

Linguistic Landscape of Multilingual Informative Signage at Jawa Timur Park 2, Indonesia

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Abstract

Lack of visibility of information in tourist areas threatens the credibility and image of Indonesian tourism at the global level. In the context of globalization that encourages multilingualism practices, the choice and use of languages on signs becomes a crucial aspect. Therefore, this study highlights how tourist destinations in Indonesia, especially Jawa Timur Park 2, navigate these challenges. This study aims to explore the language displayed on informative signage in the educational tourism destination and visitors' reactions to it. It looks at the linguistic landscape phenomenon from three perspectives, namely Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) taxonomy of signs, Sebba's (2013) language writing, and Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) positive language attitudes. The method used is descriptive qualitative, with the first primary data in the form of phrases, sentences, and paragraphs in informative signage, and the second primary data in the form of visitor statements from questionnaire responses. The findings reveal the existence of multilingual, bilingual, and monolingual sign types to convey detailed information, object names, and place names. In addition, the languages used are Indonesian, English, and scientific language from Greek/Latin. Visually, the language is written in symmetrical, asymmetrical, and mixed language-spatial relationships. The language is written in equivalent, disjoint, and overlapping language-content relationships. The visitors' positive attitudes towards national and international languages are addressed by language loyalty and pride. Thus, this study suggests that tourism officers, sign designers, and tourism policy makers consider language use on monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs that are adequate, inclusive, and functional for all visitors.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape; Informative Signs; Language Attitude; Educational Tourism

1. Introduction

UNESCO's 2023 warning of one of Indonesia's tourist areas, namely the Toba Caldera Geopark, shows the issue of the lack of visibility of the tourist area, which has an impact on the revocation of its status as a UNESCO Global Geopark. According to the Expert Council of the National Solidarity Movement for Tourism, this could lead to a decline in the credibility and attractiveness of Indonesian tourism as a whole in the future (DetikTravel, 2025). This also weakens Indonesia's position as one of the five most popular tourist destinations in ASEAN in 2023 (Liputan6, 2024b).

In this context, the language on the sign becomes crucial. Since globalization has encouraged multilingualism, the selection and use of appropriate, clear, and inclusive language is essential to increase attractiveness (Suhaimi & Abdullah, 2017) and accessibility for various visitors (Savitri, 2021). In Indonesia, the implementation of the use of languages still faced problems, such as text on information signs in public spaces that are often difficult to read (Savitri et al., 2024), incorrect English writing (Nenotek et al., 2024), and the dominance of languages that do not suit language users (Datang, 2023). This may be influenced by factors such as Indonesia's low English proficiency (Kompas, 2024) and strict policies regarding the use of Indonesian in public spaces (Law No. 24/2009, Articles 36 & 38). Therefore, this



study takes a position on this tourism issue by exploring the language in signs at tourism destinations in Indonesia, including the choice and use of language and visitors' reactions to the language used.

The choice and use of language in signs in an area, and the reactions to it, are topics in linguistic landscape study. It provides a new perspective on the relationship between language, society, and language policy through language analysis on signs that reflect the dominant language, linguistic diversity, group identity, and societal reactions (Gorter & Cenoz, 2023). Spolsky & Cooper (1991) proposed a taxonomy to classify signs in the linguistic landscape, as cited by (Diana et al., 2022; Putra et al., 2024; Sarniwati et al., 2022; Supriatnoko et al., 2022). This taxonomy divides signs based on three main criteria. First is the sign's function and use, which includes warning and prohibition signs, advertisements, road signs, information, object labels, commemorative plaques, and graffiti. Second, the type of material used, such as wood, metal, tiles, posters, stone, and plastic. Third, the number of languages used on the sign, which can be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual (Spolsky, 2009).

These language variations are often organized in such a way as to form a linguistic landscape. Sebba (2013) offers a typological approach to multilingual writing, focusing on three main dimensions. First is the language-spatial relationship, which examines whether the relationship between language and the text layout in a sign is symmetrical, asymmetrical, or mixed. Second, is the language-content relationship, which looks at how languages convey the same or different messages, divided into equivalent texts, disjoint texts, and overlapping texts. Thirdly, the type of language mixing refers to the phenomenon where some parts of one text are written in different languages, but the whole text is considered a mix.

Arrangements of language variation in the linguistic landscape can affect the visitor experience, which can be studied through language attitudes. Garvin & Mathiot (1968) identified three characteristics of positive attitudes: language loyalty, which encourages speakers to maintain their language; language pride, which encourages the development of language as a symbol of identity; and awareness of language norms, which encourages appropriate and polite language use. Therefore, studying language attitude can help to see the reaction to the linguistic landscape.

Previous studies on linguistic landscapes often show the contestation of different languages and the dominance of a language on commercial signage in certain public areas. Nambu (2021) found the dominance of English in Brazilian immigrant communities in Japan, reflecting globalization and the influence of popular culture. In Indonesia, Purnanto & Ardhian (2020), Artawa et al. (2023a), and Artawa et al. (2023b) found the dominance of English in commercial signage, especially in tourism areas.

Research on language dominance in the linguistic landscape of signage in a tourism destination also shows a similar pattern. According to Datang (2023), Rastitiati & Suprastayasa (2022), and Mulyawan et al. (2022), the English language also dominates the use of signage in tourism destinations. Other research has focused on analysing how languages in the linguistic landscape, especially in commercial signs, portray ideologies or values promoted in a particular region. Siziba & Maseko (2024), Dabrowska (2024), An & Zhang (2022), and Costley et al. (2023) have examined how the English language dominates the linguistic landscape in various cities experiencing the effects of globalization and economic inequality. Meanwhile, research in Indonesia, as shown by studies such as Jendra & Wiradnyana (2023), Khazanah et al. (2022), Atmawati et al. (2024), and Iwana & Sudarwati (2021), indicates that there is a relationship between Indonesian, English, and regional languages in advertising signs. The need to balance local and global identities is what this combination suggests.

Research on language impact in the field of linguistic landscape has shown that perceptions, attitudes, and individual identities all play a role in language. Gorter et al. (2021) found that the linguistic landscape may be a vital learning asset and improve individual language skills. Additionally, Yao (2020) discovered that languages in linguistic landscapes can evoke emotions and nostalgia, influencing individual perceptions of a place. In addition, previous research has primarily concentrated on general tourism destination areas (Datang, 2023; Mulyawan et al., 2022; Rastitiati & Suprastayasa, 2022) or commercial space (Atmawati et al., 2024; Iwana & Sudarwati, 2021; Jendra & Wiradnyana, 2023; Khazanah et al., 2022; Nambu, 2021). Some also focused chiefly on the role of identity or signeting (An & Zhang, 2022; Costley et al., 2023; Dabrowska, 2024; Siziba & Maseko, 2024). Lastly, the previous research (Artawa et al., 2023a; Artawa et al., 2023b; Purnanto & Ardhian, 2020) only focused on the issue of language dominance, namely English.

English as a worldwide language has a new dimension thanks to its dominance in certain countries, especially those with non-English native spoken (Khazanah et al., 2022). Landry & Bourhis (1997) link language dominance with strength or encouragement for certain language speaker groups, but this contradicts the reality that was explained before. Finally, previous research has only examined the role of language in individual learning and perceptions on a commercial level (Gorter et al., 2021; Yao, 2020) without examining how language choices made in educational tourism settings influence visitors' perceptions and understanding of the language and educational content displayed.

Thus, by referring to the findings above, this research fills the gap through providing a new perspective on linguistic landscape study, emphasizing the educational tourism context. In addition, this study delves further into how

signage in public spaces disseminates educational information to visitors using a sociolinguistic approach (Spolsky, 2009). Beyond that, this research also examines how language choices on signs influence visitors' understanding and perception of educational materials, revealed through a language attitude study (Garvin & Mathiot, 1968). Consequently, this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of language in the informal learning process in tourism areas.

This research needs to be conducted for several reasons. First, understanding the use of language variation in signage and how visitors' attitudes towards it impact the travel experience can provide insights into language policy as well as improve multilingual communication in tourism destinations (Spolsky, 2009). For this reason, this research aims to analyse the type of informative signs in the educational tourism destination based on the number of languages used, their language writing designs, and explore tourists' perceptions and attitudes toward them. More specifically, this research addresses three key questions: 1) What are the types of public signs that have an informative function in the educational tourism destination based on the number of languages used? 2) How are the languages used in public signs to convey educational information to visitors with different backgrounds in the educational tourism destination? 3) How do visitors' attitudes and perceptions differ regarding the use of international languages compared to national languages on informative signs in the educational tourism destination?

2. Method

This study used the interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach. The interpretive paradigm was used to understand the language choice and use of the informative signs in the educational tourism destination, and also relate it to its social context, which is visitors' attitudes and perceptions. In addition, this study used a qualitative approach to deeply analyse the written language displays of informative signs in the educational tourism destination and visitors' reactions to them. This qualitative research presents the findings as descriptive (Heigham & Croker, 2009).

This study used two types of data. The first data is the written language, such as words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs gathered from informative signs in Jawa Timur Park 2. These data were analyzed by grouping the informative signs based on the zone, reducing damaged, unreadable, or duplicated signs, analyzing them, and categorizing them using Spolsky and Cooper's (1994) taxonomy of signs and Sebba's (2013) typology of multilingual writing. The second type of data is the written statements in the form of words, phrases, or sentences. These data come from questionnaire responses from visitors at the research site, which were collected online via Google Forms. These data were interpreted based on Garvin and Mathiot's (1968) positive language attitudes.

3. Findings and Discussion

In this linguistic landscape research, the initial data collected includes 767 informative signs in Jawa Timur Park 2, covering: 255 signs in Batu Secret Zoo, 246 signs in Museum Satwa, and 266 signs in Eco Active Park. After the reduction process, the amount of data became 181 informative signs consisting of 89 signs at Batu Secret Zoo, 32 signs at the Animal Museum, and 60 signs at Eco Active Park. The classification of 181 signs resulted in 53 monolingual signs, 75 bilingual signs, and 53 multilingual signs. The distribution of signs is visualized in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The distribution of sign variation in Jawa Timur Park 2

These languages are not only used individually in one sign but are also frequently combined. An illustration of the combination of language use and the number of occurrences in each type of sign is presented in Figure 2.

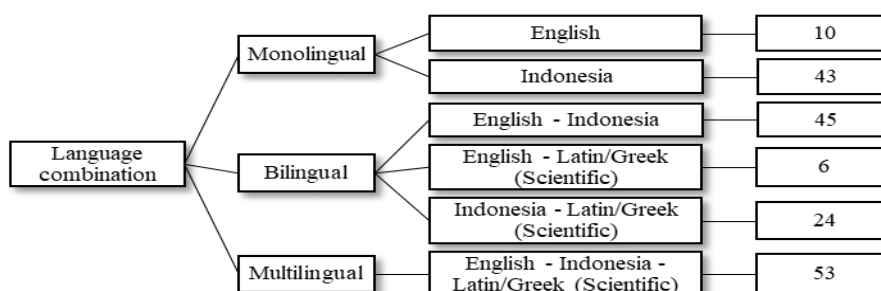


Figure 2. The chart of language choices on signage in Jawa Timur Park 2

From a total of 181 informative signs, it can be seen that the informative signs in Jawa Timur Park 2 function as a whole for details information, naming, and place naming. In more detail, monolingual sign types are distributed for detailed information, names of objects, and names of places. Meanwhile, bilingual and multilingual sign types are only distributed for the functions of details information and the names of objects. The highest tendency observed is that monolingual signs tend to use Indonesian to convey detailed information. Bilingual signs typically combine English and Indonesian to convey detailed information, while multilingual signs generally incorporate English, Indonesian, and scientific terms derived from Latin or Greek to deliver detailed information.

Informative Public Signs in the Educational Tourism Destination

The study found three types of informative public signs in Jawa Timur Park 2, Batu, which are multilingual (three or more languages), bilingual (two languages), and monolingual (one language). This finding is in line with the third criterion of Spolsky & Cooper's (1991) theory of signs' taxonomy, which states that signs can be classified into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Based on all informative signs documented in the area, the dominant type is a multilingual sign (see Figure 1).

The large number of multilingual informative signs with the same design indicates their important role as a means of conveying information to visitors from different linguistic backgrounds and reflects the importance of information equality in the context of educational tourism. As Spolsky (2009) explains, multilingual signs often serve both symbolic and communicative functions. In addition, the abundance of bilingual signs with different designs appeals to tourists (Suhaimi & Abdullah, 2017) and groups with lower literacy levels. Meanwhile, fewer monolingual signs reflect that the tourist area is not monolingual. Thus, the use of only one language is considered insufficient to reach all visitors, so more languages are needed to fulfill the informative and representative functions. This finding adds to the knowledge of a previous study, Khazanah et al. (2022), which only examined the creativity of bilingual/multilingual shop signs in several major tourist destinations, including Jawa Timur Park 2.

Furthermore, the current study found that informative signs in educational tourism destinations use three languages, namely Indonesian, English, and Scientific language from Latin/Greek (see Figure 2). The use of these three languages represents awareness of the importance of access to information (Savitri, 2021) in the context of educational tourism destinations, and it also symbolizes openness, inclusiveness, and global orientation. In addition, the presence of three languages indicates a specific dimension of function. Indonesian and English, which are official languages, as described by Spolsky (2009), are chosen for communicative purposes, while scientific languages are used for scientific purposes. Not only that, the linguistic diversity seen in the linguistic landscape at Jawa Timur Park 2 reflects the real linguistic and cultural diversity of the ethnolinguistic groups living in the area (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), which is educational tourism.

The most dominant language choice in Jawa Timur Park 2 is Indonesian, which can be seen in all three sign types in each language combination (see Figure 2). This follows the opinion of Gorter & Cenoz (2023), who say that language choices in signs can lead to challenges related to contestation. The dominant Indonesian language is motivated by the policy of using Indonesian in signs, as stipulated in article 38 paragraph (1) of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2009 that states that Indonesian must be used in public signs, road signs, public facilities, banners, and other information tools that are public services. So, the dominance of Indonesian shows that Jawa Timur Park 2 has successfully implemented regulations about language use on signage. This is in line with the opinion of Gorter & Cenoz (2023), who state that language policy rules are a factor in the use of language in signs in a country.

Furthermore, the tendency of language choice also shows that Indonesian is the language of the majority group that inhabits the area (Maurais in Landry & Bourhis, 1997), in this context, visitors to educational tourism destinations. Not only that, it is also influenced by the high status of Indonesian as a national language, so that it is widely used on public informative signs even though the majority of visitors come from the Java region, which uses Javanese at home and the local community (Bourhis in Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In the context of tourism in Indonesia, the dominance of Indonesian is also apparent in other tourist destinations, such as Borobudur, which was found by previous research (Atmawati et al., 2024).

This strategic language display becomes especially relevant when considered alongside visitor demographics. According to Batu City Tourism Office, a total of 11,005,189 tourists visited Batu City, comprising 10,983,568 domestic tourists and 241,205 international tourists (DetikTravel, 2025). Therefore, this finding indicates that informative public signs in the educational tourism destination, Jawa Timur Park 2, function to be inclusively informative for the diversity of visitors (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). Moreover, the presence of English in bilingual and multilingual signs also functions as an economic strategy to reach global promotion (Iwana & Sudarwati, 2021; Sumarlam et al., 2020). Furthermore, the use of scientific languages derived from Latin or Greek in multilingual signs indicates educational purposes. As Gorter et al. (2021) state that language displays on public signs are an important resource for learning. Therefore, this is suitable for the context of the tourism destination type, that are based on scientific knowledge.

The Use of Language in Public Signs to Convey Educational Information

Multilingual signs contain educational information on animal names, physiology, taxonomy, and ecological aspects such as conservation status, habitat of origin, and behaviour. These signs tend to have variations in language use. Multilingual signs that use a combination of Indonesian, English, and scientific language to convey detailed information apply various writing types shown by the examples in Figure 3.



Hippo (symmetry-overlapping)



Konservasi (asymmetry-equivalent)



Digit ular (asymmetry-disjoint)



Bekantan (asymmetry-overlapping)



Blue Tang (mixed-equivalent)



Brown bear (mixed-overlapping)

Figure 4. Various writing types of the informative signs in Jatim Park 2

Asymmetry language-spatial relationships used in multilingual text in informative signs relate to the concept of a code preference system (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), which states that in many cultures with left-to-right writing systems, elements placed on top, left, or centre have higher status. Therefore, this type of writing is not only visual but also reflects social and political dynamics in the linguistic landscape. Moreover, Sebba (2013) states that this imbalance can indicate a linguistic hierarchy, where one language is more visually dominant than the other. Furthermore, the emergence of symmetry language-spatial relationships is intended to give readers a visual balance. This pattern may arise from an awareness of providing equal information to both local and international visitors. In addition, a mix of symmetry and asymmetry language-content relationship adds complexity in the linguistic design of a sign or text.

Overlapping language-content relationships that are used in multilingual text in informative signs arise because the sign-maker believes that readers who understand both languages can recognise the similarities as well as the differences. In addition, the emergence of disjoint language-content relationships is usually intended for individuals with more than one language proficiency who understand each language without the need for translation. While equivalent language-content relationship relates to the monoliterate readers (Sebba, 2013). By the rules of second language choice (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991), this pattern arises due to the condition that the readers are the majority who use Indonesian, while the minority need English translation.

The patterns of language use in both bilingual and multilingual signs add to the broad category proposed by Sebba (2013), which only classifies multilingual texts into parallel (symmetry-equivalent) and complementary (asymmetry-disjoint). Moreover, the finding about applying the categories of disjoint and overlapping in multilingual text is similar to the findings of a previous study (Dabrowska, 2024), which found that these categories emerge in advertisements. In addition, the findings regarding the tendency of applying overlapping language-content relationships support the findings

of the study by Khazanah et al (2022), who found that complementary categories (another term for overlapping) were common in the shop signs of Jawa Timur Park.

The Attitudes and Perceptions towards the Use of National and International Languages in Public Signs

The third objective of this study is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of visitors in the educational tourism destination towards national and international languages on the signs there. In this study, data collected through questionnaires resulting 21 responses from local visitors. There are three positive attitudes towards language, namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summarized analysis of visitors' attitude and perception of the public signs

Questions	Responses	Attitude	Aspect
Whether visitors were more comfortable if the information board only used Indonesian or preferred other languages	"Bahasa Indonesia saja [Indonesian only]" – (F, teenage girl, local)	Positive	Language loyalty
	"Saya pribadi nyaman dengan papan informasi yang memiliki beberapa bahasa, dapat memudahkan turis non local untuk memahami hewan yang ada sekaligus mempelajarinya [I am personally comfortable with information signs that have multiple languages, can make it easier for non-local tourists to understand the animals that exist and learn about them]" – (LL, adult female, local)	Positive	Language loyalty
Whether or not the information conveyed through several languages became clearer	"Menurut saya, informasi yang disampaikan dengan beberapa bahasa menjadi lebih jelas dan mudah dimengerti [In my opinion, the information conveyed in multiple languages becomes clearer and easier to understand]" – (LL, adult female, local)	Positive	Language loyalty
Whether the Indonesian language on the signage helps to understand the information more easily	"Membantu sekali, dengan adanya bahasa indonesia di papan informasi memberikan banyak pengetahuan terlebih tentang satwa-satwa yang ada di Eco Active Park [It is very helpful, with the Indonesian language on the information board providing a lot of knowledge, especially about the animals in the Eco Active Park]" – (RN, teenage girl, local)	Positive	Language pride
Visitors' impressions when seeing information signs that use English or other languages	"Jika terdapat bahasa Inggris maka menandakan pengelola wisata 'welcome' terhadap wisatawan dari mana saja [If it is in English, it indicates that the tour manager 'welcomes' tourists from anywhere]" – (AF, adult female, local)	Positive	Language pride
Visitors' opinions regarding the use of Indonesian, which seemed to be more dominant	"Ingin mengenalkan berbagai macam ragam yg ada disini dan memperkenalkan budaya serta bahasa indonesia ke orang luar [This wants to introduce the various kinds of things that exist here and introduce Indonesian culture and language to outsiders]" – (VIE, teenage girl, local)	Positive	Language pride
Visitors' opinions on whether the Indonesian writing on the information board was easy to read	"Enak karena penggunaan font, ukuran font, serta warna font diatur sedemikian rupa dan menjadi mudah terbaca dan dipahami [It's great because the font usage, font size, and font color are arranged in such a way that they become easy to read and understand]" – (SF, adult female, local)	Positive	Awareness of language norms
	"Menurut saya, untuk judulnya sudah eyecatching dan mudah dibaca, namun bagian poin-poinnya terlalu kecil yang mana sedikit menyulitkan untuk orang yang rabun bahkan lansia" [I think the title is eyecatching and easy to read. However, the point section is too small which makes it a little difficult for people who are nearsighted and even elderly]" – (LL, adult female, local)	Positive	Awareness of language norms

Based on sign analysis, public signage at the educational tourism destination, Jawa Timur Park 2, uses the national language of Indonesian and the international language of English. Furthermore, the analysis on visitors' responses found that visitors show a positive attitude towards the use of Indonesian in public signs, although they also recognize the importance of the presence of English. This means that visitors' attitudes towards both languages do not show significant differences. This finding also reflects the tension between the identity attached to the national language (Diana et al.,

2022; Wahyuni, 2024) and the need for openness to the global (Yusuf et al., 2022), which directly affects visitors' perception of language representation in public spaces.

The findings of the current study reveal that the level of legibility, comprehension, impression, awareness of language function, and language ability influence visitors' perceptions of the use of national and international languages on public signage. The national language is generally perceived as comfortable, clear, easy to understand, communicative, and reflecting cultural identity and values. Meanwhile, international languages tend to be perceived as helping non-local tourists, broadening understanding, and reaching global promotion. In general, these perceptions reflect positive language attitudes: language loyalty and language pride, while awareness of language norms is not yet apparent, may be due to visitor competence. From the three aspects of attitude, language loyalty was most prominent in the visitors' perceptions.

The visitors' language loyalty attitude is aimed at both languages. According to Garvin & Mathiot (1968), language loyalty refers to the desire of a community to maintain its language, and if necessary, to protect it from the influence of foreign languages. This attitude appears and feels stronger when it is directed towards a standard language. Language attitude toward the national language is characterized by the perception that Indonesian provides comfort, the main means of communication, and clarifies information. Besides, language loyalty towards the international language is illustrated by visitors' perception that English has an important function in serving international tourists. Thus, the national language and the international language received positive attitudes of language pride, although the perceptions towards them were slightly different.

Visitors' perceptions also reflect language pride towards national and international languages. Garvin & Mathiot (1968) state that language pride refers to a sense of pride in a language. This pride usually arises because the language has things that are considered special. Language pride in Indonesian is reflected in the perception that Indonesian helps to gain insight, which the majority of tourists need, and to inform foreigners of its richness and cultural values. On the other hand, language pride towards the international language is in line with the perception that English has a function as a means of reaching foreign tourists, and expanding the attractiveness of tourist attractions. Therefore, language pride is aimed at the two languages above, with each perception showing the specialty of the two languages.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis, this study found that there are three types of informative signs, namely multilingual, bilingual, and monolingual. Overall, the most frequent sign type is multilingual, with a combination of Indonesian, English, and Latin to deliver detailed information. While by design, the most frequent sign type is the bilingual type, with a combination of Indonesian and English, which is used to deliver detailed information.

The findings also show that the most frequently occurring language-spatial relationship on bilingual language use on signs is the asymmetrical category, while the most frequently occurring language-content relationship is the overlapping category. In addition, language use on bilingual signs places Indonesian as the first language in the sequence. The findings also reveal that the most frequent language-spatial relationship in multilingual language use on signs is the asymmetrical category, while the most frequent language-content relationship is the overlapping categories. In addition, language use on multilingual signs places English as the first language in the sequence.

The final result indicates positive attitudes towards language loyalty and pride. In general, Indonesian is perceived as the main means of communication, identity, and cultural transmission. Meanwhile, English is generally perceived as a role as a global communication tool, supporting access to information, and a means of expanding tourist reach.

This study still has some limitations in its findings. First, this study only focuses on permanent informative signs and does not take into account temporary informative signs such as banners or posters. Secondly, this study was limited to observations at one educational tourism location based on a zoo, so the findings may be different if educational tourism destinations with different characteristics, such as religious and historical. Thirdly, this study collected data during the low season following the permit, so it does not obtain data from the international visitors who usually visit during the holiday season. In addition, this study also cannot guarantee whether visitors' responses are the same or different if the data is taken during the high season. Fourth, this study examines the linguistic landscape only through the lenses of Spolsky & Cooper's language choice (1991), Sebba's language writing (2013), and Garvin & Mathiot's (1968) positive language attitude. Thus, findings may differ if explored using other theoretical perspectives. These limitations highlight the potential for further research and suggest that future studies should build on the current findings.

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