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# The linguistic landscape for sustainable and inclusive tourism: insight from Timor Tengah Selatan, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of linguistic elements in supporting or hindering sustainable and inclusive tourism, a vital factor for the economic growth of the regency, which depends heavily on tourism. The research aims to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing the linguistic landscape in Timor Tengah Selatan Regency (TTS) of East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia, and its impact on tourism development. Data for the study were gathered from all potential tourist destinations listed on the government website, including beaches, nature reserves, baths or waterfalls, tourist villages, and religious tourism sites. Data collection methods included observation, photographic documentation, and interviews. The collected data were analyzed using both qualitative approaches. The signage at these tourist locations typically included directional signs to the destinations, name boards, directional signs within the sites, and other informational signs, such as reminders to keep the area clean or to protect the trees. The signs were predominantly in Indonesian and English, presented in monolingual formats. The linguistic landscape in the tourist areas of TTS represents a critical intersection of language and tourism. This research adds to the broader discussion on sustainable tourism by emphasizing the significance of linguistic diversity and inclusive practices in achieving long-term sustainability objectives.

## IMPACT STATEMENT

This research contributes significantly to linguistic landscape studies, particularly in tourism development in Timor Tengah Selatan Regency and Indonesia. It provides new insights into the role of the linguistic landscape in developing sustainable and inclusive tourism in Timor Tengah Selatan regency, offering a detailed and context-specific understanding of the interplay between language and tourism.

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## 1. Introduction

Global tourism is an industry expanding quickly and has excellent economic growth and community empowerment potential. To ensure sustainability, however, several social and environmental issues are frequently brought up by its quick expansion. The goal of sustainable and inclusive tourism is to strike a balance between the need to preserve sociocultural aspects of destinations and the environment, as well as the economic benefits (Gupta et al., 2024; Stojanović et al., 2024). Sustainable and inclusive tourism practices have become increasingly important in recent years.

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This paper represents a collaborative effort among scholars from various disciplines, focusing on linguistic landscape research and its intersection with language teaching, sociopragmatics, and economic perspectives. The authors include Seprianus Arwadi Nenotek, Norci Beeh, Naniana Nimrod Benu, and Atalya Robeca Cornelis from Artha Wacana Christian University in Kupang, Indonesia, alongside I Made Suta Paramarta from Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha in Bali, Indonesia, and Alya Elita Sjioen from Artha Wacana's Economics Faculty. Their research explores how linguistic landscapes can inform educational practices and socio-economic strategies. This paper contributes to broader issues of multilingual representation, cultural identity, and marketing within public spaces, aligning with global efforts to understand the role of language in fostering sustainable and inclusive development. The interdisciplinary approach highlights the synergy between linguistic studies and practical applications in community engagement and tourism, reflecting the authors' diverse expertise and shared commitment to impactful research.

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Language shapes the tourist experience and promotes inclusive tourism practices because it is a medium for communication and artistic expression (Lonardi & Unterpertinger, 2022; Paramarta et al., 2022). The language employed in communications on tourism plays a critical role in promoting or impeding accessibility. Previous studies have emphasized the significance of employing inclusive language that steers clear of perpetuating stereotypes and fosters constructive societal transformation (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018). A thorough understanding of the intricate relationships between tourism, local communities, and the environment is necessary for sustainable tourism development. According to earlier research, community involvement must be proactive to achieve sustainable tourism (Mikulec & Antoušková, 2011; Terkenli et al., 2021). Achieving long-term sustainability goals requires sustainable tourism policies and efficient destination management (Berno et al., 2022). This involves protecting natural and cultural assets and the active participation of local communities in tourism planning and decision-making processes. By integrating the principles of sustainable tourism, TTS can create a tourism model that supports economic growth while preserving its unique cultural and environmental heritage.

This research arises from increasingly acknowledging the linguistic landscape as a crucial element in tourism studies. Although significant focus has been placed on environmental sustainability and community involvement in tourism (Meneghello, 2021; Mikulec & Antoušková, 2011; Terkenli, 2014), the linguistic aspect has often been neglected. While the linguistic landscape has gained increasing attention for its role in tourism, especially in enhancing the visitor experience and promoting cultural heritage, there remains limited research on its application in fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism. Most studies in this area focus on urban or internationally recognized tourist sites, neglecting lesser-known, rural areas like Timor Tengah Selatan, Indonesia. Furthermore, there is a gap in understanding how linguistic elements, such as signs, directions, and cultural information, in these settings can address the dual needs of environmental sustainability and social inclusion, particularly in regions with diverse linguistic and cultural identities. This gap leaves room for exploring how the linguistic landscape in less explored destinations can contribute to a more holistic approach to tourism, benefiting both local communities and tourists. Timor Tengah Selatan Regency (TTS) is part of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) Province in West Timor, Indonesia. It has a rich cultural history and stunning natural settings that make it a popular tourist destination (Kause et al., 2023; Kulandima & Lasso, 2023; Seo, 2023). A mosaic of Dawan language dialects that represent the diverse cultural backgrounds of the region's communities is another characteristic (Benu, 2022).

This study demonstrates the visibility and prevalence of various languages in the linguistic landscape and how they influence visitors' experiences and sense of place. The study looks at how these linguistic components support or undermine inclusive and sustainable tourism, which is an important topic considering how much the district depends on tourism for economic growth. Previous studies have shown that effective tourism strategies must include both environmental sustainability and community participation (Meneghello, 2021; Prince, 2019; Terkenli et al., 2021). However, the role of the linguistic landscape in these processes remains underexplored.

The concept of linguistic landscape refers to the visible use of languages in public spaces, including signs, billboards, and other forms of written communication. It provides insights into the social dynamics of language use and the power relations between different linguistic groups (Gorter & Cenoz, 2024). In tourism, the linguistic landscape can significantly influence how tourists perceive and interact with a destination. A well-managed linguistic landscape can promote inclusivity by accommodating the linguistic needs of diverse tourist groups, thereby enhancing their overall experience.

Conducting this research is essential to address a critical gap in the literature on tourism and linguistic landscapes, providing new insights into how language use in public spaces can affect tourism outcomes. This study seeks to analyze the current visual language elements, such as public signs, information boards, and cultural markers, that shape the tourist experience in this region. Additionally, it aims to assess the role of local languages and cultural symbols within the linguistic landscape, examining their potential to foster inclusivity for both residents and visitors. By understanding how these linguistic elements influence and reflect sustainable tourism practices, such as promoting local culture, environmental stewardship, and community involvement, the research will provide recommendations for optimizing the linguistic landscape. These recommendations will focus on policy and community-based strategies to enhance the role of language in supporting a more inclusive and sustainable tourism model in Timor

Tengah Selatan. The findings of this study can also inform policymakers and tourism planners in TTS and beyond, helping them to design more effective and culturally sensitive tourism strategies. Furthermore, by highlighting the role of language in tourism, the study can encourage greater community involvement in tourism development, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Linguistic landscape and tourism

The linguistic landscape (LL) concept refers to the visible manifestation of language in public spaces, including signs, billboards, and other written forms of communication. It reflects the social dynamics and power relations between different linguistic communities, offering a lens to understand the status and significance of various languages in a given area (Gorter & Cenoz, 2024). In tourism, the linguistic landscape is pivotal in shaping how tourists perceive and interact with a destination. The language choices on public signage, brochures, and other tourist-related materials can reinforce existing stereotypes or promote positive social change, depending on their use (Azyyati, 2023; Lonardi & Unterpertinger, 2022; Paramarta et al., 2022).

The importance of the linguistic landscape extends beyond mere communication; it is integral to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for diverse tourist populations. For instance, accommodating the linguistic needs of tourists from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds can significantly enhance their experience. This is particularly important in promoting inclusive tourism, which aims to cater to the needs of all tourists, including those with disabilities or special needs. The visibility of multiple languages in public spaces facilitates communication and signals respect for diversity and inclusion. Previous studies highlight the necessity of critically examining language use in tourism-related communication to ensure it aligns with the principles of inclusivity and accessibility (Gillovic et al., 2018; Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018; Wardana & Herawan, 2024). By adopting inclusive language practices, tourism destinations can create a more welcoming and supportive environment for all visitors. This approach enhances the overall tourism experience and contributes to the broader goals of social equity and cultural preservation within the tourism industry.

The prominence of specific languages in tourist areas often reflects the target demographic of the tourism industry. For instance, in Bali, English dominates commercial signage, indicating a solid orientation toward international tourists (Artawa et al., 2020; Mulyawan, 2020; Paramarta et al., 2022; Parwati, 2018). Studies revealed that using local languages on signage in traditional restaurants and vernacular buildings signifies an effort to showcase authentic local culture alongside accommodating international tourists. Similarly, in Mallorca, Spanish and international languages overshadow the minority language, Catalan, which has limited visibility and is mainly confined to top-down signage (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2015). The limited use of Catalan in the linguistic landscape suggests a neglect of the local culture in favor of catering to a mass tourist market. This trend is also observed in Labuan Bajo, where foreign languages dominate tourist accommodation signage, reflecting significant foreign influence (Datang et al., 2022). Similarly, research on the Veneto language in Mexico focuses on diaspora languages but highlights the lack of attention to how tourism can support these languages (Castillo-Villar & Merlo-Simoni, 2022). These studies indicate a gap in comprehensive research on how minority languages can be more prominently integrated into tourist areas. In contrast, in Lijiang, the Dongba script is driven by governmental regulations and business interests to enhance the ethnic and cultural atmosphere, although its use is mainly symbolic (Tong et al., 2024). The case of Ladin in South Tyrol demonstrates that tourists appreciate the maintenance of local languages and cultural traditions, which contribute positively to their experience (Pirlone & Spadaro, 2017).

The dominance of foreign languages in signage raises concerns about the erosion of local and national identity (Benu et al., 2023). So, these studies also suggested a need for studies that balance the linguistic needs of tourists and the cultural preservation of local communities. The previous studies also lead to the understanding of how bottom-up approaches can be better integrated to reflect local culture and community needs effectively (Azyyati, 2023). While tourism has the potential to support language preservation, it can also lead to language commodification and endangerment. The literature review on

minority languages and tourism underscores this dual potential, suggesting that more research is needed to develop strategies that ensure tourism supports rather than undermines language maintenance.

## **2.2. Sustainable and inclusive tourism**

Sustainable tourism aims to balance the need to preserve the sociocultural aspects of destinations and the environment and the economic benefits of travel. Research has examined the intricate connection between destination management, sustainable tourism policies, and visitor behavior (Gupta et al., 2024; Tong et al., 2024). It concludes that destination management strategies and policies significantly impact sustainable tourism development. Moreover, destination social responsibility partially mediates the relationship between destination management, sustainable tourism development, and sustainable tourism policy. This emphasizes incorporating sustainability concepts into management strategies and tourism policies to meet long-term sustainability objectives. Alternatively referred to as accessible tourism, inclusive tourism highlights the importance of meeting the various needs of every visitor.

The language employed in communications about tourism plays a critical role in promoting or impeding accessibility. Studies have explored the language used in accessible tourism and emphasize how language can either promote positive social change or reinforce stereotypes (Gillovic et al., 2018). To guarantee that language use in tourism-related communication fosters inclusivity and accessibility, the study emphasizes the necessity of critically analyzing language use. Tourism destinations can enhance the overall tourism experience and promote inclusivity by implementing inclusive language practices that address the diverse needs of all visitors, including those with disabilities.

## **2.3. Sustainable and inclusive tourism policy and development**

Sustainable tourism development necessitates the implementation of efficient management strategies and policies. Research has examined how institutional strategies and structures help different tourism stakeholders integrate their points of view and coordinate their actions (Khan et al., 2021; Roxas et al., 2020). It creates a Decision Support System (DSS) to help analyze the opinions, worries, and strategies planned by different tourism stakeholders. According to the study, cooperative negotiations between various tourism stakeholders can significantly impact integrated tourism development in underdeveloped and rural areas. This emphasizes the importance of including stakeholders and local communities in tourism planning and decision-making procedures to guarantee inclusive and sustainable development.

Previous researches highlighted the influence of regional businesses and communities on rural tourism (Andreyanova, 2021; Karthik, 2023). It emphasizes how crucial it is to grow rural tourism in ways that satisfy the demands of visitors and those of the host community, the environment, and local vendors. This strategy ensures that local communities actively participate in developing rural tourism rather than developing it as an unfortunate result of uncontrollable outside forces. Tourism destinations can ensure inclusive and beneficial tourism development that benefits the local population, promoting long-term sustainability by empowering residents.

Several strategies can be employed to enhance the linguistic landscape to support sustainable and inclusive tourism. First, promoting the use of both local and international languages in public signage can balance the needs of tourists and local communities. Encouraging bilingual or multilingual signage, as seen in Bali and South Tyrol, can help achieve this balance (Mulyawan, 2017; Pirlone & Spadaro, 2017). Second, implementing educational and informational support to boost community participation and tourism empowerment is crucial. For instance, in the Wuzhen scenic area, enhancing community participation through educational initiatives has shown positive outcomes for sustainable tourism development (Lonardi & Unterpertinger, 2022). Third, leveraging digital tools like Virtual Landscape Linguistics (VLL) can provide virtual tours that promote local culture without compromising natural appearances, as demonstrated in Ubud-Bali (Paramarta et al., 2022; Savitri et al., 2022). With a systematic research and development approach, Phuthong et al. (2023) succeeded in creating a mobile application that is innovative and practical. This research paves the way for further studies on the application of technology in the tourism sector and the importance of continuous evaluation of destination competitiveness. Wang (2023) also provides valuable insights into the use of algorithms in optimizing tourists' travel paths.

Finally, creating policies and regulations to encourage the use of local languages in tourism-related signage, as seen in Lijiang, can help preserve cultural heritage. However, it is essential to ensure these languages are used correctly and meaningfully (Tong et al., 2024).

Given that tourism is by its very nature a social context with cross-cultural and cross-linguistic meanings, it is essential to consider how tourists navigate these differences (Higgins & Ikeda, 2021). To conclude, the linguistic landscape in tourist areas plays a significant role in reflecting local culture, serving the needs of tourists and the local community, and impacting the experiences and identities of all stakeholders. Destinations can better balance cultural preservation with tourism development by adopting strategic measures to enhance linguistic diversity and promote sustainable and inclusive tourism practices. The extent to which languages in the linguistic landscape reflect local culture and serve community needs varies. The study by Long et al. (2023) shows that cultural distance, as measured through differences in values and social norms, has a significant impact, including on international trade. Linguistic diversity in tourism areas is crucial in shaping tourists' experiences and local residents' sense of inclusion and identity.

### 3. Research method

This study adopts a qualitative method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to analyze the linguistic landscape in tourist areas comprehensively. The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews and field observations to capture the perspectives of residents, tourists, and stakeholders. The data for this research were taken from all potential tourist destinations as listed on the TTS Regency Government website (Kominfo, 2024) including beaches, nature reserves, baths or waterfalls, tourist villages, and religious tourism. The data collection process was carried out in three stages:

1. Document and library study. Various documents were collected and analyzed to understand existing policies and guidelines regarding language use in LL and sustainable and inclusive tourism.
2. Photographic documentation. Taking photos of public signage in tourist areas. This involves capturing images of all types of signage, including commercial, informational, and directional signs, ensuring a comprehensive dataset.
3. Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 27 informants using purposive sampling, including 8 local residents, 11 tourists, 4 business owners, and 4 governmental officials. The interviews were focused on their perceptions of language use in public spaces, the importance of local languages, and the impact of linguistic diversity on their experiences and identities.

The collected data were analyzed using both qualitative methods. The photographic documentation was used to identify the presence of languages, their visibility, and their distribution across different types of signage (top-down vs. bottom-up). The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Titscher et al., 2000) to identify common themes and patterns in the informants' responses. This involves identifying key themes related to the reflection of languages used, the needs of tourists and the local community, and the impact of linguistic diversity on experiences and identities. This approach has been effectively used in research on community perspectives and cultural heritage (Beeh et al., 2023; Sudarmanto et al., 2023). The findings from the photographic documentation and interviews were compared to identify consistencies and discrepancies so as to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic landscape. Based on the analysis, strategies have been developed to enhance the linguistic landscape for sustainable and inclusive tourism.

### 4. Result

This research's findings were obtained through observation, photographic documentation, and interviews. Data were collected from 23 Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS) regency tourist destinations. The observations focused on the number of signs, types of signs, their positions or locations, and the languages used. Meanwhile, the interviews addressed issues of accessibility, accommodation, safety, and infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on the necessity of directional signs at tourist objects.



The signs found at these tourist objects generally included directions to the destination, the destination's name boards, directional signs within the destination, and other informational signs, such as those to keep the area clean or to protect the trees. The languages used on the signs were Indonesian and English, presented in monolingual forms.

Access to tourism destinations can be easily obtained due to directional signs, as shown in the sample of data in Figure 1. The data sample in Figure 1 includes directional signs to Oehala Waterfall, ecotourism of natural conservation in Mutis Mountain, and Tagepe Waterfall. These signs were created by the Department of Land Transportation, as indicated by the signs' color, size, and placement, which comply with the Regulation of the Minister of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia Number PM 13 of 2014 on traffic signs. According to Article 18, green signs are used as guide signs. Guide signs are used to direct road users during their journey or to provide other information to road users. Specifically, green is used for directional signs, worded guidance, and street name boards. As the government makes these signs, Indonesian is the country's official language, following Law Number 29 of 2009.

Although the tourist managers or TTS tourism office do not create these signs, tourists have found these guide signs helpful in navigating to the tourist destinations. Observational data indicate that these directional signs are present at all routes leading to tourist sites. No other signs, such as advertisements or additional guides related to the tourist sites, were found outside the tourist areas as a form of promotion or additional information. Some tourist destinations have name boards installed at the gates, as shown in Figure 2(a,b), and others do not, such as Kolbano Beach and Tagepe Waterfall. Despite this, local tourists stated that this does not affect them because the names of these places are already well-known through various social media platforms and by other tourists.

Figure 2a is a name board installed at the entrance gate of the Oetune Beach, which not only provides the name of the tourist site but also indicates the management and location of the site. The language used is Indonesian in the phrase 'Selamat datang di Pantai Wisata' (welcome to tourist beach), while the name of the tourist destination, 'Oetune', and the village and subdistrict names indicating its location are written in Dawan on the left and right sides. Additionally, the name 'Kabupaten Timor Tengah Selatan' is written prominently on the name board to indicate that it is handled and managed by the government of TTS. This contrasts with Figure 2(b), which represents the name board of an ecological tourist site.

Figure 2(b) is a name board installed at the forest tourist gate in Buat, Molo Selatan subdistrict of TTS regency. This ecotourism area is managed or handled by a coalition of forest farmer groups, indicated on the name board as *Gapoktanhut*, named *Ora Et Labora*. Forest Farmer Groups are associations of Indonesian farmers managing forestry businesses both inside and outside forest areas, as outlined in Article 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia Number P.89/Menlhk/Setjen/Kum.1/8/2018 concerning Guidelines for Forest Farmer Groups.

Regarding public signage in tourist destinations, tourists generally highlight the lack of public signs. As a tourist said:



Figure 1. Sample of directional signboard to tourism destination.



(a)



(b)

**Figure 2.** (a) Name board of Oetune Beach Tourist Site. (b) Name board of Ecotourism Forest Site.

'Beta berharap ada rambu-rambu yang kasih informasi tentang arah, jarak, atau lokasi fasilitas seperti toilet dan tempat parkir' (I wish there were signs providing information regarding directions, distance, or location of facilities such as toilets and parking).

Another tourist said:

'Informasi tentang objek wisata lewat rambu-rambu sangat kurang. Ada juga yang tidak memiliki peta kawasan wisata yang menunjukkan rute lengkap atau informasi tentang objek wisata lainnya di sekitar. Beberapa lokasi yang pernah kami datangi tidak memiliki rambu sama sekali, sehingga kami harus bertanya pada orang sekitar



untuk menemukan tempat wisatanya.' (Information about tourist attractions via signs is very lacking. There are also those that do not have maps of tourist areas that show complete routes or information about tourist area. Some of the locations we visited had no signs at all, so we had to ask local residents to find certain tourist attractions).

In response to this, the head of the TTS Tourism Office acknowledged this situation by saying that:

'Saat ini kami sadar bahwa rambu-rambu di beberapa lokasi wisata di TTS ini masih perlu diperbaiki. Di beberapa lokasi, petunjuk arah menuju tempat wisata masih terbatas, bahkan ada pula yang tidak tersedia sama sekali. Tentu ini berpotensi menyulitkan wisatawan, terutama yang berasal dari luar daerah atau wisatawan asing. Selain itu, kami juga memahami pentingnya rambu peringatan, misalnya di area berbahaya seperti tebing, air terjun, atau jalur pendakian, untuk menjamin keselamatan pengunjung.' (Currently we are aware that the signs at several tourist locations in TTS still need to be repaired. In some locations, directions to tourist attractions are still limited, some are even not available at all. Of course, this has the potential to make things difficult for tourists, especially those from outside the region or foreign tourists. Apart from that, we also understand the importance of warning signs, for example in dangerous areas such as cliffs, waterfalls or hiking trails, to ensure visitor safety).

However, there are still many things that need to be addressed regarding tourism in TTS. Based on interview data with the head of the TTS tourism office, the management rights of tourist destinations due to this government regulation have resulted in suboptimal tourism management. Several tourism destinations face challenges due to these regulations, which hinder the government from effectively managing them. Other issues related to these regulations include land ownership of the destination tourist sites and other factors that complicate the TTS government's ability to manage these sites effectively. These inhibiting factors contribute to the scarcity of public space signage found at tourism destinations.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Visibility and role of local languages in tourism destinations

The linguistic landscape, which includes signs, billboards, advertisements, and other public texts, shapes tourists' perceptions and experiences. The presence of multilingual signage can enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of a tourist destination, making it more attractive to a diverse group of visitors (Hakim et al., 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2023). The visibility and presence of languages in tourism-related signage can be categorized into top-down (governmental and official) and bottom-up (local businesses and community) representations.

The dynamics of language visibility in TTS's tourism landscape also reflect broader economic factors. The reliance on official languages in top-down signage is driven by the need to cater to a broader audience, including international tourists who are more likely to understand a widely spoken language like Indonesian or English. The role of the English language in tourism is particularly significant, as it serves as a global lingua franca, facilitating communication and shaping tourist perceptions and identities (Berno et al., 2022). However, this economic pragmatism can inadvertently marginalize local languages, which may be perceived as less commercially viable. Efforts to integrate local voices and practices into tourism, such as promoting food stories and experiential culinary tourism, can create synergies between culture, history, and nature (Buzinde et al., 2020). By incorporating local languages into these narratives, tourism in TTS can become more inclusive and reflective of the region's cultural richness. This approach aligns with sustainable tourism, which seeks to empower marginalized communities and ensure they benefit directly from tourism activities.

The linguistic landscape of public signage in tourism objects plays a crucial role in shaping the tourist experience and ensuring effective communication. It includes the effectiveness of the signs, the languages used, and the signs' placement within this region's tourism context. The effectiveness of tourism-related signage can be assessed through several dimensions, including clarity, visibility, and the ability to convey necessary information. Public signage in tourism areas must cater to local and international tourists, ensuring that information is accessible and comprehensible to a diverse audience. In the context of TTS, the effectiveness of the signs can be influenced by the local community's involvement

in tourism development. Research indicates that when local communities are engaged in tourism development, including signage, it leads to better sustainability and visitor satisfaction (Adinugraha et al., 2021; Towner & Davies, 2019). For instance, in Dieng, Central Java, the involvement of local community groups like POKDARWIS has resulted in more culturally relevant and effective tourism communication strategies (Towner & Davies, 2019). This approach can be replicated to improve the effectiveness of public signage.

Language choice is a critical aspect of public signage in tourism areas. Effective signage should ideally use languages widely understood by the majority of visitors. The linguistic landscape in TTS should consider the local languages spoken by indigenous communities, in addition to Indonesian and English. This multilingual approach not only aids in communication but also respects and promotes local cultures. As seen in promoting Indonesian culinary tourism, the strategic use of language and visual elements can significantly enhance the tourist experience and convey cultural values (Hakim, 2020). Similar strategies in Timor Tengah Selatan can make signage more inclusive and informative. In addition to the primary languages, incorporating basic phrases or symbols in other major languages, such as Mandarin, Japanese, or Korean, could further extend the signage's reach, considering the growing number of tourists from these regions. The effectiveness of such multilingual signage lies in its ability to cater to a broader audience, thereby enhancing the overall tourist experience.

The placement or position of signage is crucial in ensuring that tourists can easily access the information they need. Effective signage placement involves strategic positioning at critical locations such as entry points, crossroads, tourist attractions, and facilities like restrooms and eateries. In developing Oehala Waterfall as a tourist destination, the strategic placement of signage can enhance visitor navigation and experience. For example, placing clear and informative signs at the entrance, along the pathways, and at the waterfall can effectively guide visitors and provide necessary information about the site, safety guidelines, and environmental conservation efforts. The placement should also consider visibility and readability. Signs should be placed at eye level and in well-lit areas to ensure they are easily seen and read. In areas with high foot traffic, such as popular tourist attractions, signs should be frequent and repetitive to reinforce the information and guide tourists seamlessly. Community-based tourism development in TTS can benefit from a participatory approach to signage placement. Engaging local communities in the design and placement process ensures that the signs are culturally appropriate and effectively serve the needs of both locals and tourists. This approach aligns with the principles of sustainable tourism development, which emphasize local involvement and empowerment (Adinugraha et al., 2021; Sanam, 2019).

## ***5.2. Sustainable and inclusive tourism practices***

The relationship between sustainable tourism practices, policy, and destination management in Timor Tengah Selatan Regency (TTS) involves a multifaceted approach that integrates environmental, sociocultural, and economic considerations. Sustainable tourism protects a destination's environment and socio-cultural elements while empowering communities. Analyzing local tourism policies and management practices in TTS highlights the alignment with sustainability goals and their impact on the linguistic landscape. The study on the Oehala Waterfall Tourism Development Strategy in South Mollo District reveals significant internal strengths and external opportunities for tourism development despite facing various threats (Tanesab et al., 2023). Sustainable tourism practices that prioritize cultural preservation can help maintain the prominence of local languages, while policies that undervalue cultural heritage may lead to linguistic erosion. Therefore, aligning tourism policies with sustainability goals is crucial for protecting the linguistic landscape and ensuring that tourism development respects and promotes linguistic diversity.

The inclusion or exclusion of marginalized communities in tourism development in Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS) can be examined through various lenses, including community participation, benefit-sharing models, and empowerment strategies. These factors are critical to ensuring that tourism development is inclusive and beneficial to all community members. Research indicates that tourism development can potentially provide significant benefits to local communities. However, the extent of these benefits and the degree of community control over tourism activities can vary widely. The benefits are modest, and

there is a need for more transparent benefit-sharing models. The communities experience economic gains from community-based tourism, but the distribution of these revenues and the control over resources remain complex and contentious (Aquino & Andereck, 2018; Karthik, 2023; Saarinen, 2011). These examples highlight the importance of developing fair and transparent mechanisms for sharing tourism benefits to ensure marginalized communities are not left out. Integrating local voices and practices into tourism is essential for inclusive tourism. Scientific tourism, for example, can facilitate the co-production of sustainable solutions by combining indigenous and scientific knowledge. This approach requires effective boundary organizations that can translate and coordinate across cultural paradigms, promoting sustainability outcomes in Indigenous communities (Buzinde et al., 2020). Similar strategies could be employed in TTS to integrate local knowledge and practices into tourism development, ensuring that the benefits are distributed more equitably and that local communities have a say in managing tourism.

Furthermore, various stakeholders, including government and non-governmental organizations, play important roles in protecting marginalized communities and alleviating poverty, including disabilities (Wardana & Herawan, 2024). For TTS, a similar multi-stakeholder approach could be beneficial in ensuring that tourism development is inclusive and that marginalized communities are not excluded from the benefits. However, challenges remain in achieving inclusive tourism. For example, volunteer tourism in marginalized communities often fails to provide significant benefits beyond the individual contributions of volunteers. This highlights the need for better management actions to enhance the benefits and alleviate negative consequences (Saarinen, 2011). Moreover, creative tourism in poor communities requires the involvement of external entities to provide capital, skills, and resources, which can help develop entrepreneurial initiatives and increase community involvement in tourism (Scheyvens & Biddulph, 2018).

### **5.3. Strategies for enhancing linguistic landscape**

One of the primary strategies for enhancing the linguistic landscape is the implementation of multilingual signage. This calls for using several languages, including English and other foreign languages, as well as local and national languages. Visitors' experience from various linguistic backgrounds is enhanced when the destination has multilingual signage, making navigation easier. Many tourist locations have successfully used this strategy, which has increased their ability to compete globally (Wang et al., 2022). For example, community-based coffee tourism (CbCT) in Puncak (Prihayati & Veriasa, 2021). By empowering the local community to contribute to the linguistic landscape, destinations can ensure that the signs and texts reflect the community's identity and values (Andreyanova, 2021; Mangku et al., 2022). Integrating cultural heritage into the linguistic landscape is essential for preserving the destination's identity. For example, the landscape planning in Heshu village reproduced scenes from famous local poetry, thereby promoting cultural heritage through the linguistic landscape (Li et al., 2021). Similarly, incorporating the local Dawan language and traditional motifs can enhance the destination's cultural appeal in TTS regency.

Adopting eco-friendly sign materials and minimizing intrusive advertisements in TTS is another strategy to help maintain the region's pristine environment. Sustainable tourism practices are also essential for preserving a destination's natural and cultural landscape. This includes promoting eco-friendly signage materials, reducing visual pollution, and ensuring that linguistic elements do not detract from the area's natural beauty, such as in the Banyuwangi Geopark (Hakim et al., 2022).

Besides, understanding tourists' perceptions and preferences is vital for developing an effective linguistic landscape. Research indicates that tourists appreciate landscapes with positive attributes and are deterred by negative features such as neglected environments and industrial views (Aquino & Andereck, 2018). To enhance the tourist experience in TTS, esthetically pleasing and informative signage highlighting the region's natural beauty and cultural attractions is important to enhance the tourist experience in TTS.

In addition, government intervention is necessary to regulate and support the development of the linguistic landscape. This includes setting standards for signage, providing funding for multilingual projects, and ensuring that tourism development aligns with sustainable practices. The government's strategy

of improving attractions, accessibility, and public facilities while promoting sustainability is a model for TTS. Implementing similar policies can help create a cohesive and attractive linguistic landscape.

Several case studies highlight the successful implementation of linguistic landscape strategies in promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism. The development of coffee landscapes in Banyuwangi and the promotion of green tourism in Puncak, Bogor, illustrate the benefits of integrating cultural and natural elements into the linguistic landscape (Prihayati & Veriasa, 2021; Zalloom, 2020). Additionally, the landscape planning in Heshu and Pu'an villages in China demonstrates the importance of preserving local traditions and involving the community in tourism development (Li et al., 2021).

While enhancing the linguistic landscape offers numerous benefits, it also presents challenges. These include the potential for linguistic homogenization, the need for ongoing maintenance, and the risk of cultural commodification. To address these challenges, it is essential to adopt a balanced approach that respects local traditions while accommodating the needs of international tourists. Opportunities for enhancing the linguistic landscape in TTS include leveraging digital technologies, such as mobile apps and QR codes, to provide multilingual information and interactive experiences. Collaborating with local artists and cultural experts can help create unique and culturally significant signage that enhances the destinations.

## 6. Conclusion

The linguistic landscape of tourism destinations represents a critical intersection of language and tourism. This timely and relevant study addresses key issues in tourism development and contributes to the broader understanding of the linguistic landscape as a vital component of tourist destinations. The result shows that the linguistic landscape of public signage in tourism destinations in Timor Tengah Selatan (TTS) regency is a multifaceted issue involving effectiveness, language use, and placement considerations. Effective signage is clear and visible and provides necessary information to a diverse audience. Using multiple languages, including local languages, Bahasa Indonesia, and English, ensures inclusivity and enhances the tourist experience. The strategic placement of signs at critical locations and the involvement of local communities in the process further improve the effectiveness of the signage. By adopting these strategies, TTS can improve its tourism signage, enhance the overall tourist experience, and support sustainable tourism development in the region. Further research is recommended to explore multilingual signage, visitor perception, and digital integration in tourism areas. Community involvement in signage design and longitudinal studies on evolving signage impact would also offer insights. Comparative studies with other regions may reveal best practices, enhancing sustainable tourism through culturally inclusive and engaging linguistic landscapes.

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