

The Linguistic Landscape of Ruteng City: A Study on Shop Signs Owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian Ethnic Groups

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ABSTRACT

The main question in this research is how the shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian communities in Ruteng represent ethnic identity and cultural values, reflect multicultural dynamics, and illustrate the process of acculturation within the public space. The objective of this research is to describe the forms of language representation used in the shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian communities in Ruteng; to identify the cultural values reflected in the language choices and visual appearances of the shop signs; and to analyze how multicultural dynamics and cultural acculturation processes are manifested in the linguistic landscape of Ruteng City. This research used a qualitative approach, utilizing methods of observation, photography, interviews, content analysis, and literature study. The data were analyzed using content and thematic analysis techniques.

The research results show that Indigenous Indonesian store owners tend to choose names and colors based on personal preferences and the concept of modernity. In contrast, Chinese store owners preserve cultural values by selecting names that carry meanings of luck, harmony, and feng shui principles. Chinese ethnic stores tend to have symbolic functions, whereas Indigenous Indonesian stores tend to be informative. The language used in Chinese ethnic stores is monolingual, while Indigenous Indonesian stores use both monolingual and bilingual languages. The multicultural dynamics, viewed through the lens of the linguistic landscape in Ruteng, show an acculturation process characterized by harmonious social integration, where cultural identity is preserved without constraining social interaction. Ruteng City emerges as an example of inclusive and dynamic multiculturalism.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, Store, Chinese, Indigenous Indonesian, Ruteng

INTRODUCTION

The function of language is not only as a tool of communication but also as a marker of a society's social and cultural identity. In the context of multicultural communities, language serves as a symbolic representation of the existence of a group within a social space (Moon, 2018). One of the social spaces that represents such existence is the public space. Within

public spaces, various elements of society interact both visually and symbolically. Several examples can be observed in shop signs, billboards, banners, and other outdoor advertisements. Public space is not neutral. Amid the diversity of symbols used, it becomes an arena where cultural identities are negotiated, affirmed, and even contested. The choice of language, typography, images, and colors in public space media reflects the values, ideologies, and power relations among different ethnic or social groups. Therefore, public spaces can be interpreted as a linguistic landscape that reveals the social and cultural identity of a society.

In a multicultural public space, language appears not only as a medium of verbal communication but also in visual forms throughout various parts of the city. The representation of language visible on shop signs, advertisements, banners, posters, and street signs is part of a phenomenon known as the linguistic landscape. The linguistic landscape (LL) is a field of sociolinguistics that studies the visibility and prominence of languages in public spaces through signs, billboards, and other written displays (Gorter, 2018; Gorter & Cenoz, 2023a)

Indonesia is a multicultural country, which consequently leads to multilingualism. This diversity creates a complex and meaningful linguistic landscape. Within the linguistic landscape of public spaces, these multicultural and multilingual phenomena do not merely illustrate demographic plurality but also serve as a medium through which cultural identities are displayed and negotiated by the audience or readers. Stuart Hall, a cultural theorist and sociologist, views cultural identity as something socially constructed, fluid, and non-inherent. He believes that language is the primary tool in shaping meaning and identity (Moraes, 2019) (Anggraeni & Hidayat, 2020). In this context, shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians reflect expressions of identity through the choice of language, symbols, and other visual elements.

Ruteng is a small city in Eastern Indonesia with a multicultural character. The interaction between local residents and migrants has shaped the ethnic diversity in this city. In addition to the Indigenous Manggarai people as the dominant ethnic group, Ruteng is also inhabited by various ethnic communities from outside the East Nusa Tenggara Province, such as Javanese, Sumatran, Sulawesi, and Balinese. Meanwhile, within the internal regions of East Nusa Tenggara, nearly all ethnic groups contribute to shaping the city's social dynamics, including Bajawa, Ende, Sikka, Larantuka, Adonara, Timor, Sumba, Alor, and others. In addition, the Chinese ethnic community has long settled in Ruteng, even since before Indonesia's independence. The city is also known as a place rich in tolerance, where the predominantly Catholic population lives harmoniously alongside people of other faiths. This ethnic and religious diversity makes Ruteng a tangible example of inclusive multicultural life. In the context of the linguistic landscape, this condition is reflected through the presence of various shop signs and other visual markers owned by merchants from diverse backgrounds, including the Indigenous Manggarai people, Indigenous groups from outside East Nusa Tenggara, and the Chinese ethnic community. Therefore, public spaces in Ruteng serve as an engaging field to study how cultural and linguistic identities are visually and symbolically represented in everyday life.

In the context of a multicultural society, public space serves not only as a place for social interaction but also as a manifestation of cultural identity and linguistic expression. Shop signs are part of the linguistic landscape, containing both visual and verbal messages that represent the owner's identity and the surrounding sociocultural dynamics. Based on this, the research questions are as follows: How are the forms of language representation manifested in the shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng? What cultural values are reflected through the language choices and visual elements of these shop signs? Moreover, how are multicultural dynamics and processes of cultural acculturation reflected in the linguistic landscape of Ruteng City? This study hypothesizes that "the shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng represent the ethnic identities of their owners through language choice and visual elements. This representation also reflects processes of interaction, acceptance, and cultural acculturation within the public spaces of a multicultural city."

Based on these issues, the objectives of this research are as follows: to describe the forms of language representation used in the shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng; to identify the cultural values reflected in the language choices and visual appearances of these shop signs; and to analyze how multicultural dynamics and processes of cultural acculturation are manifested in the linguistic landscape of Ruteng City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic landscape studies examine the visibility and salience of languages displayed in public and commercial spaces within a specific territory or region. These studies focus on written signs such as road signs, advertising billboards, street and place names, shop signs, and public information boards, which symbolically construct social space. Such visual texts reflect the linguistic situation of an area and embody social and cultural meanings. The linguistic landscape is therefore understood as a sociolinguistic field that explores how language use in public spaces reveals underlying social and symbolic phenomena (Ardhian & Soemarlum, 2018; Faizi et al., 2024). This study analyzes linguistic variation, contestation, and domination within society (Ardhian & Soemarlum, 2018; Tresnasari et al., 2022). The linguistic landscape can reveal the ideologies and motives behind the use of certain languages, such as language revitalization, education, or disease prevention (Oktavianus, 2021). To explore this research comprehensively, the theory of geosemiotics also supports this study. The analysis of public signs should consider not only the linguistic aspects but also the layout, symbols, colors, and their social context (Lou, 2016).

The functions of the linguistic landscape consist of two main aspects: the informational function, which serves as a specific marker of the geographical area occupied by a particular language community, and the symbolic function, which represents the most essential dimension in expressing the identity of a specific ethnic group or community (Bourhis et al., 2015).

Texts that constitute the linguistic landscape of a given area may appear in monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual forms, reflecting the linguistic ecology of the space. These signs typically serve both informational and symbolic functions (Gorter, 2018). In addition, public signs are examined within the dichotomy of top-down and bottom-up (Gorter & Cenoz,

2023a). The top-down category refers to linguistic landscape items that are influenced or created by the government, while the bottom-up category refers to linguistic landscape models produced by private individuals.

Meanwhile, Berry's acculturation theory, explains the process of cultural and psychological change that occurs as a result of contact between different cultural groups that interact and influence one another within a shared social space (Nuris & Syahrani, 2021), including through symbolic and linguistic adaptation in public spaces. Therefore, the linguistic landscape not only contains practical information but also reveals the dynamics of identity and cultural acculturation that take place visually within a plural society such as Indonesia.

Linguistic landscape research is a relatively new area within sociolinguistics. Its conceptual origins and early studies have been widely reviewed in recent works, which trace the field's emergence and development from early descriptive studies of public signage to contemporary multimodal approaches (Gorter & Cenoz, 2023a).

The study by Wulansari, D. W. (2020), found that English is the most dominant language used on shop signs in Bali, followed by Indonesian, Balinese script, and Chinese characters. The use of Balinese script reflects efforts to preserve cultural identity amid the growth of tourism (Wulansari, 2020). Another linguistic landscape study in Indonesia was conducted by Pramesti and Hermawan (2024). This study used a linguistic landscape approach to examine the aesthetic functions of shop signs in Nagasaki and Okita Prefectures, which utilized color and font size as tools to attract attention in public spaces (Pramesti & Hermawan, 2024).

This research was conducted in the public spaces of Ruteng. Ruteng is a small city in East Nusa Tenggara with a multicultural context between Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian ethnic groups, which has not been widely studied in the context of the linguistic landscape. The Chinese ethnic community had long settled in this city and was even among the first to open grocery stores. Their shop signs had undergone acculturation but still implicitly preserved their original culture. In addition, this research specifically compared the shop signs owned by the Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian ethnic groups to explore how their cultural identities were represented through language choice, visual design, and communication strategies. This research presented a new perspective in linguistic landscape studies by highlighting the construction of ethnic identity through shop signs in a multicultural small city and linking it to the dynamics of cultural acculturation in Eastern Indonesia.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach, utilizing methods of observation, photography, interviews, content analysis, and literature study. The purpose was to understand the representation of ethnic identity and multicultural dynamics by analyzing the context, meaning, and visual elements in shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng. The qualitative approach in linguistic landscape studies generally highlights signs within their local contexts in depth, including the identity of the sign makers and users, as well as the historical context that influences them (Gorter & Cenoz, 2023b). Qualitative research is often used in linguistic landscape studies to examine how languages interact within multilingual societies (Couffignal & Jourde, 2015). The research procedure began

with data collection through photographs of shop signs, which were then analyzed based on linguistic and visual aspects. This data collection process was often complemented by interviews, observations, questionnaires, or policy document analysis (Gorter & Cenoz, 2023b). This research used direct observation, store sign photography, interviews, content analysis, and literature study methods. Data collection was conducted over a period of 14 days, focusing on 121 shop signs located in the city center of Ruteng and its surrounding areas. This location was chosen because it represents ethnic diversity and dense economic activity, making it a strategic area for observing expressions of identity within public spaces (Lune & Berg, 2017). Data analysis in this research was carried out using content analysis and thematic analysis techniques (Lune & Berg, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). Data obtained from shop signs, interviews, and observations were coded based on themes of language, visual elements, and cultural symbols. Subsequently, the data were analyzed to identify the relationship between language, ethnic identity, and multicultural dynamics within the linguistic landscape of Ruteng City.

RESULTS

Reporting Research Results

The number of Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian stores predominantly used store names in Indonesian, English, local languages, or a combination of these. The following are examples of store names owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian ethnic groups.

Table 1. Chinese-Owned Stores

No.	Store Name	Type of Store	Dominant Language/Color
1	Toko Tani Selamat	Agricultural Store	Indonesian / Red–Yellow–Blue
2	Toko Sejati	General Store	Indonesian / Blue–Red–White
3	Toko Sejahtera	General Store	Indonesian / Blue–Red
4	Toko Agung	General Store	Indonesian / Blue–White–Red
5	Toko Sentosa	General Store	Indonesian / White–Blue
6	Toko Utama	Shoe Store	Indonesian / Red–Green
7	Swalayan Sentosa Raya	Supermarket	Indonesian / Red–White
8	Nirwana Pasaraya	Modern Market	Indonesian / Red–Yellow
9	UD Laris	Trading Business	Indonesian / Red–Black–Green
10	Apotek Tiga-Tiga	Pharmacy/Health Store	Indonesian / Red–Pink
11	Toko 555	Building Store	Numbers (Chinese Symbol) / White–Blue
12	Toko Jaya Plastik Tiga-Tiga	Plastic/General Store	Indonesian / Yellow–Brown
13	Toko Sejahtera	General Store	Indonesian / Blue–Orange
14	Toko Agung	General Store	Indonesian / Blue–White
15	Toko Sentosa	General Store	Indonesian / White–Blue



Figure 1. Chinese-Owned Store

Table 2. Indigenous Indonesian-Owned Stores

No.	Store Name	Type of Store	Dominant Language/Color
1	Duta Elektronik	Electronics	Indonesian / Green-White
2	Duta Celluler	Telecommunications/Mobile	Indonesian / Blue-White
3	Duta Mode	Clothing/Fashion	Indonesian / Yellow-Red
4	Duta Music	Music/Musical Instruments	Indonesian / Red-Blue
5	Raja Fashion	Clothing/Fashion	Indonesian / Brown-Blue
6	Ongkor's Salon	Salon/Beauty	English / Orange-White
7	Toko Yuli	Sandals & Accessories	Indonesian / White-Pink
8	Toko Elim	General (Shop Building)	Indonesian / Red-Yellow
9	Pinky Lovely	Cosmetics & Skincare	English / Pink-Black
10	Pas Keta Coffee	Cafe/Culinary	English / White-Black
11	Ca Nai Barbershop	Barbershop	English / White-Gray
12	Toko Sepatu Hero	Shoe Store	Indonesian / White-Blue



Figure 2. Indigenous Indonesian-Owned Store

DISCUSSION

The forms of language representation in the shop signs owned by Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng can be explained as follows. There are four patterns observed in the naming of stores owned by the Chinese ethnic group.

- 1) Linguistic Practice. Stores owned by the Chinese ethnic group in Ruteng generally use monolingual language, primarily Indonesian, as seen in names such as Sentosa and Sejahtera, or local languages, such as *Motang Rua*. In addition, there are bilingual forms that combine Manggarai and Indonesian, such as *Wae Laku* (where "wae" means water in the Manggarai language, and "laku" means prosperous in Indonesian). Another linguistic practice is the bottom-up approach, meaning that the language forms are independently created and chosen by business owners without direct involvement from the authorities (government).
- 2) Positive Meaning Names as Representations of Hope and Cultural Identity. Names such as *Agung*, *Nirwana*, *Sejati*, *Sejahtera*, *Sentosa*, *Selamat*, *Utama*, and *Laris* demonstrate the tendency of Chinese store owners in Ruteng to choose words with positive meanings that convey hopes for success, prosperity, and business continuity. This also reflects a symbolic business strategy commonly found within Chinese communities. In the context of the linguistic landscape, shop signs function as representations of identity rather than merely sources of information. Language in public spaces carries a symbolic function that signifies the presence and existence of specific social groups (Gorter, 2018). Furthermore, positive diction can be understood as a performative form of language (Surya Prasetya et al., 2022), in which the Chinese ethnic group believes that the meaning of words can attract fortune and build a positive image.

Table 3. The Meaning of Diction in Chinese Store Names

Store Name	Meaning	Relevance to <i>Feng Shui</i> /Chinese Culture
Sejahtera	Prosperity, well-being	Financial fortune and a harmonious life.
Sejati	Authenticity, sincerity	Harmony with moral values and honesty in business.
Agung	Great, magnificent, noble	Symbolizes glory and success, similar to the concept of "大" (<i>dà</i>) in Mandarin, which means great and powerful.
Selamat	Safety, good fortune	Similar to the concept of "吉" (<i>jí</i>), which means luck and happiness.
Nirwana	Ultimate happiness	Related to the concept of heaven and eternal joy, resembling the idea of harmonious living in Chinese culture.
Sentosa	Safe, peaceful, prosperous	Safety and blessing, consistent with feng shui principles that emphasize balance and harmony.

Utama	The best, the most important	Aligns with the philosophy of success and striving to be the foremost in business.
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In Chinese culture, the selection of business names is often influenced by *feng shui*, a practice aimed at creating balance and attracting positive energy (*qi*). A good name is believed to bring good fortune, prosperity, and smooth business operations. *Feng shui*, an ancient Chinese practice, emphasizes the organization of the environment to create harmony and balance (Ng et al., 2015). Harmony can also be reflected through pronunciation and sound.

- 3) Names Using Numbers. Numbers hold deeply symbolic meanings in Chinese culture. For instance, the numbers 5 and 3 are often associated with luck and harmony. A name such as *Tiga-Tiga* (which means *Three-Three*) may symbolize stability or convey a deeper personal significance.

Number Symbolism in Chinese Culture. The Chinese have a strong belief in numbers; for instance, they consider odd numbers lucky. When presenting hampers, the items should be in even numbers, but they always avoid the number 4 because it symbolizes death (Halim et al., 2023). Harmony, such as homophony (similarity in sound) in their language, is also taken into consideration. For example, the number 3 (*sān*) is a homophone of (*shēng* – life, growth); “9” (*jiǔ*) and (*jiǔ*) mean eternity.

In this study, the numbers 1, 3, and 5 were found. The number 1 (*yī*) can mean beginning, singularity, or uniqueness. In business, it may signify excellence. The number 5 (*wǔ*), in some contexts, symbolizes balance because there are five elements in Chinese philosophy (water, wood, fire, earth, and metal). The number 3 holds many important meanings, such as the sun, moon, and stars, or it may represent heaven, earth, and humankind, which are three essential components of life. Lastly, it can also be associated with the context of *Tingjing*, which refers to the meanings of father, son, and grandson, symbolizing three generations within a family (Yu, 2015).

- 4) Names with Catholic Religious Elements. Flores, including Ruteng, has a predominantly Catholic population (Lon & Widyawati, 2020). This also influences the Chinese ethnic community that has long been engaged in trade in Ruteng. Store names such as *Hosana* (meaning praise), *Gloria* (meaning glory), and *Berkat* (meaning blessing) reflect the cultural acculturation between the Chinese community and the local majority religion in Ruteng (Catholicism). This can also be seen as a form of cultural assimilation that strengthens the bonds among people of different backgrounds.
- 5) Locally or Regionally Based Names. Store names such as *Motang Rua* (the name of a local hero from Manggarai) and *Wae Laku* (meaning “profitable water” or “water that sells”) serve as symbols of openness, acceptance, and the desire to build a sense of belonging to the local culture. This represents a subtle yet meaningful form of acculturation. It can be said that ethnic identity no longer stands alone but instead engages in dialogue and blends with the local identity.
- 6) Store Sign Colors. This research focuses only on the dominant colors used. The dominant colors of Chinese-owned stores are red, blue, and yellow. The meaning of the color red for the Chinese ethnic group is believed to be associated with happiness, luck,

and good fortune (Halim et al., 2023; Kurnia & Kurniawan, 2016). In addition to red, the color gold is also frequently used by the Chinese ethnic community in various events. The color gold or yellow symbolizes beauty, neutrality, prosperity, and good luck (Streit, 2017). Dark blue, as an element of water and earth, represents tranquility. These are calming colors that reflect relaxation, peace, trust, adventure, and exploration (Halim et al., 2023)



Figure 3. Chinese Ethnic Stores in Color

In this research, four naming patterns of Indigenous Indonesian stores were identified, reflecting different cultural backgrounds, identities, and communication strategies within the public spaces of Ruteng. The Indigenous Indonesian groups consist of Javanese, Makassarese, Bimanese, and Padang ethnicities. Other Indigenous store owners are local residents, namely the Manggarai ethnic group.

1. Language Practice. Stores owned by Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng use both monolingual and bilingual language forms. Examples of monolingual Indonesian names can be seen in stores such as *Duta Elektronik*, while monolingual English names appear in stores like *Hero*. Monolingual Manggarai names, such as *Ca Nai* (meaning “one heart”), are also found. Bilingual forms are found in names such as *Pas Keta Caffe*, which combines Manggarai (*pas keta* meaning “very fitting”) with a foreign language (*caffe*), as well as in *Duta Music*, *Raja Fashion*, and others. This variation reflects flexible communication strategies that adapt to local identities, global trends, and personal connections. Another linguistic practice is the bottom-up approach, meaning that the language forms are independently created and chosen by business owners without direct involvement from authorities (government).
2. Generic Symbolic Patterns. Store names such as *Duta Mode*, *Duta Celluler*, *Istana Mode*, *Zona Store*, and *Raja Fashion* illustrate this pattern through the use of symbolic and generic words that carry nationalistic or majestic nuances (*Duta*, *Istana*, *Raja*, *Zona*), combined with specific words describing the type of business (*Mode*, *Celluler*, *Store*, *Fashion*). This naming style aims to convey a formal, grand, and professional impression. Such name choices can be seen as reinforcing a credible business identity and demonstrating the store’s social status in the minds of local consumers.

In addition, the use of English in names such as *Pinky Lovely*, *Hero*, and *Zona Store* demonstrates an effort to attract a younger and more modern market. These names convey a sense of contemporary trends, urban lifestyle, and connectedness with the outside world. Although used by Indigenous Indonesians, this pattern indicates that

global culture has permeated local business identities and become part of the way enterprises are presented in public spaces. This reflects a model of local cultural acculturation toward something more global.

3. Personal Name Pattern. *Toko Yuli*, *Toko Alinda*, *Toko Elim*, and *Ongkor's Salon* represent a pattern that is not found in Chinese-owned stores. This pattern reflects the personal relationship between the owner and their business. Such names typically indicate trust in individual reputation, closeness with customers, and businesses established based on family relationships. This creates the impression that the store is part of the community and approachable, thereby fostering loyalty based on social relations.
4. Local Language Pattern. *Toko Ca Nai* and *Pas Keta Caffé* differ slightly from the previous three patterns. Native residents of Ruteng generally own stores that use names in the local Manggarai language. The choice of these names represents pride in local cultural identity. The use of local language serves as a strong marker of ethnic identity and demonstrates an active form of participation within Ruteng's cultural space. For the Manggarai people, maintaining local names in public spaces helps build a sense of belonging amid the changing times.
5. Store Sign Colors. In choosing colors for shop signs, stores owned by Indigenous Indonesians in Ruteng seem to prioritize personal concepts or business themes rather than adherence to specific cultural symbols. There are no particular rules or traditions that require the selection of certain colors to convey the symbolic meanings of local culture. On the contrary, color selection tends to be pragmatic and is adjusted to the product image or target market. For example, *Pinky Lovely* store chooses pink as the dominant color because it sells cosmetic products, with women as its main target consumers. This means that colors are chosen not to represent cultural values but to enhance the store's visual appeal in accordance with the characteristics of the business being operated.



Figure 4. Indigenous Indonesian Shop Signs in Color

The research results indicate that non-local Indigenous store owners, specifically migrants from outside Manggarai, do not use the local language when naming their stores. In contrast, the use of the local language is found only in stores owned by native Manggarai residents and the Chinese community. This finding indicates that local identity is more strongly

internalized by the native population and the Chinese community, who have long settled in Ruteng.

Multicultural dynamics and processes of cultural acculturation are manifested in the linguistic landscape of Ruteng City. The Chinese tradition of choosing store names is highly philosophical and filled with inherited symbolic considerations. The success of the Chinese ethnic group in trade has been associated with their ability to adapt socially and culturally while maintaining their cultural symbols (Nur, 2019). In terms of economy and branding, Chinese business owners in Indonesia often use such names because they are easily accepted by Indonesian society, continue to reflect values of good fortune without directly using the Mandarin language, and help avoid stigma.

Meanwhile, many Indigenous (non-Manggarai) store owners appear to be more pragmatic, choosing names that are considered “attractive,” “modern,” or “pleasant to hear,” without a strong attachment to cultural symbolism. This is also related to the relatively shorter period they have been engaged in trade in Ruteng, meaning that their cultural acculturation process has not been as extensive as that of the Chinese community. In addition, differences in religious backgrounds also play a significant role, as most Indigenous (non-Manggarai) store owners are Muslim. Their bonds are also very strong due to shared religious backgrounds. Meanwhile, the Chinese community is generally Catholic, the same as the native Manggarai people, which makes the process of cultural assimilation easier. However, these religious differences do not lead to intolerance; instead, they reflect a tendency for acculturation in store naming based on shared backgrounds. The small city of Ruteng thus serves as a tangible example of harmony and tolerance within a multicultural society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the language used, it can be concluded that Chinese ethnic stores tend to have a symbolic function, while Indigenous Indonesian stores tend to be informative, although the opposite also occurs in some cases. The languages used by both Chinese and Indigenous Indonesian communities are in monolingual and bilingual forms. In addition, their linguistic practice follows a bottom-up approach, meaning that it is created based on the creativity of business owners without government involvement.

This research found that within the linguistic landscape of Ruteng City, Indigenous Indonesian store owners chose store names and colors based more on personal preferences and the concept of modernity, without a strong attachment to traditional cultural symbols. In contrast, Chinese-descendant store owners maintained their cultural values.

Differences in language choices for store names among the Manggarai Indigenous group, the Chinese community, and other migrants in Ruteng can be understood through the lens of Berry's acculturation theory (Nuris & Syahrani, 2021), it state the use of local naming by the Manggarai people and part of the Chinese community reflects a tendency toward the integration model, which emphasizes maintaining one's own cultural identity while actively engaging within a multicultural society. In contrast, the use of modern and global names by non-Manggarai store owners tends to show assimilation, in which the original cultural identity becomes less visible, replaced by new symbols that are more universal and commercially appealing. This phenomenon demonstrates that the linguistic landscape of

Ruteng is not only an economic space but also a reflection of a living and interconnected cultural dynamic.

The multicultural dynamics in Ruteng City show signs of acculturation manifested in the form of harmonious social integration. Although each ethnic group, both Chinese and Indigenous Indonesians, maintains its own cultural identity, the interaction between these groups has successfully created mutually supportive social relationships. This reflects a city capable of combining traditional values with social and economic innovation, proving that Ruteng City is a tangible example of multiculturalism that is not only tolerant but also grows inclusively.

LIMITATION

Every research study has limitations that need to be honestly acknowledged. These limitations are not intended to weaken the research findings but to serve as a critical reflection on the scope and approach used in this study. The limitations of this research are as follows. This study was conducted only in the small city of Ruteng, which has a limited number of stores. Therefore, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to other cities in Indonesia that have different multicultural contexts. In addition, this study focused more on store owners and did not involve the perspectives of the general public or consumers regarding how they interpret shop signs. This research also did not include temporal analysis or examine changes in shop signs over time.

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