of image construction, identity representation, and branding strategy. Language is used to reinforce local cultural proximity, evoke an international atmosphere, or elevate the social status of a brand or establishment. Bilingual practices in Braga can therefore be understood as serving a dual role: first, expanding communicative access by making messages more comprehensible to diverse audiences; and second, creating symbolic value through the representation of cultural identity, global style, and commercial imagery that enhances the district’s overall appeal.

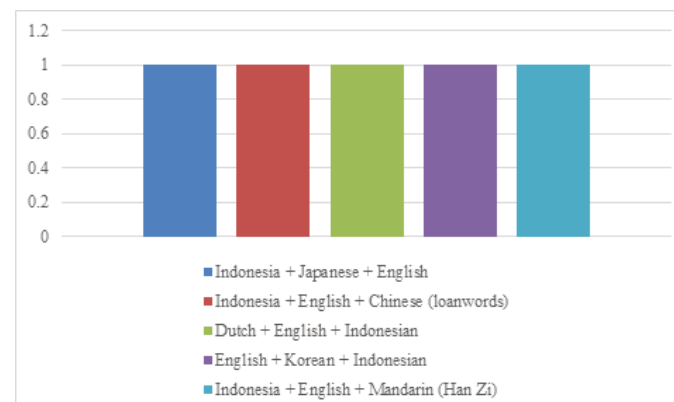


Figure 11. Recapitulation of Multilingual Signs on Braga Street

The findings indicate the presence of five multilingual combinations, each occurring only once: Indonesian–Japanese–English, Indonesian–English–Chinese (loanwords), Dutch–English–Indonesian, English–Korean–Indonesian, and Indonesian–English–Mandarin (Han Zi). This balanced distribution demonstrates that the use of more than two languages remains a minor practice within the linguistic landscape of the research area, contrasting with the more dominant bilingual patterns.

Although limited in number, these patterns reveal a clear global orientation. The majority of multilingual combinations consistently include English, which functions as a universal connector. English operates as a tool for communication, personal and social empowerment, and the integration of people from different countries and cultural traditions in today's global environment (Pandarangga, 2016). This suggests that English is positioned as a bridging language, linking local languages, historical languages (Dutch), and popular Asian languages such as Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin.

At the same time, Indonesian consistently appears in nearly all combinations, reinforcing its role as the core language within the linguistic landscape. Even when paired with foreign languages, Indonesian functions as a local anchor, ensuring that messages remain relevant to the surrounding social and cultural context. Thus, these multilingual practices reflect an effort to balance the demands of global communication with the preservation of local identity.

Several examples illustrate how the use of more than two languages on a single public sign simultaneously integrates both informational and symbolic functions. At *Kedai Bakmi Tjeng*, for instance, the combination of Indonesian, English, and Chinese is used to provide practical information regarding halal menu options (e.g., “No Pork, No Lard”) and promotional cues such as “NEW!”. At the same time, the inclusion of Chinese culinary terms like *Hainan* and *Charsiu* emphasizes ethnic identity and conveys the authenticity of Chinese cuisine.

Another example is *Koffie – Goede Oude Tijd*, which combines Dutch, English, and Indonesian. From an informational perspective, the sign indicates both the business name and its location on Braga Street, making it clear for visitors. However, the presence of Dutch goes beyond mere information, serving as a symbol of Bandung's colonial heritage and nostalgic past. In this way, it adds historical and aesthetic value to the coffee shop.



Figure 12. The Use of Multilingualism in Signage as an Informational and Symbolic Representation of Colonial Heritage on Jalan Braga

Meanwhile, the poster *Suis Butcher – Korean Edition* employs three languages: English, Korean, and Indonesian. The main information conveyed includes a limited-edition promotion, menu items, and location details. However, the use of the Korean expression **맛있다!!** (*mas-issda!!*, “delicious”) carries a symbolic function as a representation of the K-Wave trend, which is highly popular among young people. In doing so, it appeals to the interests of the urban generation that closely follows Korean pop culture.



Figure 13. Multilingual Signage as a Promotional Media and Representation of Korean Popular Culture Trends

A similar case can be observed at *Bakmie Tjo Kin*, which combines Indonesian, English, and Mandarin. From an informational perspective, the sign provides details such as opening hours, halal certification, and menu types. However, the inclusion of Mandarin characters (*Han Zi*: 鸡肉面, *jīròu miàn*, “chicken noodles”) serves not only a practical function but also constructs an image of authenticity and prestige associated with Chinese cuisine, thereby enhancing the restaurant’s appeal.

From the research findings, it can be concluded that multilingualism in the Braga area does not appear on a mass scale but rather in a selective and strategic manner. The local language, Indonesian, remains the core element that ensures comprehensibility for the wider community. However, the presence of foreign languages such as English, Mandarin, Korean, Dutch, and Chinese loanwords is far from incidental. These languages are incorporated to add symbolic layers, whether by emphasizing ethnic identity, reinforcing historical heritage, or aligning with current global trends.

Thus, multilingual practices in Braga can be understood as serving dual roles. First, in terms of their informational function, the use of multiple languages contributes to the clear communication of menus, promotions, locations, and services, making them accessible to cross-cultural audiences. Second, in terms of their symbolic function, linguistic diversity provides added value in the form of authenticity, prestige, and commercial appeal, achieved through the representation of culture, colonial heritage, and popular global trends.

The findings from Braga Street indicate that monolingual signs dominate (68.3%), primarily using English and Indonesian. These two languages serve different yet complementary functions. English is widely employed in modern commercial sectors to project a cosmopolitan image and connection to the international sphere, while Indonesian is more frequently used in local culinary businesses to highlight authenticity and cultural values. This reveals a tension between the functions of internationalization and local identity: the global language acts as a branding tool, whereas the national language reinforces cultural ties.

This phenomenon is not unique to Braga. For instance, in Hongcun Village, China, bilingual signs are employed both to reinforce heritage identity and to facilitate communication with foreign visitors (Lu et al., 2020). Accordingly, the pattern in Braga is consistent with global findings that English dominates urban commercial spaces as the international lingua franca (Jiang & Lui, 2023; Wardzyńska, 2024).

The informational function of the linguistic landscape (LL) is evident in signs that provide directions, business identity, or services, such as *REST AREA*, *Stop Here – Free Valet Service*, or *Terima Lukis / Accept Painting*. This aligns with LL theory, which emphasizes that public signage plays a crucial role in providing accessible information to diverse communities (Mustapić, 2019; Yuan, 2019).. Yet beyond being merely informative, the symbolic function of language is far more prominent in Braga. English, for example, is often associated with cosmopolitanism, modernity, and prestige, as reflected in signs such as *Leather Palace* and *Braga Art Café*, which strengthen the area's image as a global tourist destination ((Chen, 2021; Darakienl, 2024).

Indonesian, meanwhile, functions as an anchor of national identity and as a symbol of heritage. This is visible in signs using old orthography, such as *Restoe Boemi* or *Kopi Toko Djawa*, which, according to Silverstein's (2003) theory of indexicality, index nostalgia, colonial memory, and authenticity (Chernyavskaya, 2023; Seddon, 2024). Dutch, as seen in *Indische Café* or *Braga Weg*, recalls colonial history, whereas Sundanese (e.g., *C'MAR Braga*) is marginalized despite its strong ethnolinguistic value. This reflects a broader global trend where local languages are often displaced in urban spaces, overshadowed by national or global languages (Trianto et al., 2025; Vandenbroucke, 2016). In addition, French (*Maison Bogerijen*) and Italian (*Gino Feruci Braga*) appear selectively to connote exclusivity and prestige, aligning with Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, which situates high-status languages as instruments of symbolic value (Coelho et al., 2024).

Bilingualism, accounting for 23.3% of all signage, is dominated by the Indonesian–English combination and reflects a dual communication strategy. On one hand, Indonesian ensures readability for the local community, safeguarding the basic communicative function. On the other hand, English introduces a branding dimension that reinforces the cosmopolitan image of the area. A clear example is *SIN SIN – Souvenir & Antique Shop – Since 1943*, where bilingual structuring not only provides practical information but also adds a symbolic layer linking local business to international tourism networks.

This dual function resonates with international findings. For instance, Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau (2015) demonstrated that bilingual signage in Palma, Spain, simultaneously facilitates communication and signals multiculturalism. Similarly, Lee and Lee (2025), in their study of Seochon Village, Seoul, found that bilingual public signage represents a negotiation between tradition and modernity. Braga's linguistic landscape mirrors this dynamic: Indonesian asserts local roots and cultural continuity, while English adds global prestige, positioning public space as a site where local identity intersects with globalization.

Beyond Indonesian–English, other combinations such as Indonesian–Dutch (Braga plaques, heritage signage), Indonesian–Sundanese (*Mie Kocok Mang Dadeng*), or Indonesian–Makassarese (*Konro Daeng*) highlight cultural diversity. Sundanese usage underscores ethnolinguistic identity, while Dutch emphasizes colonial heritage. In commercial contexts, bilingualism also functions pragmatically, as in *Terima Lukis / Accept Painting*, ensuring accessibility for both locals and foreign tourists. Yet the symbolic dimension is again more prominent: foreign languages are mobilized for urban lifestyle branding (*Warunk Upnormal*, *Feel Matcha*), while local languages mark identity and cultural intimacy (*Mie Kocok Mang Dadeng*). Thus, bilingualism in Braga operates not merely as a communication tool but as a strategy of branding, cultural representation, and global–local identity construction.

Although comparatively small (8.4%), multilingual signage on Braga Street performs a strategic role in positioning the area as a cosmopolitan tourist destination. The presence of Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin alongside English and Indonesian serves not only to expand accessibility but also to construct particular images aligned with global trends. Examples such as *Bakmie Tjo Kin* (Indonesian–English–Mandarin) or *Suis Butcher – Korean Edition* (Indonesian–English–Korean) illustrate how multilingualism conveys both authenticity and alignment with popular cultural currents.

This multilingual phenomenon is consistent with findings from Dai et al. (2024) in Haikou, China, which show that linguistic authenticity in heritage signage enhances visitors' emotional engagement and intention to visit. The patterns in Braga similarly suggest processes of glocalization—the blending of globalization with local identity. Japanese and Korean are employed to signify popular culture trends, Mandarin to emphasize ethnic authenticity, while Dutch indexes colonial nostalgia. Such practices parallel other Southeast Asian cities where multilingualism functions as a branding strategy that integrates local values with international trends (Artawa et al., 2023; Pathanasin, 2025).

These dynamics cannot be separated from global cultural flows. The Korean Wave (K-Wave), for instance, has reshaped cultural consumption patterns in Indonesia, spanning K-pop, K-drama, and Korean cuisine. Consequently, the use of Hangeul in restaurant or café signage is not merely informational but an index of authenticity and cosmopolitan identity. Research shows that Korean script in signage carries symbolic value in the form of trendiness, modernity, and cultural capital closely tied to youth enthusiasm (Backhaus, 2010; Sakhiyya & Martin-Anatias, 2020).

In general, the multilingual landscape of Braga can be understood as a semiotic resource that fuses informational functions with symbolic meanings. English provides international legitimacy and accessibility; Korean and Japanese mark the authenticity of popular culture and cuisine; Mandarin symbolizes heritage and economic credibility; while Indonesian serves as the anchor of national identity. Together, these practices illustrate how global currents are locally absorbed to shape a cosmopolitan yet culturally grounded destination identity—a concrete manifestation of glocalization.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the linguistic landscape of Braga Street is not a neutral representation of language but a complex site of negotiation between colonial history, national identity, tourism commodification, and globalization. Public signage thus functions not as a passive medium but as an active agent in shaping cultural identity and the city's image. This aligns with Nenotek et al. (2025), who argue that linguistic diversity in public spaces both supports inclusive tourism and acts as a vehicle for preserving cultural identity. Accordingly, Braga Street can be read as a layered semiotic space, where language simultaneously serves as communication, branding, identity marking, and historical memory.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Jalan Braga's linguistic landscape is characterized by a hierarchy of language functions: English as a global branding and prestige marker, Indonesian as a national and cultural anchor, Dutch as a colonial memory symbol, and Sundanese as a marginalized yet meaningful local identity. Multilingual practices, though less frequent, serve strategic roles in projecting cosmopolitanism and aligning with global cultural trends. The findings suggest that Braga's linguistic landscape does more than facilitate communication, it constructs symbolic narratives about heritage, identity, and globalization. For policymakers and cultural heritage managers, this underscores the importance of integrating local and historical languages into urban planning to preserve cultural authenticity while accommodating global tourism. However, the study is limited to a single street, and further research should expand to other heritage sites in Indonesia or conduct comparative studies across cities. Future studies may also examine audience perception of multilingual signage, exploring how local residents and tourists interpret linguistic diversity in heritage contexts.

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