Linguistic Landscape: Forms and Functions of Signs on Khaosan Road, Thailand

Atichat Rungswang
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand
Email: atichat.ru@kmitl.ac.th

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Abstracts

This study explored linguistic landscape (LL) of Khaosan road, focusing on language use and functions of shop signs. A mixed-method approach was employed by collecting shop signs, categorizing, and conducting in-depth interviews with shop owners. 68 shop signs were collected and 5 shop owners including tattoo, bar, restaurant, souvenir, and jewelry were recruited for the in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that English was immensely used in all aspects. For language use, bilingual signs, English-Thai signs, were found the most followed by English-only signs. Interestingly, Thai-only sign, that is a language of community, was not found at all at Khaosan road. For language functions, using a pair of English and Thai was mostly used to show shop names and English-only information was most frequently used in telling shops' details and services. Additionally, the qualitative results obtained from in-depth interviews demonstrated the significances of English that can be divided into three themes: *a well perceived and understood language*, *internationalization* and *national identity and authenticity*. Finally, this study discussed how and why English was predominantly used to promote the place.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape (LL); English as an international language; Khaosan road, image of place

Introduction

According to the report on world tourism barometer by the World Tourism Organization or UNWTO (2020), in 2019, Thailand was ranked as 8th of most visited destinations by international tourist arrivals (39.8 million) and 2nd in Asia-Pacific. When considering international tourism receipts, Thailand was ranked as 4th of the top ten tourism earners for the year 2019 (60.5 US$ billion) and 1st in Asia-Pacific. From the Thailand's remarkable rank, it is undoubted that tourism is an economic contributor to Thailand. In addition to this, Bangkok of Thailand has been recently ranked as 8th of travelers' the best 25 destinations in the world of 2021 from Tripadvisor.

Among many attractive tourist destinations in Thailand, Khaosan road is well recognized among backpackers or budget travelers. It is a street filled up with bars, food stands, local souvenir shops and cheap accommodations which attract backpackers from every corner of the world. For backpackers, it is also known as a transit hub to other regions of Thailand. Here on Khaosan road, they can grab a beer and some banana pancakes at all hours of the day. People visiting Khaosan road are always excited by seeing spectacular things such as crowd gathering on the street, sound of beat-up songs and tons of colorful and flashing signs along the street as shown in Figure 1. A newcomer relies on shop signs leading to where to eat or

where to hang out. With this reason, languages, colors, and pictures are potentially used to create shop signs in order to attract shop owner's target customers.

Tourist areas are dubbed as intersectional spaces of demanding languages. Actually, the establishment of tourist areas are influenced by linguistic landscape of those areas (Bruyei-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2009; Moriarty, 2015; Thongtong, 2016). Languages are employed to promote tourism and are considered as an essential source of information for the prospective tourists. Moreover, according to Salim, Ibrahim and Hassan (2012), Languages used in the tourist spaces seem to be a factor encouraging travelers in decision-making of the destination they would like to travel to.

Figure 1 Colorful and flashing shop signs along the Khaosan road

Shop signs in the tourist space have been clearly a research object explored in linguistic landscape studies. Scholars have investigated shop signs in Bangkok, and outside Bangkok to uncover language diversity, language trends, and language situation. Furthermore, studies of linguistic landscape and tourism have shed light on an understanding of how language and tourism are related and how cultural perspectives and other identities in touristy destinations are presented. However, there has been no evidence that shop signs on Khaosan road are investigated through the lens of linguistic landscape. Therefore, this study employs a mixed-method design to investigate linguistic diversity as well as the purposes of language use of shop signs on Khaosan road.

Research Objectives

In order to investigate forms and functions of signs on Khaosan road, two objectives were set as guidelines, along with the two purposed research questions. The objectives were to investigate the language use and the purposes of language use of shop signs on the main road of Khaosan area. Two purposed research questions are stated below.

1. What is the language use of shop signs on the main road of Khaosan area?

2. What are the purposes of language use of shop signs on the main road of Khaosan area?

Literature Review

Linguistic landscape

Linguistic landscape or also known as LL has widely defined by scholars. LL is the analysis of language in the public space (Backhaus, 2007; Bruyel-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2015; Huebner, 2006; Kasanga, 2012; Siricharoen, 2016). Originally, Landry and Bourhis (1997) defined LL as:

> The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. (p. 25)

They also explained further the term LL as "visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 23). Regarding the definition, the range of objects is expanded to include graffiti (Pennycook, 2009) and the language of tourist post cards (Jaworski, 2010 : 569-594), of science lab bulletin board notices (Hanauer, 2009), of the banners and placards at sporting events (Monaghan, 2016), and of cyberspace (Ivkovic & Lotherington 2009; Jones, 2011; Troyer, 2012).

To investigate written language used in sign in public space, objects and actors are involved (Huebner, 2016). According to Huebner (2016), the objects of analysis have been not only the framed and static manifestation of the ethnolinguistic composition of a specific area. The meaning of a sign results not from only the linguistic features, but rather from the symbolic relationship between the language of public sign and non-linguistic semiotic modes in the public space, such as colors, images, sounds, building designs (Shohamy & Waksman, 2009) and the appearance of participants as they walk through the public space (Garvin, 2010; Lou, 2010). Actors refer to authors, intended readers, and inhabitants of the area who were only indirectly implied. Malinowski (2009) explained that

> The domain of human agency behind the linguistic landscape remains unnamed, with authorial intent couched between two more visible dichotomies: (1) the semiotic reading of the *dominance* of one linguistic code over another on bilingual signs, and (2) the distinction between government or officially authored *'top-down'* and private or individual '*bottom-up*' signs. (p. 108)

To uncover the forces behind the language choice and authorship in LL, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) provide three ways of considering at it. First, the dominance of a language over another in a bilingual sign as shown by size, type, color, and placement of font is linked to the power relations between the dominant and subordinate groups. Second, the presentation of self and community identity markers can be portrayed through LL. Finally, both linguistic and non-linguistic choices employed in the LL are directed by the expected influence of its consumers.

Agreed by the LL practitioners, studying linguistic landscape covers not only the literal study on language use in the signs, but also the representation of languages, which signifies identity and cultural globalization. According to Gorter (2006), linguistic landscape can be synonymously defined as linguistic market, ecology of languages, diversity of languages or the linguistic situation. It can be seen that the cases of LL refer to the social context in which more than one language is used. This then generates multilingualism.

What the notion of multilingualism can be found in LL studies is not only the portrayal of the use of more than one language on the public signs, but also the relative power and status of linguistic communities in a given area (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991), the importance and influence of English as a global language (Huebner, 2006), power and solidarity (Backhaus, 2006).

Scholars have been explored LL from various perspectives, such as national and ethnic identity (Trumper-Hecht, 2009; Dray, 2010; Rungswang, 2018), marginalization of minority communities (Lou, 2010), language switching and hybridization (Huebner, 2009), language policy and language ideology (Sloboda, 2009; Marten, 2010), language awareness and education (Dagenais et al., 2009), linguistic input for language learning (Cenos & Gorter, 2008; Dagenais et al., 2009; Bolton, 2012; Sayer, 2010), and tourism and the commodification of culture (Kallen, 2009; Piller, 2010; Moriarty, 2015; Thongtong, 2016). Noticeably, LL is interdisciplinary study encompassing sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and education.

Tourism, national identity, and image of place

According to Anderson (1983 as cited in Lepp & John, 2008), nations are described as imagined community, and tourism's role is emphasized in the construction of national identity. The positive national identity generated in tourism is believed to increase foreign investment and support. Palmer (1999) adds that tourism is the image that helps construct and express national identity. Moreover, tourism sights are also viewed as key aspect in the formation and maintenance of a national identity (Pretes, 2003) and an important factor in the process of identity-building (Light, 2001). For example, the study by Kaneva and Popescu (2011) investigated the use of national branding to reinvent national images in tourism of post-communist Romania and Bulgaria. This can be seen that touristy spaces embrace the cultural diversity to create the value of national identity and inclusivity. However, Kneafsey (1998) insists that tourism must be understood in terms of the new social relations since globalization has mobilized people worldwide, Therefore, tourism enacts national identity in which accepts cultural diversity to create the value of identity and inclusivity through social interaction.

Apart from national identity, image of place and tourism are intertwined. The image of place is characterized and depends on the characteristics of tourist destination. According to Salim, Ibrahim and Hassan (2012), tourism images significantly contribute to the success of any destination, especially how they generate the positive satisfaction and best experience to tourists. Hence, establishing and maintaining the image of place can attract potential tourists and they finally become loyal or actual tourists. This has then become an academic interest among tourism research studies. Echtner and Ritchie (2003) and Molina, Gómez and Martín-Consuegra (2010) have given an attention to destination image and their studies have suggested that destination image is normally required for successful tourism management and destination marketing. Molina, Gómez and Martín-Consuegra (2010) elaborate that the information about specific destination has a vital role in promoting tourism industry and influences destination image. Explained by Reynold (1965), a flood of information significantly drives the formation of image since it generates impressions that develop a mental construct. In the case of destination image, this flood of information comes from various sources including promotional literature (travel brochures, posters, signs), the opinions of others (family/friends, travel agents) and the general media (newspapers, magazines, television, books, movies) (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

It can be seen that destination image and national identity are interconnected since the national identity is portrayed through destination image. Importantly, the information created by the locals in a particular area is also an essential element in promoting both destination image and national identity. Therefore, information in touristy spaces is undoubtedly interesting and worthily investigated to uncover intangible concepts such as image and identity.

Previous Studies into Linguistic Landscape conducted in Thailand

In Thailand, there are a number of studies investigating LL in different areas with different purposes. Huebner (2006) investigated the signs from both government and private sources of 15 Bangkok neighborhoods to explore language contact, language mixing and language dominance. The findings shed light on linguistic diversity in a large metropolitan area like Bangkok comparing to various neighborhoods. The data of the study raised a question about the effect of the pervasiveness of English in the linguistic landscape of Bangkok on the language proficiency of its youngest citizens.

In 2016, *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities* published by Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand launched the Special Issue entitle *Linguistic Landscapes of Thailand: Some Preliminary Vistas.* The issue comprises of scholars who show how LL was investigated in different parts of Thailand. Wu and Techasan (2016) examined shop names of Chinatown in Bangkok. They explored the preservation of Chinese language and culture under the circumstance of language contact with Thai, the majority language, and globalization influence of English. It was found that shop names suggest that in part because of its commodifying value and cultural awareness of the current proprietors, the Chinese shop owners are inclined to preserve the Chinese language and culture of the shops through the use of traditional Chinese characters, colors, layout and other marks of the shops, and the dominance of English has created the complexity of the multilingual landscape in Bangkok's Chinatown. Prapobratanakul (2016) studied the patterns of language use and the influence of English on the shop names in the linguistic landscape of Si Yan market, a local commercial area in Bangkok. The results showed that a combination of Thai script, lexicon and syntax were found most often, followed by shop names with a mix of Thai and English script, lexicon and/or syntax. the study also suggested that English lexical borrowing and the hybridization of language provide evidence not only of the globalization of English but also of the subconscious nature of the pervasive influence of English on Thai. Sutthinaraphan (2016) examined the photographs of advertising signage at three stations, Mochit, Payathai and Siam, of the BTS Skytrain System to explain the bilingual strategies used. It was found there were many types of code-mixing and English was used in advertising for stylishness and flamboyance. In addition to commercial districts, educational setting was also selected as a research area. Siricharoen (2016) aimed at investigating how multilingualism was promoted through public signs in the common area in Faculty of Arts, Chalalongkorn University. The study revealed that Thai-English bilingualism was promoted within the Faculty of Arts. Apart from Bangkok, Thongtong (2016), explored language choices and linguistic devices in creating signs on Nimmanhemin Road in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The findings showed that on Nimmanhemin Road, linguistic strategies including transliteration, word formation, lexical relations, speech acts and politeness strategies are demonstrated in public signs. Monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs could be found, normally written in Thai, English and / or Chinese.

According to this review of the past research studies related to LL, the real language situation in the investigated areas can be perceived of in terms of language diversity, language patterns, the power of the existing languages, and even the identity maintained among locals.
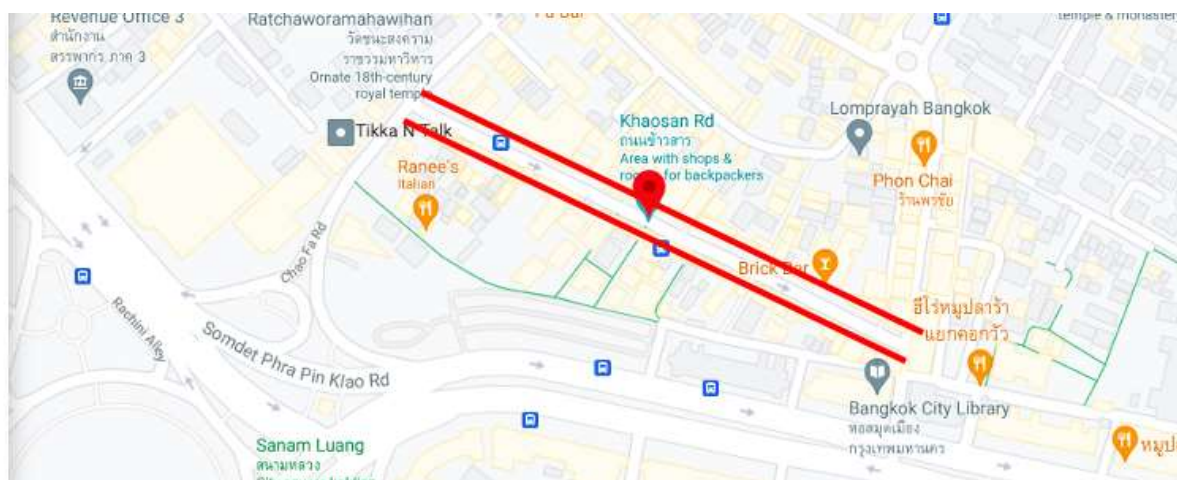
Research Methodology

Suggested by Barni ang Bagna (2015) and Blackwood (2015), investigating linguistic landscape does not limit to counting the number of signs and the languages presented on them, but also examining the surrounding context and expanding to include the actor who shape or use the language and the factors which have influenced the signs' formation and patterns. This study therefore employed a mixed-method design by investigating linguistic landscape on Khaosan road. Data collection and data analyses are explained below.

Data collection

According to Backhaus (2007 as cited in Siricharoen, 2016), to validate the data collection, three issues should be considered and explicitly stated including 1) the geographical limit of the target area, 2) the unit of analysis, and 3) the definition of multilingual signs.

The area of investigation: Khaosan road

Khaosan road once used to be a prospering area for rice trading in the reign of King Rama VI. As presented in Figure 2, the road is a 400-metre long located near Bang Lam Phu and Ratchadamnern Klang road linking with Bangkok's famous temples, palaces and tourist attractions such as Grand Palace, Bowon Niwet temple, Saket temple, Ratchanatda temple, Democracy Monument, National Museum and also shopping places like Bang Lamphu, Phra Chan pier, Phra Arthit Road as well as Santi Chaiprakan park. Khaosan road has reputation as a place for cheap accommodations and nigh life, so it is very well-known among travelers with a backpacker's budget. The charm of Khaosan road attracts both Thais and foreign tourists to experience international food at either restaurants or street food vendors. There are also many places for live music, shops, and services.

Figure 2 Location of Khaosan road

Signage

It is notable that there are many shop signs on Khaosan road that are written in many languages and shown creativity in persuasive way to attract their customers. According to Huebner (2009), the unit of analysis can be problematic if the criteria of what constituted a sign is not clearly elaborated. To avoid ambiguity with respect to unit of analysis, a sign counted as data of analysis in this study can be "any piece of written text with in spatially definable frame" (Backhaus, 2007 as cited in Siricharoen, 2016). Hence, a place containing information attached in front of the shop will be considered as an item in linguistic landscape, regardless of size and material.

To collect signs, I used my I-phone 8 Plus to capture each sign of any shops facing to the main road. By this way, a lot of shop signs were obtained. Suggested by Rungswang (2018), scoping down the type of sign by clarifying what to be included ana excluded is needed (see Figure 3). Thus, the major signs that are the biggest sign above shop, most attractive, and easy to notice by customers or people passing by were included. On the other hand, the minor signs that are smaller than the major signs and not to be easily seen were excluded. From my first survey, I found that on Khaosan road within 3-floor building, there are three shops occupying each floor. This means that the shop of each floor establishes its shop sign outside the building stretching from the shop toward the main road, so this kind of sign will be considered as the major sign and also included as data of investigation. The repeated signs were not included. With the criteria of sign collection, there were 68 shop signs collected as data of analysis.

No 1 and 3 refer to the major sign which is the data of analysis
No 2 refers to the minor sign which is not the data of analysis

Figure 3 Criteria of sign collection

In-depth interviews

To obtain qualitative data, individual interviews were conducted. Five shop owners who created shop sign by themselves or even provide the ideas in creating shop signs were recruited for in-depth interview. Since the researcher want to get various perspectives from the shop owners, the different types of shops including tattoo, bar, restaurant, souvenir, and jewelry were included. The interviews were conducted through face-to-face communication, and the interview session was one-hour meeting for each shop owner. In addition, when bias selection was concerned, the first five shop owners, met at the beginning of the street, operating different kinds of business, and voluntarily agreeing to participate the interview, were recruited.

Data analysis

The analysis was divided into two main parts. Widely employed as the main focus of analysis in previous studies (e.g. Prapobratanakul, 2016; Rungswang, 2018; Thongtong, 2016; Wu and Techasan, 2016), the first part was the analysis on language use focusing on the language(s) and patterns of language used on the signs. The second part was the analysis of language functions which were then categorized into two functions: shop name and shop detail.

For the analysis on the part of language use, the types of language use were identified by counting the number of languages shown on each sign according to the criteria. The criteria were first monolingual signs which refer to signs with only one language as shown in Figure 4; secondly, presented in Figure 5, bilingual signs refer to signs with two languages; finally, multilingual signs referred to signs with three or more languages (see Figure 6).

Figure 4 Monolingual sign

Figure 5 Bilingual sign

Figure 6 Multilingual sign

For the analysis of language functions, the information appeared on the signs was divided into two functions: shop name and shop detail. As demonstrated in Figure 7, shop name means the name of the shop and shop detail refers to details of the shop such as types of shop, working hours, details of sale items as well as awards received. While the language function of each sign was being identified, the language use was investigated in each function similar to part one.

Figure 7 Scope of an analysis of language functions

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results are presented according to research questions respectively together with discussion of each issue.

RQ1: What is the language use of shop names on the main road of Khaosan area?

There were 68 shop signs on Khaosan road that comply with the criteria of data collection. It was found that there were three types of language use including monolingual, bilingual and multilingual. Bilingual signs were most frequently found (62%), followed by monolingual signs (32%), and multilingual signs (5%) respectively. The details of language use are elaborated Table 1.

Table 1 Language use in shop signs

Types of signs	Number of signs	Percentage (%)	Total of language use
Monolingual Sign	22	32	Eng = 22 (100%)
Bilingual Sign	42	62	Eng-Th = 42 (100%)
Multilingual Sign **(Three or more languages)**	4	5	Eng-Th-Jap = 1 (25%) Eng-Th-Ch = 3 (75%)
Total	68	100	Eng = 68 (57%) Th = 47 (39%) Ch =3 (3%) Jap = 1 (1%)

Eng = English, Th = Thai, Jap = Japanese, Ch = Chinese

According to Table 1, there were four languages used in the shop signs on Khaosan road. English was the dominant language (57%) and used in all types of signs. Thai which is the language of the community was used the most second (39%) appeared in both bilingual and multilingual signs. Japanese and Chinese were found, but not popularized by the shop owners. English and Thai were a pair employed the most of all language uses. Interestingly, there was no usage of Thai language in monolingual sign. When looking into the use of English and Thai in bilingual sign, it revealed that 27 out of 42 signs demonstrated the pervasive features in which Thai alphabets were presented in smaller size, compared to English ones, and placed at either top left or top right corner of the sign as shown in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8 A bilingual sign with smaller-size Thai alphabets

As presented in Figure 8, English shop name "Vayu guesthouse" was primarily emphasized in terms of size and vivid color and Thai shop name "วายุ เกสต์เฮ้าส์" was repeatedly created in smaller size to demonstrate the identical meaning. This means that the meaning of English and Thai versions is completely the same. This format of shop sign may occur when the shop owners want to keep their shop signs in Thai, which is the language of a community and to communicate with the foreign visitors. English language was used the most and found in every type of signs. Although, English was mixed with other languages such as Thai, Chinese, and Japanese, English is still emphasized in terms of size, color, and position. This

phenomenon aligns with the LL studies that investigated signs in tourist and commercial districts in Thailand. They revealed that English on sign was popularized, and English-Thai signs were widely and predominantly used in various commercial areas and tourist destinations such as Si Yan market (Prapobratanakul, 2016), at three stations, Mochit, Payathai and Siam, of the BTS Skytrain System (Sutthinaraphan, 2016), at Siam Square and on Sukhumvit Road (Huebner, 2006), and on Nimmanhemin Road, Chiang Mai (Thongtong, 2016). It is known that these areas are multilingual and multiracial, where foreign tourists and residents are particularly involved. Khaosan road is also highly recognized and popularized among both foreigners all over the world and local Thais. With this sense, finding English on signs seems to be pervasive since English is widely dubbed as an international language and employed in internationalizing the places.

RQ2: What are the purposes of language use of shop names on the main road of Khaosan area?

When scrutinizing into 68 shop signs collected by the researcher, it revealed as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Language functions in shop signs

Functions of sign	Types of signs	Total of language use
Shop name	Monolingual	Eng = 23 Th = 2
	Bilingual	Eng-Th = 33
	Multilingual	Eng-Th-Ch = 2
Shop details	Monolingual	Eng = 37
	Bilingual	Eng-Th = 4 Eng-Ch = 2
	Multilingual	Eng-Th-Jap = 1

Eng = English, Th = Thai, Jap = Japanese, Ch = Chinese

For language functions, English was still predominantly employed to demonstrate both shop name and shop details. Providing English-only information about the shop and services was found the most. However, while English was used in all aspects, English-Thai signs were most frequently used to show name of the shop.

Theses results can reassure the significance of English as several scholars posit that English has been purposefully used by several reasons. First, according to Crystal (2003), English has become a global language of business, tourism, and communication so that why English is often used in shop signs around the world. Additionally, English has a simple and easy-to-understand alphabet, which makes it easy to create and read shop signs in English. Second, English promotes modernity, technology and innovation in the sense of marketing which can be attractive qualities for business owners who want to position themselves as cutting-edge or up-to-date (Holmquist & Cudmore, 2013; Gerritsen et al., 2010). Lastly, as stated by Grabe (1988) and Ahmadi and Reza (2018), since English become an international language, it is also recognized as accessible language for many people. Therefore, using English on signs can help ensure that information is easily understood by a wide range of people.

Qualitative results from the in-depth interviews

The interviews with shop owners including tattoo, bar, restaurant, souvenir, and jewelry were conducted. The objectives of the interviews were to obtain the information of creating a shop sign through the shop owners' perspectives. The results yielded three main themes as follow.

English language is well perceived and understood.

All participants agreed that audiences or customers are their primary concern since they know that most customers who frequently visit or walk by are foreign ones. The English attractive and understandable signs were therefore created to convey what they are selling. And English language, agreed by all participants, is international and well-comprehensible language. The following excerpts are exemplified on this issue.

Restaurant: *"My shop signs must be seen and understood by all (both Thai and foreign people), and an English-Thai sign was created. However, English fonts were emphasized since they were presumably well perceived by all people."*

Bar: *"Both Thai and foreign people can be my customers, so I created an English-Thai sign for my shop. However, I made English fonts in bigger size and more vivid color because I thought that most people know English, and the words on my shop sign was not difficult."*

Multilingual signs were used in internationalizing across the area.

Four out of five participants had a mutual view on using multilingual signs to demonstrate the sense of internationality or global outlook. Apart from the wide perception, popularity and familiarity of English, English and other languages were eagerly employed to internationalize the image of Khaosan road. It has been known that Khaosan road has become the destination, where the tourists from all over the world want to stop by when they visit Bangkok. To promote the international atmosphere, and to show owners' modern perspectives, bilingual or multilingual signs were then created. Internationalization, from participants' understandings, means adjusting place and promoting atmosphere to comfort or minimize the communication conflict that may arise between foreign visitors and Thai shop owners or locals. In addition to this, the selected languages were varied depending on their target customers. The examples of excerpts are shown below.

Tattoo: *"Internationalization, for me, means bridging between local and international atmosphere, and signs are one of the tools to make it happen because I cannot stand in front of my shop and welcome customers with English speaking. Multilingual signs do help promote international outlook as well as inclusivity. Let's imagine that walking to a restaurant where there is no language you know at all is going to give you a sense of awkwardness. Or other example is that if I walked down in the street in the USA and found a shop with a Thai shop name, I would be excited and fell not isolated."*

Souvenir: *"Being modern or international means accepting and adjusting what is not ours. Language acceptance is an obvious example. Using English, Chinese, or Japanese is expanding our messages and services to international platform, not only*

Thai community. For my shop, souvenir, my customers are actually not Thai, so an English-Japanese-Chinese sign is applicable."

National identity and authenticity portrayed through Khaosan road were colorfully cultural district.

Since the literature addressed that the promotional literature including signs, posters and travel brochures can reflect the national identity (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), and modernity in tourism context that includes authenticity as a significant component that can generate cultural image or representation (Mantecón & Huete, 2008), the question is that "how can you maintain the authenticity and show national identity while you are internationalizing the place?"

All participants agreed that night life, busy street and multinational community are Khaosan road's authenticity. Ways of life of local people here are unique, reflecting one aspect of Thai identities. Additionally, as presented below, they insisted that Khaosan road is colorfully cultural district as they are making it like that, not traditional Thai. Being both multiracial and multilingual community are truly reflecting Khaosan. The examples of excerpts are shown below.

Jewelry: *"Khaosan road is not like Ayutthaya, historical site, where cultural root is well recognized. At Khaosan, tourists from all over the world come here for nigh life and exciting experiences, so as service providers, we try so hard to arrange the shop and prepare ourselves to meet their expectations. Any signs including shop signs and road signs are also the elements to promote the sense of excitement and to impress the visitors."*

Tattoo: *"Signs along the street or even my shop signs reflect my shop's characters and Khaosan road's distinctive identity. English signs or shop name with colorful and flashy lights make Khaosan Khaosan."*

Finally, the results from the interviews can further explain and reconfirm the quantitative findings obtained from the investigation of language use and language functions on shop signs found along Khaosan road that the most use of English in all types of signs and all functions, the bigger size of English fonts on most shop signs, and more obvious position of English letters comparing to other languages strengthen the importance of English in expressing the comprehensible information to the visitor, internationalization across the place and expressing identity of the place. Interestingly, English-only and English-combined shop signs were created based on target visitors, eventually aiming to facilitate and satisfy the visitors. This is then becoming a drive of national identity construction (Pretes, 2003).

Conclusion

This paper aims to investigate the language use and the purposes of language use of shop signs on the main road of Khaosan through the lens of linguistic landscape. 68 shop signs were collected for data analysis. This study employed a mixed-method design by quantifying the frequency of the language use on the shop signs and conducting in-depth interviews with five shop owners.

The findings showed that English was used the most in all aspects. Through shop name and shop details, English was actively used to promote international language, accessibility of information, internalization, authenticity of the place, place's target audiences and image of place. Supported by in-depth interviews, English was also dubbed as a well perceived and understood language, a tool to promote internationalization and national identity and authenticity. It can be seen that the use of English, on Khaosan road, is powerful to run the place and impress the visitors. Eventually, this study also demonstrates the interconnection between the notions of language, power, and identity of place.

For recommendation for future research, since this study mainly focused on the signs and sign creator and mentioned that positive satisfactions and experiences of visitors towards that place can generate or be a fundamental element of national identity construction, future study may investigate the satisfactions of the visitors passing by towards the shop signs on Khaosan road This will help visualize how they perceive the place and the country.

Limitations and Recommendations

Since this study collected only shop signs, that were attached in front of the shop, the scope and number of signs were limited. Therefore, there are other signs such as informative signs produced by government and warning signs created by locals. With this respect, future research can expand the scope to include other types of signs of the place. This will offer multidimentional perspectives on the concept of language, identity, and place.

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