

A Linguistic Landscape Analysis of Sukhothai Historical Park

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to investigate the linguistic landscape of Sukhothai Historical Park in terms of the types of public signage and language choices and to examine the attitudes of governmental officials, tour guides, and tourists towards the role of English in the chosen research site. A total of 288 pictures were taken to outline the different types of linguistic landscape items. The analysis was conducted, and it was revealed that the signs encompassed various categories, including name signs (29.51%), traffic signs (23.96%), information signs (15.97%), moral signs (15.28%), regulation signs (10.07%), and map signs (5.21%). The language choices were thoroughly examined. The findings indicated that all of the signs in the targeted area featured "Only Thai script signs (9.37%)," "Only English script signs (5.56%)," and the most frequently encountered type, "Bilingual Signs with Script in Thai and English (Thai with equivalent translation in English) (85.07%)." The existence of English in the signs signifies a strategy to attract international visitors as it allows them to comprehend the intended message with ease. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 local government employees, tour guides, and foreign tourists. The findings indicate that English is practical in providing guidance, meeting tourism needs, and supporting advertising campaigns. It facilitated communication, comforted foreign travellers, and symbolized an international and modern perspective.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Public Signage, Language Usage, Sukhothai Historical Park, English as an International Language

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาภูมิศาสตร์ทางภาษาศาสตร์ของอุทยานประวัติศาสตร์สุโขทัยโดยพิจารณาประเภทของป้ายสาธารณะและการเลือกใช้ภาษาในป้าย รวมถึงการสำรวจความคิดเห็นของเจ้าหน้าที่ของรัฐ มัคคุเทศก์ และนักท่องเที่ยว ต่อบทบาทของภาษาอังกฤษที่ปรากฏอยู่ในพื้นที่ที่ศึกษา ป้ายจำนวน 288 ภาพ ได้นำมาจัดหมวดหมู่ เพื่อจำแนกออกเป็นหลากหลายประเภทของภูมิทัศน์ทางภาษาศาสตร์ ผลการวิเคราะห์ ได้แบ่งกลุ่มของป้ายออกเป็นหลากหลายประเภท ได้แก่ ป้ายชื่อ (29.51%) ป้ายจราจร (23.96%) ป้ายข้อมูล (15.97%) ป้ายคุณธรรมและจริยธรรม (15.28%) ป้ายกฎข้อบังคับ (10.07%) และ ป้ายแผนที่ (5.21%) การเลือกใช้ภาษาที่ปรากฏในป้ายได้ผ่านการวิเคราะห์อย่างละเอียด และแสดงให้เห็นว่า ตัวอักษรที่ใช้ในป้ายส่วนใหญ่ในพื้นที่วิจัยแบ่งเป็น “ป้ายที่ใช้ตัวอักษรภาษาไทยล้วน” (9.37%) “ป้ายที่ใช้ตัวอักษรภาษาอังกฤษล้วน” (5.56%) และ “ป้ายสองภาษาโดยใช้ภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษควบคู่กันโดยมีความหมายเดียวกันในทั้งสองภาษา” (85.07%) ภาษาอังกฤษที่ปรากฏในป้ายบ่งชี้ถึงกลยุทธ์ในการดึงดูดนักท่องเที่ยวจากนานาชาติ เนื่องจากภาษาอังกฤษช่วยให้เข้าใจข้อความที่ต้องการสื่อได้ง่าย นอกจากนี้ ผู้วิจัยเก็บข้อมูลผ่านการสัมภาษณ์แบบกึ่งโครงสร้าง กับ พนักงานรัฐบาลท้องถิ่น, มัคคุเทศก์, และนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างชาติ จำนวน 15 คน ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่า ภาษาอังกฤษมีประโยชน์ต่อการให้คำแนะนำ ตอบสนองต่อความต้องการด้านการท่องเที่ยว และโฆษณาเผยแพร่ ภาษาอังกฤษนำมาใช้เพื่อช่วยในการสื่อสาร อำนวยความสะดวกให้กับนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ และ สื่อถึงความเป็นนานาชาติและทันสมัย

คำสำคัญ: ภูมิศาสตร์ทางภาษาศาสตร์, ป้ายสาธารณะ, การใช้ภาษา, อุทยานประวัติศาสตร์สุโขทัย, ภาษาอังกฤษในฐานะภาษานานาชาติ

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Introduction

Linguistic Landscape (henceforth LL) has recently been viewed as a relatively new research approach in sociolinguistics that is interwoven with different disciplines, including social geography, urban studies, anthropology, and sociology. According to their most pioneering work in LL, Landry and Bourhis (1997) define the term as “the language of public road signs, advertising boards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” (p. 25). There has been a growing interest among researchers, not only in sociolinguistics but also in different fields of applied linguistics. Many studies have been published on this topic, for instance, in a special issue of the *International Journal of Multilingualism* (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006), in a monograph (Backhaus, 2006), in an edited book (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), and in its peer-reviewed journal *Linguistic Landscape. An International Journal* was first published in 2015.

Evolving studies have confirmed that LL is a practical approach to understand the evolution of urban or public space as part of people's everyday experiences (Hult, 2013). The major focus of LL is on language in its written form in a public area where the language is invisible to people through texts (Gorter, 2006). LL takes a further investigation into whether those visual written texts may indicate what languages are relevant to the local setting or illustrate evidence of what languages are becoming relevant to the local context (Kasanga, 2012). Many scholars in LL view that the use of language in public signs could reflect the symbolic construction in the public space (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Gorter & Cenoz, 2007). In addition, the visible languages are meant to reveal the identity of a particular area and its inhabitants during a specific period (Tan & Tan, 2015). In a nutshell, the LL approach characterizes the role of existing languages and, at the same time, describes their roles in the community.

This research approach is noticeable in Thailand, as a linguistic landscape workshop was held in 2019 at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. However, the majority of the studies have mainly focused on the urban, business, and populated areas of Bangkok and major cities across the country (Huebner, 2006; Potisuwan et al., 2020; Siricharoen, 2016; Sutthinaraphan, 2016; Thongtong, 2016; Yanhong & Rungruang, 2013). Cultural and natural sights and attractions are at the margin of LL research work in the country. This is contrary to the fact that visual written texts, especially on signs in these public areas, are crucial, functional, and plentiful. In order to bridge the gap, this present study aims to make a contribution to the LL research emerging in Thailand by elaborating on the empirical implications of linguistic landscapes.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

In general, a Linguistic Landscape is the existence of all languages in a particular area represented in its public space. According to Gorter (2018), the field of linguistic landscape “attempts to understand the motives, uses, ideologies, language varieties, and contestations of multiple forms of languages as they are displayed in public spaces” (p. 80). The research studies in their seminal work on ethnolinguistic vitality and signage in Canada conducted by Landry and Bourhis (1997) are probably one of the most pioneering studies of LL. They conceptualize the term 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). In addition, Shohamy and Waksman (2009) suggest that “the most unique feature of the LL is that it refers to the texts presented and displayed in the public space” (p. 314) where top-down and bottom-up signs are posted.

According to Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), the ‘top-down’ or official signs include those distributed by governmental organizations, national and public bureaucracies, and public institutions. Signs in public areas of general interest comprise warning signs, regulations specific to a location, transport-related signs, public announcements conveying specific information, or any advertisements initiated by the government. In contrast, ‘bottom-up’ or nonofficial signs refer to signs issued by nonofficial organizations, individual social actors, shop owners, and companies. For instance, the names of private companies, hotels, residences, tourist agencies, currency exchange bureaus, and personal announcements fall under the bottom-up category. Although they may be influenced by language policies, these signs primarily reflect individual preferences. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) classify top-down and bottom-up signs into eight distinct groups, including public institutions, public signs, public announcements, street name signs, shop signs, private business signs, private announcements, and graffiti. Table 1 presents the details of both top-down and bottom-up signage. However, it is noteworthy that the chosen study site operates under the authority of the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture. Nearly all signage in the surrounding area is approved by the government body responsible for preserving cultural heritage.

Table 1: *Categories of Signs*

Category	Type of item
Top-down Official sign	Public institutions: religious, governmental, municipal, cultural and educational, medical
	Public signs of general interest, warning signs, rules and regulations
	Public announcements and advertisements initiated by the government
	Signs of street names
Bottom-up	Shop signs: e.g., clothing, food, jewelry
Nonofficial sign	Private business signs: offices, factories, agencies, hotels, housing, tourist agencies, currency exchange agencies
	Private announcements and advertisements: ‘wanted’ ads, sale or rentals of flats or cars

Moreover, LL is a multidisciplinary field of study, and theoretical perspectives emerge from various fields of study, including sociology, semiotics, politics, philosophy, and geography. In their book on LL, Shohamy and Gorter (2009) have laid out six theoretical viewpoints; however, in this present study, the research takes on a sociolinguistic perspective. Their framework includes three relevant conditions that determine the choice of languages in a sign: 1) “write in a language you know”; 2) “write in a language which can be read by the people you expect to read it;” and 3) “write a sign in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified.” (p. 33). This approach views LL through four principles of structuration: the presentation of self, the good-reasons principle, collective identity, and power relations.

In addition, the linguistic landscape serves various functions beyond simple communication, including informational, symbolic, mythological, and commercial. The first function, informational, involves presenting specific information on a sign. It shows the languages used for communication and marks the geographical area or territory inhabited by a given language community (Litvinskaya, 2010). Secondly, the symbolic function refers to the selection of messages, particularly the language displayed on public signage. This aspect fosters a sense of community belonging, acceptance, and value when their language is showcased in public spaces. Conversely, the absence of a particular language indicates that the language lacks recognition and holds a lower status in society (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Reh, 2004). Thirdly, the mythological function was introduced by Hicks (2002), and relates to the linguistic landscape in societies that maintain their native religion. The naming of places can reflect the traditional culture of an ethnolinguistic group through their associations with

myths, stories, and folklore. Lastly, according to Hornsby (2008) and Gorter (2006), the commercial function refers to signs that serve a marketing purpose and are often used to promote products and places to tourists from a commercial perspective.

To answer the research question, this study primarily employed the analytical framework developed by Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), which classifies top-down and bottom-up signs into different categories. This framework offers a method for examining various types of signage in public spaces.

Linguistic Landscape Studies in Thailand

As mentioned in the previous section, the concentration of LL studies in Thailand is in urban or touristic areas of major cities. The following studies are presented in chronological order. One of the classic studies in Thailand is Huebner's (2006) study of Bangkok, where he examined the multilingual makeup of signs in the LL of 15 neighborhoods. He provided a valuable model framework for the analysis of codemixing's different types of textual form on signs. Huebner's findings are interesting in that they emphasize the emergence of a developing form of Thai English and that English itself appears to be replacing Chinese as a language of wider communication. Another LL study was conducted by Yanhong and Rungrung (2013) in a tourist destination, Chiang Mai. The study highlighted the importance and influence of English as a global language similar to that of Huebner and presented the types of codemixing on signs for exploring language dominance and its functions. Eight types of codemixing were found, and, interestingly, they were different from Huebner's framework. Their results revealed that the information function and commercial function are the crucial LL functions performed in target areas. Taking Chiang Mai as a field study, Thongtong (2016) conducted another research project focusing on signs along Nimmanhemin Road. The study revealed that tourism in Chiang Mai has an influence on language choices in sign creation. Monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs can be found on Nimmanhemin Road. In terms of linguistic strategies, transliteration, word formation, lexical relations, speech acts, and politeness strategies are demonstrated. Along Nimmanhemin Road, the proliferation of massage parlors, spas, textile shops, souvenir shops, and other services presents a commodification of traditional Thai culture for both domestic and international tourist consumption. The use of multilingual signs performs not only an informational function for readers of Thai, English, or Chinese, but the inclusion of the language or languages not accessible to a given reader also adds an air of both authenticity and globalism to Nimmanhemin Road as an international tourist destination.

Sharing commonalities with Bangkok and Chiang Mai, Sukhothai Historical Park relies heavily on tourism from Asia, Europe, and North America. These selected research locations from previous studies exemplify the effects of globalization on global tourism revenue and the use of English for broader communication.

Research Methodology

The current study was conducted at one field site, Sukhothai Historical Park, in Sukhothai Province, Thailand. The data collection was based on a three-day stay during the peak cool season. The exploration aims to analyze this physical space in terms of the types of public signage and language choices. Hence, the following research questions evolved:

- (1) What types of signs and languages are commonly used to communicate within this community?
- (2) What attitudes do local government officials, tour guides, and foreign tourists hold towards the choice of languages at the site?

Location, History, and Culture

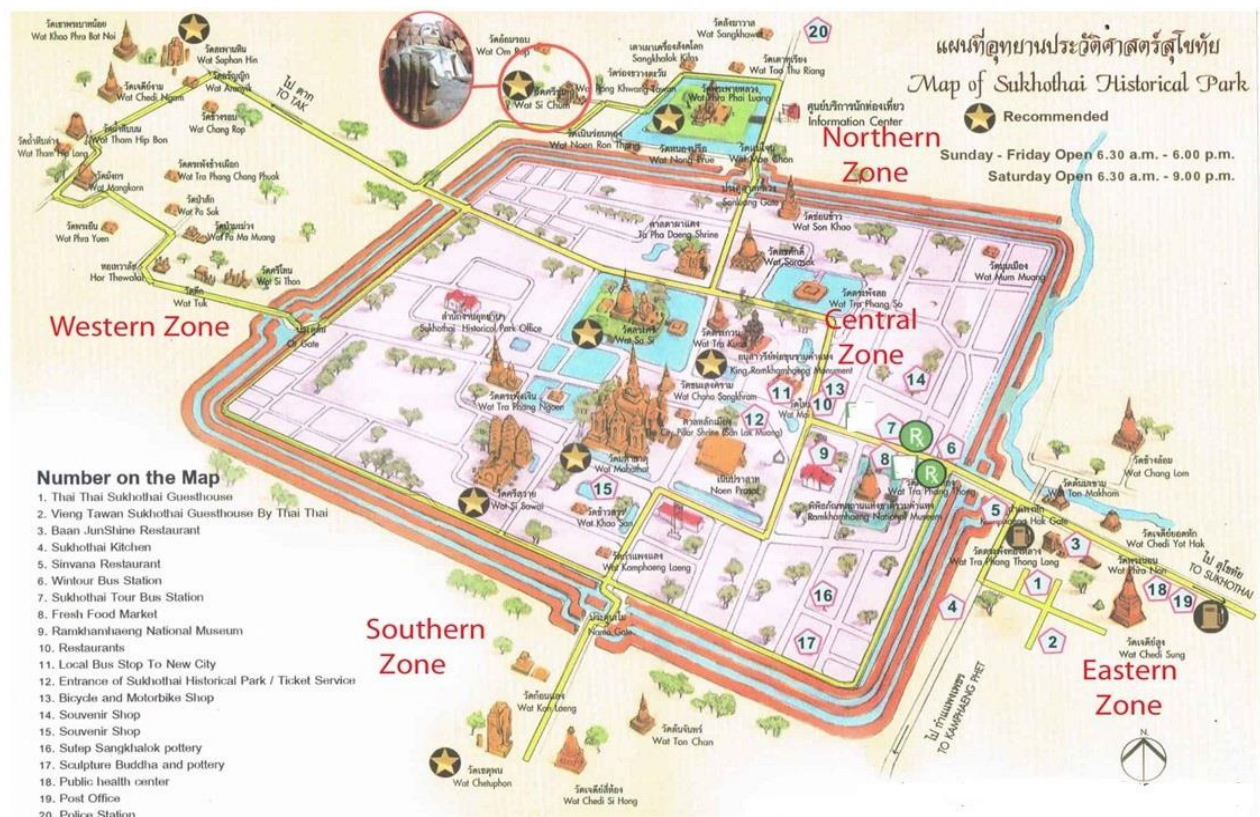
Located in the lower northern part of present-day Thailand, the historic town of Sukhothai comprises three closely situated ancient towns. During the 13th and 15th centuries, Sukhothai served as the political and administrative capital of the first Kingdom of Siam. This area showcased numerous impressive structures and monumental sculptures, which marked the emergence of Thai architecture and art, known as the "Sukhothai style." Buddhism flourished under royal support, inspiring the construction of magnificent brick monasteries with intricately carved stucco decorations. These structures embodied the idealized beauty and extraordinary qualities of Lord Buddha and his teachings. Knowledge and appreciation of the achievements of the people of Sukhothai largely come from the remains of these religious monuments. The Kingdom of Sukhothai is credited with originating and advancing various unique aspects of Siamese (Thai) culture, many of which are directly attributed to its most revered and beloved ruler, King Ramkhamhaeng, widely regarded as the Founding Father of the Thai Nation.

The park includes the remains of 21 historical sites and four large ponds enclosed by the ancient walls, with an additional 70 sites situated within a 5-kilometer radius. The investigation encompassed five zones of the historical park: the central, northern, eastern, western, and southern zones. The researchers used a camera to capture photographs and

explored the area in search of linguistic landscape signage. Subsequently, the researchers documented and photographed the various signs found in the vicinity. A comprehensive collection of pictures of visual signage was gathered and analyzed to determine the languages displayed and their locations along the roadside or within significant areas.

Figure 1

Map of Sukhothai Historical Park



Adapted from *Map of Sukhothai Historical Park*, by The Fine Arts Department (<https://finearts.go.th/sukhothaihistoricalpark>).

Data collection and analysis

Concerning data collection methods, the researchers used a compact digital camera to photograph signs and inscriptions both indoors and outdoors to evaluate their visibility within the designated area. Signs were assessed based on any written content within a clearly defined frame. Both monolingual and bilingual signs were incorporated into the study, and each sign was counted as a single item regardless of its size or type.

This study employed descriptive statistics, namely frequency and percentage. Based on Ben-Rafael et al.'s (2006) analytical framework for signs focusing on top-down LL items, the study covered official signs distributed by governmental organizations, national and public

bureaucracies, and public institutions. According to the framework, signage found in the selected location was classified into warning signs, rules and regulations specific to the location, signs related to transport, public announcements that provide specific information, or any advertisements initiated by the government, as well as street names.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit the perspectives of local government employees, tour guides, and foreign tourists regarding the public signage in Sukhothai Historical Park. Each face-to-face interview lasted 15-20 minutes and focused primarily on the roles of Thai and English, the clarity of signs, and the suitability of language usage.

Results of the Study

Types of Signs, Languages on Signs, and Language Distribution

The researchers recently conducted an exploration of Sukhothai Historical Park, focusing on its ancient temples and ruins. The investigation involved photographing all the signs present in the area and analyzing the language scripts used on each sign and their characteristics. The linguistic landscape items were collected and categorized based on the representation of signs in the five specific locations of interest. A total of 288 pictures were taken to outline the different types of linguistic landscape items. The findings revealed that the signs encompassed various categories, including name, map, regulation, traffic, information, and moral signs.



Picture 2: Regulation Sign



Picture 3: Map Sign



Picture 4: Moral Sign



Picture 5: Information Sign

Table 2: Types of Signs located at Sukhothai Historical Park

Kind of signs	Number	Percentage
Name signs	85	29.51
Map signs	15	5.21
Regulation signs	29	10.07
Traffic signs	69	23.96
Information signs	46	15.97
Moral signs	44	15.28
Total	288	100%

Table 2 presents the quantity of each sign type identified. The findings indicated that the majority of the signs in the targeted area featured "Only Thai script," "Only English script," and the most frequently encountered type, "Bilingual Signs with Script in Thai and English (Thai with equivalent translation in English)." In addition, Table 3 below illustrates the distribution of each script in the area.

Table 3: Language Scripts Displayed on Signs

Language Scripts	Number (N =288)	Percentage
Only Thai Scripts	27	9.37%
Only English Scripts	16	5.56%
Bilingual Signs with Scripts in Thai and English	245	85.07%
Total	288	100%

This section presents the findings concerning what kind of language script is written on signage around Sukhothai Historical Park, mainly its ancient temples and ruins. As mentioned above, the linguistic landscapes in the targeted area exhibit three main language scripts that

can be frequently found and seen, including Only Thai script, Only English script, and finally Bilingual Signs with script in both Thai and English. The following table points toward the number of signs that were written in each script.

Table 4: *Number of signs written in each script*

Kind of signs	Only Thai	Only English	Bilingual	Total
Name signs	4%	1%	23%	28%
Map signs	0	0	5%	5%
Regulation signs	1%	1%	9%	11%
Traffic signs	1%	0	23%	24%
Information signs	2%	2%	12%	16%
Moral signs	0	0	16%	16%
Total	8%	4%	88%	100%

The Results of Interviews

Attitudes Towards the Use of English on Public Signs

All 15 interviewees recognize the significance of English as an international language, both locally and globally. English is taught and learned as a second or additional language worldwide. They all agree that English constitutes a part of the linguistic landscape in many major cities and tourist destinations across the country.

Their viewpoints were categorized into three groups: government officials, tour guides, and foreign tourists. Within the government officials category, all the officials believed without any doubt that it was necessary to use English in Sukhothai Historical Park, which was recognized as either a world-renowned or a top-rated tourist destination in the country. Regarding the roles of English, they emphasized its crucial role, particularly highlighting its significance in providing guidance, education, communication, convenience, and alignment with international standards. Park officials clearly prioritize using English in public signage to assist foreign tourists. However, they also ensure to include the traditional Thai language on the signs. This is not only for local Thai visitors to appreciate their own historical heritage but also to represent the cultural heritage that foreign visitors can value. The following are detailed excerpts that support the points mentioned.

‘Given Sukhothai Historical Park’s designation as a world heritage site, it should undoubtedly be accessible to the world. Thus, in my opinion, with the increasing number of non-Thai tourists, using only Thai characters might hinder

understanding and navigation for many foreign visitors. English is not just crucial but also commonly used for global communication.'

(Government Official 1)

'Because there are so many foreign tourists visiting the park, the use of English is common. It also reflects the level of cultural internationalization. Its role is to assist and guide foreigners. However, Sukhothai is also a favorite destination among local residents, particularly Thai students, who visit the park for outdoor historical excursions and admire its heritage. It's important that Thai signage is accurate and informative to meet their needs.'

(Government Official 3)

'Of course, English serves as a hallmark of a welcoming tourist destination, and I have no objection to using the English language on public signage in the park. However, I believe that when foreigners come to explore the park, they should not only appreciate the ruins but also the local language.'

(Government Official 4)

All tour guide participants agreed that English plays a large part in communication, symbolizing internationalization and modernity. They also share the thought that the Thai language on signs could attract foreign visitors to appreciate more of the “Thainess” of the site. However, a few interviewees pointed out that English and Thai scripts are not sufficient to assist all of the visitors, as the park has received an increasing number of tourists from different parts of the world. Therefore, other languages may need to be added in the future to assist them better. The information for explanation in detail was as follows.

'Indeed, English represents not only the international status of ancient Sukhothai but also that of other cultural heritages throughout the country. It is evident that tourists from all corners of the globe visit these sites. English has served as an international lingua franca, which proves to be highly convenient for them.'

(Tour Guide 1)

'I think it's a fun way for visitors to learn the language. Many of them are interested in Thai characters and often ask what is written on the signs they see, especially when the signs are in Thai script alone. They are curious to know.'

(Tour Guide 3)

'In my opinion, English serves the right to dominate the signage in the area. I support the use of English. Its role is obvious, which is to help and guide foreigners. However, I would love to see more Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other Western languages alongside English. The more foreign languages that appear on public signs, the more accessible the park becomes.'

(Tour Guide 4)

Nearly all responses from foreign tourists highlighted the absolute necessity of English. For them, English was immensely helpful and significant and their preferred language due to its ease of understanding. However, despite its advantages, some interviewees encountered some problems or issues.

'I appreciate the use of English on information signs because it allows me to understand them. And I am traveling alone without a local guide. So, it is very helpful for me to get around the park and understand the stories behind the temples and ruins.'

(Foreign Tourist 2)

'English is very helpful because it is the only language that I can read and understand. I would be in trouble if all signs were written in Thai. But, there are quite a few errors, and it can be confusing and sometimes hard to understand.'

(Foreign Tourist 5)

'Of course, English is widely spoken, and it can be understood by tourists from abroad. English definitely serves its purpose. However, I feel slightly strange when I see English scripts here. Sukhothai is the country's cultural heritage and represents Thai culture, right? I feel more like traveling in Thailand when I see things written in Thai.'

(Foreign Tourist 7)

Based on the mentioned excerpts, it can be inferred that English is crucial for foreign tourists. However, writing and translation errors can present challenges for them. Nevertheless, these issues were not the focus of the current study. Moreover, one issue arises from the response that using the local language serves to preserve and promote the local language and culture. Using only English signage loses the connectivity with the local culture.

Discussion

Based on the findings presented in the results section, it is evident that different languages influence linguistic landscapes on signage. Sukhothai Historical Park, including its ancient temples and ruins, is also affected by language choices, as evidenced by the signs in the targeted area. Despite the absence of an English-speaking community residing near Sukhothai Historical Park, the prevalent use of bilingual signs is notable within the investigated region. The English language appears to wield significant power and dominance. This is clearly illustrated in the table, where it can be readily observed that the bilingual signs with both scripts constitute the primary use of language in the linguistic landscape of Sukhothai Historical Park, particularly within its ancient temples and ruins.

Most signs, including name, moral, map, regulation, traffic, and information, were predominantly written in bilingual format with scripts in both languages (or Thai with equivalent translation in English). Evidently, the authorities in the region prioritize the use of English while also ensuring the inclusion of the traditional Thai language in the signage. The role of the local language is to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for local residents and visitors who are familiar with or prefer it. Moreover, using the local language on public signage serves as a practical tool for communication and also plays a vital role in preserving and promoting the diversity of the local language and culture.

The existence and usage of the English language in the signs clearly signify an effective strategy to attract international tourists, travelers, and customers, as it allows them to easily comprehend the intended message. English is a symbol of globalization because it is widely used and understood worldwide. In this study, English is employed as a means of communication to cater to international visitors and to signify openness to the global community. By using English in public signs, messages can effectively communicate with people from different linguistic backgrounds and facilitate international interactions. Moreover, some responses from the interviews have shed light on the fact that English has received its prestigious status and widespread recognition as a language of high importance and influence. It is often associated with economic power, cultural dominance, and global accessibility. Ross (1997) proposed several appealing reasons for the utilization of English in signs, which are as follows:

English today is seen as an attractive and fashionable language. An English name lends an aura of prestige to a business, suggesting that it is part of the international scene, following the latest trends and up-to-date with the newest ideas. This aspect of English as an international language (...) is perhaps too often underestimated. Yes, English is important for communication worldwide, but English is also important because of the prestige associated with English-speaking countries. (p. 31)

In addition to the bilingual format, the targeted places also feature signs that are exclusively written in either Only English or Only Thai script. However, the number of such signs is limited. Recognizing the need to cater to the understanding of travelers and tourists, the authorities opted for the creation of bilingual signs instead of relying solely on signs in a single language. The implementation of bilingual signs underscores the significance of both the Thai and the English languages and enables tourists and customers to comprehend the information provided accurately.

Landry and Bourhis (1997) classified language signs' informative and symbolic functions. The signs of Sukhothai Historical Park show that a specific language, "English" or "Thai," is available to communicate: they provide guidance and give information. Landry and Bourhis (1997) are of the view that LL can be an important factor in language policy and economic processes (Gorter & Cenoz, 2007). The LL in Sukhothai Historical Park reflects the bilingual language policy and the economic processes that brought about the influx of English and its attendant use of the English language for tourists and travelers.

The local authorities have activated the worldwide language "English" to be mostly used on signage. Furthermore, it is not only in Sukhothai Historical Park's ancient temples; linguistic landscapes can be found on every corner, such as on shop signs and many traffic signs, apart from the area of investigated places. It can be deduced that English is indispensable for foreign tourists. However, some problems were encountered, such as writing errors and translation errors, because writing with those characteristics may be difficult for the tourists if it is in an incorrect form.

Conclusion

The results of this study effectively address the two research questions: the language scripts used on signage around Sukhothai Historical Park, particularly within its ancient temples

and ruins, and the language characteristics displayed on these signs. The findings clearly indicate that the presence of English alongside Thai, resulting in bilingualism, significantly influences the old city. This conclusion is drawn from the observation that English plays a major role in signage, primarily using bilingual format with scripts in both Thai and English. This pattern aligns with the popularity and globalization of English, which is also evident in other research conducted in different historical areas around the globe, such as Lijiang Old Town, China (Xia & Li, 2016) and Gaborone, Botswana (Akindele, 2011), and Granada, Spain (Guilat & Espinosa-Ramírez, 2016).

It is important to note that the prevalence of English in the signage does not necessarily imply that the local population speaks English more than the native language, Thai. Rather, it signifies the influence and influx of the English language and culture. Many respondents in the study recognized the necessity of English, and its utilization was found to be advantageous in various aspects. English proved to be helpful in providing guidance, exhibitions, education, catering to tourism needs, advertising, and catering to foreign tourists. It was also employed to facilitate communication, comfort foreign travelers, show respect, attract customers from other countries, and symbolize an international and modern perspective.

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