# THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (2020-2025)

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**ABSTRACT**

Linguistic landscape is commonly found in public spaces through signs, information, boards, posters, directional signs, and other visual displays. In the context of education, these displays become part of students' daily learning experiences and may influence how they interact with their surroundings. Previous studies have discussed linguistic landscape in relation to multilingualism and language learning. However, its role in supporting inclusive education has receive less attention. This study aims to explore how lingusitic landscape supports inclusive education based on studies published between 2020 and 2025. A systematic literature review was chosen using the PRISMA framework. Ten articles were selected based on inclusion criteria and analyze the contribution of linguistic landscape to inclusive educational practices. The results show that linguistic landscape supports inclusive education in several ways. It reflects inclusive values and policies within educational settings, improves accessibility through visual, tactile, and navigational resources. these findings suggest that linguistic landscape can be used as a resource to create learning environments that are more inclusive, assessible, and responsive to the needs of diverse learners.
**Keyword**: accessibility, inclusive education, linguistic landscape

## INTRODUCTION

Schools today serve students with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning needs. This diversity makes the school environment an important aspect of the educational process. In this context school are expected to provide a learning environment where all students feel accepted, supported, and able to participate in learning activities. However, creating such an environment remains a challenge in many educataional settings. Some students still experience barriers that limit their participation and learning opportunities. According to UNESCO (2023), a supportive learning environment contributes to students' cognitive, social, and emotional development. In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education also emphasizes the importance of promoting inclusiveness, and respect for diversity in educational settings (Kemdikbud, 2022). This principles are related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all learners.

In this context, inclusive education is not limited to students with disabilities. It also includes learners with different cultural backgrounds, language differences, learning difficulties, and various social conditions (Ainscow, 2020; Padmadewi, Artini, et al., 2024). Creating an inclusive environment is influenced by many factors, including teaching practices and the physical environment. Elements such as visual design, space organization, language use, and symbolic representations can affect students' sense of belonging , identity, comfort, and participation in learning activities.

One aspect of the school environment is linguistic landscape (LL). Landry and Bourhis (1997) introduced this concept to describe the use of language in public spaces through signs, posters, and various other visual representations. In an educational context, this concept extends beyond the study of written signs. Gorter (2018) introduced the concept of the schoolscape, which views the visual and linguistic elements in schools as representations of institutional identity, cultural values, and language ideology. From this perspective, the linguistic landscape becomes part of the learning environment that shapes students' daily experiences.

Various studies show that the linguistic landscape can support the learning process in various ways. Gorter and Cenoz (2017) suggest that the presence of multiple languages in the school environment can support language learning and strengthen students' linguistic identities. Bernado-Hinesley (2020) also found that the presence of multiple languages helps acknowledge students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, Malinowski (2020) states that visual messages displayed in schools influence how students perceive language, language users, and their own positions as learners. These findings suggest that L can contribute to creating a learning environment that values diversity.

Linguistic landscape is not only related to language learning but can also contribute to inclusive education. In the context of education, signs, visual symbols, simplified texts, and navigation systems can make information easier to access, especially for students who depend on visual support or experience difficulties in processing information (Evans & Boucher, 2015). The presence of multilingual signs may also help students from different linguistic backgrounds feel acknowledged and welcomed within the school community (Paris et al., 2017). In this way, linguistic landscape can support the creation of learning environments that are accessible and inclusive for learners.

Studies on inclusive education in Indonesia have mostly focused on factors such as teacher attitudes, empathy, and social cultural values (Padmadewi et al., 2024; Padmadewi et al., 2024;Situmorang & Pipit, 2025). These studies have contributed to a beter understanding of how inclusive practices can be implemented in schools. However, less attention has been give to the role of linguistic landscape as part of the learning environment. As a result, there is still a need to explore how linguistic landscape can support accessibility, represent diversity, and encourage the participation of students in inclusive

Many studies published between 2020 and 2025 have discussed linguistic landscape, especially in relation to multilingualism and language learning. However, only a few studies have discuss at lingusitic landscape from the perspective of inclusive education. As a result, there is still limited information about how linguistic landscape can support inclusive learning environments. To fill this gap, this study explore studies related to linguistic landscape and inclusive education published between 2020 and 2025. The review was conducted using the PRISMA framework. This study focuses on answering the following question: How is linguistic landscape used to support inclusive education practices during the 2020-2025 period?

## METHOD

This study uses a Systematic Literature review (SLR) approach to examine how the linguistic landscape is disscussed in supporting inclusive education practices during the period 2020-2025. This approach was chosen because it allows a clear and organized process of identifying, selecting, and reviewing relevant in a transparent manner. To report the article selection process, this study follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) guidelines, as outlined by Page et al., (2021). The PRISMA guidelines was used to outline the review process and illustrate of article identification, screening, and inclusion.

(a) Data collection technique

The articles included in this review were collected from three databases: Google Scholar, ERIC, and ScienceDirect. The search was limited to publications from 2020 to 2025 in order to capture the recent studies related to linguistic landscape and inclusive education. Keywords were arranged using Boolean operators, such as "linguistic landscape" OR "schoolscape" AND "inclusive education" OR "inclusion" OR "accessibility" OR "diversity." At the initial stage, broader terms including education, multilingualism, and social inclusion were also used to ensure that relevant studies were not missing, especially those that did not

explicitly mention inclusive education. Through this search process, a total of 88 articles were identified. These articles were then filtered using predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine those that were relevant to the focus of the study.

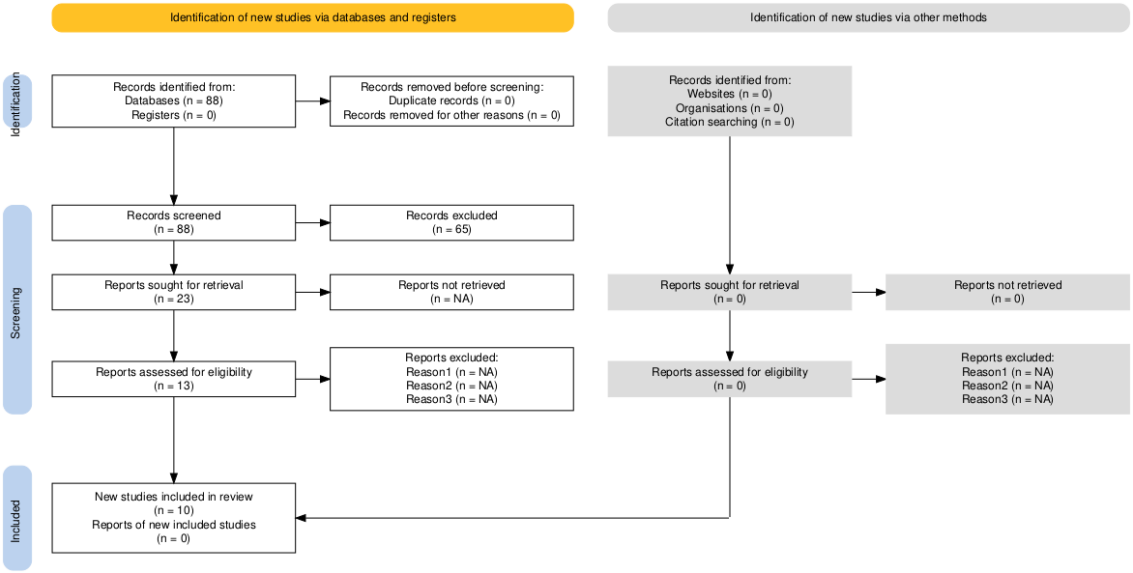



**Figure 1.** Visual representation of the search and selection process basen on (Page et al., 2021)

**Table 1.** Inclusion and exclusion criteria

| Inclusion criteria | Exclusion criteria |
|---|---|
| Discusses linguistic landscape, schoolscape, or visual linguistic phenomena in educational context | Discusses linguistic landscape in non educational context |
| Related to inclusivity, diversity, accessibility, social representation, or student participation | Not related to inclusivity issues, wheter pedagogical, social, or policy-related |
| Full text articles are available and accessible | Full text articles are not available or cannot be accessed |
| Published between 2020-2025 | Published outside the 2020-2025 |

(b) Data analysis

In this study, Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure that the selected articles were aligned with the research focus. After the initial screening, 23 articles that were reviewed in full to determine their final eligibility. During this stage, each article was examined by considering the depth of its discussion, the clarity of the educational contexts, and its relevance to understanding how the linguistic landscape supports inclusive education practices. The full- text reviewed indicated 13 articles did not meet the inclusion criteria because their discussion was too general, lacked empirical evidence or relevant analysis. As a result, 10 articles were identified as suitable and were included for further analysis in this review.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The results of a systematic review of ten articles thoroughly evaluated and meeting inclusion criteria indicate that LL are used in inclusive education in various forms and roles. Overall, LL is not only used as a visual tool in the classroom. Instead, it aids in language learning and multicultural understanding, increases accessibility for students with special needs, and communicate diversity. The results show that LL actively influences students' learning experiences, social interactions, and access to a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.

**Table 2**. Overview of studies included in this systematic review

| No | Author & Year | Method | Context | Main Findings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (Ruffin, 2025) | Qualitative study | Higher education | Linguistic landscape reflects changing institutional commitments to diversity and inclusivity. Changes in language and symbol related to DEI indicate ideological and policy shifts, not only visual changes. |
| 2 | (Hossain, 2024) | Literature review | English language learning | Cultural elements present in the learning environment play an important role in creating inclusive language learning. The linguistic landcape can be a means of instilling cultural values that influence student engagement. |
| 3 | (Hu, 2022) | Qualitative study | Inclusive education for people with visual impairment | Element such as tactile signs, spatial markers, navigation systems, and Braille-based information are important parts of an inclusive learning environment that supports student independence and safety. |
| 4 | (Awang et al., 2024) | Qualitative study | Special needs | Although inclusive education policies have been developed, limited resurces and implementation gaps still hinder the realization of a disability-friendly linguistic landscape, especially in rural areas. |
| 5 | (Dean-scott & Haber-curran, 2025) | Qualitative study | Higher education | Anti-DEI policies have an impact on language use on campus and inclusivity. The |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | linguistic landscape is an indicator of institutional values and power relations in higher education. |
| 6 | (Fernée & Trimmis, 2020) | Case study | Refugee and asylum-seeking learners | Student engagement in exploring the linguistic landscape of the city, combined with a drama approach, helps in second language acquisition and strengthens a sense of belonging and social inclusion. |
| 7 | (Yavuz et al., 2024) | Quantitative study | Public and educational spaces | Lingusitic landscape is dominated by national and global languages, so that minority languages are less visible and influence perceptions of language validity in the context of education. |
| 8 | (Prasatyo et al., 2025) | Qualitative study | Higehr education | Students have a positive attitude toward regional languages but their use of these languages in academic context remain very limited, indicating a gap between attitude and practice. |
| 9 | (Suejam et al., 2025) | Action research | ELICOS classroom | The use of linguistic landscape as a learning medium increase students' awareness of multiingualism and helps develop language skills through exposure to language in real life. |
| 10 | (Al-jarf, 2021) | Classroom based study | Students studying abroad | The use of linguistic landscape in English language teaching helps develop vvocabulary, reading comprehension, and contextual language use. |

The table above summarizes the ten articles analyzed in this systematic literature review. The information presented includes the author's name and year publication, research design, study context, and key findings related to the use of LL in supporting inclusive education practices. All of these articles were published between 2020 and 2025, indicating that studies on LL in the field of inclusive education are still relatively new and continue to develop, in line with the increasing attention to issues of diversity, accessibility, and equity in education. In general, the findings from the ten articles show that LL has been used to support inclusive education practices in various forms and functions. Although its application is

influenced by the social context, education policies and the availability of resources in each region.

**Discussion**

This comprehensive evaluation shows that the learning environment LL should be considered part of the learning environment rather than just an additional decoration or visual display in the classroom in inclusive education. Of the ten articles evaluated, LL appears to strongly support the value of inclusion, ensuring that students with special needs can participate, and creating a language learning space through interaction with real texts in their surroundings. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), the linguistic landscape reflects social identity and power relations in public spaces. In education, the learning environment can influence whether students feel accepted and engaged in the learning process.

Institutional commitment is very important for achieving justice, especially in terms of policy design and the learning environment, according to recent discussions on inclusive education Singh et al., (2024). In situations like this, LL can be considered part of everyday school practices that convey shared values, show who is enrolled, and point the way forward for education. One piece of evidence about how ideology is embedded in these practices is the changes that occur in language, symbols, and public discourse on campus after the implementation of anti-DEI policies. As demonstrated by Ruffin (2025) as well as Dean-scott and Haber-curran (2025), the changes in language, symbols, and public discourse on campus following the implementation of anti-DEI policies indicate a deeper ideological shift than merely visual changes. This perspective support Shohamy (2006) idea of the linguistic landscape as a de facto language policy, where ideology is manifested through everyday actions in the broader educational context.

This review emphasizes the difference between inclusive practices and symbolic representation. The existence of inclusive educational practices does not always mean the existence of inclusive symbols or terms. This is in line with the idea put forward by Ainscow (2020) that inclusive education is a long-term systemic transformation process. Padmadewi et al., 2024) found that when the learning process is carried out reflectively and contextually in real classroom experiences, prospective teachers better understand inclusive education. This shows that inclusive values are not only represented symbolically; they must also be included in institutional culture, educational practices, and consistent support systems.

LL is very important for improving accessibility, especially for students with disabilities. Studies by Hu (2022) and Awang et al., (2024) found that the independence, sense of security, and spatial orientation of students with visual impairments were improved by tactile markers, spatial navigation systems, and Braille-based information. These results align with research conducted by with Dewi et al., (2025), which emphasizes that environmental readiness and support systems are vital for the success of inclusive programs for students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Kurniawati (2020) also found that a learning approach enabled a student with ASD to participate more actively in the learning process. In such situations, LL should be considered an important component of educational infrastructure that supports the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which aims to accommodate student diversity from the outset.

The use of language in inclusive classrooms demonstrates the importance of an adaptive environment. According to research conducted by Tobing et al., (2026) and Duniangella et al., (2024) visual aids, concrete materials, and multimodal approaches are important components in teaching students with English language hearing impairments. These results demonstrate the function of LL as a visual resource that can be used to increase student participation, reduce communication barriers, and create a more welcoming classroom

environment. Therefore, LL not only conveys information but also serves as a learning aid that helps students feel safe and engaged.

LL has the potential to be used in education as a relevant and contextual learning resource. According Padmadewi et al., (2023), the application of LL in project-based learning improves students' language skills, character values, and active engagement. ELICOS has a similar pattern (Al-jarf, 2021; Suejam et al., 2025), where language proficiency, multilingual awareness, and identity reflection are strengthened by interacting with authentic texts in the surrounding environment. Furthermore, community-based and cultural heritage approaches emphasize LL as a tool for social empowerment, especially for vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers and refugees who face issues of belonging and identity (Fernée & Trimmis, 2020).

From a sociolinguistic and critical education perspective, LL also reflects power relations and language hierarchies that impact educational equity. Studies by Yavuz et al., (2024) and Prasatyo et al., (2025) show that the dominance of certain languages in public and academic spaces results in low visibility for minority languages. These findings are closely connected to the concept of a culturally responsive learning environment (Hossain, 2024) and a peace education approach that emphasizes open dialogue, diversity, and social justice (Mahayanti et al., 2025). In this context, LL can serve as a symbolic medium for instilling the values of diversity, dialogue, and social cohesion in education.

This review shows that LL supports inclusive education in three main areas: inclusive ideology and values are represented, the learning environment is accessible, and pedagogical practices promote social inclusion and multilingual awareness. However, the success of LL depends on the sociopolitical context, institutional commitment, resource availability, and its integration with pedagogical practices and other support systems. As a result, LL cannot be considered, independent approach, but rather an essential comoponent of a systematic and long-term commitment to achieving equitable, inclusive, and sustainable education.

## CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic review of ten articles published between 2020 and 2025, this study shows that LL plays an important role in supporting inclusive education through various functions. The existence of LL in schools and universities not only provides visual information but also reflects the values ideology, and level of institutional commitment to the principle of inclusivity. In addition, LL has a clear practical function in improving the accessibility and independence of students with special needs, for example through the use of clear visual, directional signage, and the presentation of easily understandable information. From a pedagogical perspective, LL also has great potential, especially in language learning, as it allows students to develop multilingual awareness while strengthening social inclusion through direct engagement with language practices present in everyday life. The main strength of this study is the application of a systematic literature review method conducted in a structured manner with reference to the PRISMA guidelines, so that the process of searching, selecting, analyzing articles can be carried out transparently and systematically, and placing LL specifically in the framework of inclusive education, which is still relatively rarely discussed, especially in the context of education in Indonesia. However, this study has limitations, including the limited number of articles analyzed, most of which were from overseas contexts, so that the findings need to be interpreted carefully when applied to the local context, as well as methodological limitations because it was not possible to directly observe LL practices in the field. Therefore, future research is recommended to empirically examine the implementation of LL in inclusive schools, especially in Indonesia, involving the perspective teachers, students, and school administrators, while in practical terms, the findings of this study indicate that LL can be used by educators that supports the participation of all students, so that

LL is no longer seen only as a visual element, but as a strategic component in realizing inclusive education.

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