ภูมิทัศน์ทางภาษาศาสตร์ในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวของจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ : การศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษบนป้ายข้อความ

Chiang Mai's Linguistic Landscape in the Tourist Attraction Areas : A Study on the English Language Use on Signs

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาภูมิทัศน์ทางภาษาศาสตร์ (Linguistic Landscape) ในแหล่งท่องเที่ยวของจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ และเพื่อวิเคราะห์ประเภทของการใช้ codemixing ที่ปรากฏบนป้ายข้อความ กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ ได้แก่ ป้ายข้อความจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 262 ป้ายที่ปรากฏในพื้นที่ที่ได้มีการกำหนดไว้ในจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการวิจัยครั้งนี้มี 2 ประเภท ได้แก่ 1) แบบบันทึกการวิเคราะห์ป้ายข้อความ 2) กล้องถ่ายภาพดิจิตอล การวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลกระทำ ทั้งในเชิงปริมาณ และเชิงคุณภาพ โดยมีการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา และการวิเคราะห์ ทางสถิติ (ค่าความถี่ และค่าร้อยละ) ผลการวิจัยพบว่าลักษณะป้ายส่วนใหญ่เป็นแบบสองภาษาคือภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ ป้ายส่วนใหญ่ทำหน้าที่ในการให้ข้อมูลและการพาณิชย์ นอกจากนี้งานวิจัยยังพบ codemixing ในหลากหลายชนิดบนป้ายข้อความที่มีปรากฏซึ่งเป็นย้ำให้เห็นถึงความสำคัญและอิทธิพลของภาษาอังกฤษในลักษณะที่เป็นภาษาสากล งานวิจัยนี้แสดงให้เห็นว่าอิทธิพลของภาษาอังกฤษมีส่วนเกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาภาษาไทยไม่เพียงแต่ในรูปแบบของการยืมคำศัพท์แต่ยังรวมถึงเรื่องอักขระ การออกเสียงและวากยสัมพันธ์

คำสำคัญ : ภูมิทัศน์ทางภาษาศาสตร์ / ป้ายข้อความ / ภาษาอังกฤษ / ภาษาไทย

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ABSTRACT

This research was designed to examine the linguistic landscape (LL) functions performed in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas, to analyze the types of codemixing on signs for exploring the language dominance. The samples of the study were 262 signs in the predetermined areas. Two types of research instruments were employed: sign analysis form and digital photography. The data were analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Qualitative content analysis, as well as statistical analysis (frequency and percentage) were applied to this study. The result showed that the majority of the signs were bilingual, namely in Thai and English. The LL in the target areas primarily performed the informational and commercial functions. Moreover, the study provides various types of codemixing on signs in the city. It also highlights the importance and influence of English as a global language. The research documents the influence of English on the development of Thai, not just in the form of lexical borrowing, but also in the areas of orthography, pronunciation and syntax.

Keywords : Linguistic Landscape / Signs / Codemixing / English / Thai

Introduction

English has largely become a non-national language in non-English-speaking countries to index a social stereotype (Griffin 2004, p. 3). The realization of the importance of English can be seen from Thailand government's educational plans. The Ministry of Education recently announced the opening of its program "English Speaking Year 2012". The program aims to make Thailand ready to be a part of the ASEAN community in 2015 so English must play a key role in communication for Thais (Pattayatoday, 27 JAN 2012). Moreover, English is a symbol of modernity. Nowadays, English language intrudes into the daily life of Thai people and has been appropriated by advertisers, such as consuming products like toiletries, food, electrical equipment, television, air-conditioner, vehicles, computers, and many household and industrial devices. Most brands of these products use manuals that are bilingual-English and Thai-or even some that are English only.

In recent years, English as a dominant world language has been studied in the linguistic landscape (henceforth LL) research. This concept was first defined by the Canadian researchers Landry & Bourhis (1997, cited in Huebner, 2006, p. 32) "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". Gorter (2006a) states that language is all around us in a textual form as it is displayed on shop windows, commercial signs, posters, official notices and traffic signs, etc. LL is said to perform several functions: informational, symbolic, mythological, and commercial. Landry and Bourhis (1997, cited in Puzey, 2007, p. 11) explained the first two as basic functions of LL.

By now, the LL has been investigated from various perspectives, such as language policy, sociolinguistic and language contact, thus contributing to the study of multilingualism. Commerce, tourism and migration are increasingly contributing to the multilingual dimension of a good part of the LL of urban environments, with English displaying an advantageous status. All around the world, signs which are multilingual tend to include English as one of the languages, not just in the capital cities but also in provincial towns (Schlick, 2002). It is the fact that English is the international language that most frequently features in bi and multilingual signs in LL studies (e.g. Backhaus, 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Edelman, 2006; Huebner, 2006). At the same time, the use of English is associated with values such as international orientation, modernity, success, sophistication or fun (Piller, 2001, 2003).

To date, Huebner's work (2006) on LL is the only research conducted in Thailand. His study describes a greater degree of linguistic variation across neighborhoods in Bangkok, highlights the importance of sample selection in LL research. Furthermore, he provided a valuable model framework for the analysis of different types of codemixng*. Of the 613 signs examined, the majority of the signs (337 or 55%) contains multiple scripts written in Thai and English, and Chinese and English. This study highlights the importance and influence of English as a global language.

Footnote

*Codemixng refers to a change from one language which involves every levels of lexical and syntactic structures including words, phrases, clauses and sentences (Hudson 2004, p. 53). Very often the expression codemixing is used synonymously with code-switching and means basically intra-sentential code-switching (Liu 2006). Maschler (1998, cited in Liu 2006 p.4) defines code-switching as the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event.

Thailand is the most-visited country by foreigners in the region of Southeast Asia, one can imagine that there are a number of multilingual signs in the tourist attraction areas. However, little is known about LL in those areas. This present study was conducted with the purpose to

investigate the linguistic landscape in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas, particularly how language on signs reflects a growing prominence of English in non-English-speaking location. In addition, this study attempts to find the codemixing types on signs in the target areas.

Research questions

The following specific research questions were addressed in the present study :

1. What languages are used on signs?

2. What functions does the linguistic landscape perform in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas?

3. What types of the codemixing on signs are found in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas?

Research methodology

Samples

The samples of this study were 262 signs from five tourist attraction areas in Chiang Mai. The categorization of the areas was adapted from the study of Chaiprasert (2008). These signs included the signs in temple areas, in shopping mall areas, in night market areas, in transportation station areas and on city roads, respectively. The researcher did collect the samples by using the following criteria:

In the present study, a sign was considered to be any piece of written text, including anything from handwritten stickers at entrance doors to huge commercial billboards. The signs were either stable or non-stable. Texts that were in the interior of a shop rather than in the shop-window and monolingual Thai signs were not included.

Each sign was counted as one item, despite its size. In this study, transliterated words were not counted as monolingual, since they mix two languages in meaning and form. A multilingual sign was determined to contain English as one of the languages.

Research instruments

In order to investigate the linguistic landscape in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas as specified earlier, this study employed qualitative and quantitative methods for data analysis. To fulfill those purposes, two types of research instruments were employed:

Sign analysis form

This form is used for recording the types and functions of the collected signs.

The form is divided into three parts. Part 1 is needed for recording the types of signs according to scripts. After doing the qualitative content analysis, the signs will be categorized into monolingual, multilingual and codemixing signs. The collected signs will be further analyzed for their functions. In terms of LL functions, the signs will be divided into informational, symbolic, mythological, and commercial functions. This information will be recorded in Part 2 of the form. Part 3 will record the types of codemixing signs according to three aspects, namely script, lexicon and syntax.

Digital photography

One common characteristic shared by the majority of existing research on linguistic landscape is its use of digital photographs of signs as a research method. Recent developments in digital camera technology make the study of LL possible at a relatively low cost (Gorter, 2006c). Moreover, digital cameras with sufficient memory allow researchers to take an apparently unlimited number of pictures of the signs in the LL.

Data collection

The researcher went to collect the data in the target areas of Chiang Mai by herself in July, August and September, 2012. She took pictures of the target signs in the predetermined areas. After finishing collecting the data, the researcher put the representative photos in a database.

Data analysis

In order to answer research questions, the data were analyzed by the following techniques :

First, a sign coding scheme was employed to categorize the signs by scripts.

Gorter (2006c) concluded that the scheme included elements such as how language appears on the sign, the location on the sign, the size of the font used, the number of languages on the sign, the order of languages on multilingual signs, the relative importance of languages, whether a text has been translated (fully or partially), etc. Therefore, in terms of language categories, the script-based approach was adopted. In the present study, script refers to the displayed language(s) on the sign. Lexicon refers to the vocabulary used in a language. Syntax refers to the way that words are arranged to form sentences or phrases, or the rules of grammar which control this.

According to the definitions above, the signs of this study were classified into monolingual, multilingual and codemixing. Monolingual sign refers to the displayed language on the sign is in English script, English lexicon and/or English syntax. Multilingual sign refers to a sign contained English as one of the languages.

Second, after doing the content analysis, the data were categorized by the functions into four types, i.e. informational, symbolic, mythological, and commercial.

Landry and Bourhis (1997, cited in Puzey, 2007, p. 11) explained the first two as basic functions of LL. The informational function aims at providing information that the dominance of one language on the signs in an area can be an indicator of availability of services in that language. The symbolic function is connected to identify of language users and inhabitants of a specific area (Landry and Bourhis 1997, cited in Litvinskaya, 2010, p. 13, 14). Mythological function of LL was added by Hicks (2002). The signs serve as connection to the past and transmitter of ancient culture. LL researchers recognize the overwhelmingly commercial nature of material manifestations of language in the settings of their studies. With regard to

commodification of language, Hornsby (2008) defined it as the language usage exclusively for product and place promotion for tourists.

Third, only the codemixng signs were analyzed in detail to find the types of codemixing in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas.

Huebner (2006) analyzes the codemixing signs according to three aspects, namely script, lexicon and syntax. The present study also employed this approach for analyzing the data. For example, the sign in Picture 1 is written in English and Thai scripts. The influence of English at the lexical and syntactic levels is obvious. The Thai script "เซ็นทรัล แอร์พอร์ต พลาซ่า" is totally transliterated from the English word "CENTRAL AIRPORT PLAZA" which is the name of the shopping mall. None of the words is in Thai. At the syntactic level, it shows that the branching direction (modifier-head word order) is affected. What is less obvious is the influence of English at the orthographic level. Thai orthography uses no spaces between words. Here we see spaces between Thai words.

Picture 1 : A codemixing sign in English and Thai script with English lexicon and English syntax

Results and discussion

Question one : What languages are used on signs?

The quantitative data comprises a total of 262 signs. Table 1 shows the distribution of signs by scripts from the entire corpus.

Table 1 : signs by scripts

Signs by Scripts	Number of Signs	%
MONOLINGUAL	26	10
English	26	10
MULTILINGUAL	196	75
Thai-English	186	71
Thai-English-Chinese	10	4
CODEMIXING	40	15
Total	262	100

The results showed that three different languages were used: Thai, English and Chinese. Of the 262 signs, 75% (or 196 signs) was written in multilingual scripts. 10% (or 26 signs) was in English script. 15% (or 40 signs) was codemixng.

As mentioned above, the multilingual script was mostly used on signs. The majority of the signs (186, 71%) were bilingual signs, namely in Thai and English script. They displayed a clear separation of languages. One line contains Thai script, the other contains English script. This supports Huebner's claim that (2006, p. 35) "the first line contains Thai script, lexicon and syntax; the second contains English script, lexicon and syntax. One can claim that in this sign, Thai is the prominent language, both by virtue of its placement above the English and by the size of its script". In Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas, English signs are intended for both foreigners and a class of educated Thais. Educated Thais have varying degrees of proficiency in English, many quite high. Similarly, relatively few foreigners can speak Thai, much fewer can read it. Therefore, translation is the preferred strategy. Inclusion of English adds a cosmopolitan flair to the message that isn't available in a sign using only Thai. Interestingly, the second rank (40, 15%) gave to the codemixing script. The remaining multiple scripts (10, 4%) were in Thai, Chinese and English script. Therefore, one can claim that English has a fairly important influence on the use of language of the signs in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas.

Question two : What functions does the linguistic landscape perform in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas?

The signs in the present study were divided into four functions, i.e. informational, symbolic, mythological, and commercial function as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 : LL functions by signs performed in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas

Functions	Number of Signs	Frequency (%)
Informational	199	76
Symbolic	16	6
Mythological	7	3
Commercial	40	15
Total	**262**	**100**

Seven signs (3%) demonstrated the mythological function, while 16 signs (6%) were set to perform the symbolic function. Beyond all doubt, the majority of the signs (199, 76%) performed the informational function, and the remaining signs were given to 40 signs (15%) which represented the commercial function.

Of the signs examined, 3% performed the mythological function were temple and museum signs. They were totally written in Thai, English and a northern dialect script (Kammüang). Obviously, these signs served as transmitter of ancient culture. The results supported Smalley's claim (1994, p. 81) that Kammüang in its written form "is no longer normally used in government affairs, business, or regular correspondence, but it is still used some in the Buddhist temples" and in some academic circles in northern Thailand. 6% of symbolic function signs were produced by the government, either national, provincial or municipal, such as road signs, bus stop signs. The LL apparently carried the informational and commercial functions due to Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas as the survey areas. The first rank, i.e. the informational function (76%) was given to the signs of restaurants, hotels and billboards. 15% of signs were collected from shopping malls, night markets areas, e.g. Central Airport Plaza, Night Bazaar, etc. They were exclusively produced for the products and for promoting the tourism in the city. There is no doubt that these signs performed the commercial function. Increasingly, these 40 signs are all codemixng. They aim to attract both foreigners and Thais. For a class of educated Thais, it might have no problem to understand the function of those Thai scripts in English words and syntax. But for common people, they might get the function of these scripts from other information such as pictures on the shop window, etc. This reinforces that the use of English is associated with values such as international orientation, modernity, success, sophistication or fun (Piller, 2001, 2003).

Question Three : What types of the codemixing on signs are found in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas?

To answer question three, 40 codemixing signs were analyzed in details.

Table 3 : Types of combinations of codemixing found in the present study

Script	Lexicon	Syntax	Number of signs	Frequency (%)
Thai	English	English	2	5
Thai & English	English	English	18	45
Thai & English	Thai & English	---	3	7.5
Thai & English	Thai & English	English	2	5
Thai & English	English	---	15	37.5
Total			**40**	**100**

As summarized in Table 3, five types of codemixing were found, namely codemixing in Thai script, English lexicon and English syntax; codemixing in Thai and English script with English lexicon and English syntax; codemixing in Thai and English script, Thai and English lexicon; codemixing in Thai with English script, Thai with English lexicon and English syntax and codemixing in Thai with English script, English lexicon, respectively.

According to Huebner's framework of codemixing (2006), codemixed signs could involve any combination of Thai or English script, lexicon and syntax. In fact, in this study, not all possible combinations were found. Surprisingly, as seen in Table 3, these signs showed a number of variations that didn't occur in Huebner's study (2006).

Of the 40 codemixing signs, only Type 1 codemixng (2, 5%) accords with Huebner's study. Others (38, 95%) are new variations of codemixing signs in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas. These signs tend to be written in bilingual script, namely in English and Thai, not only in monolingual script. As seen in Picture 1, it is written in English and Thai scripts. The English script maintains the preferred position of center and it is written in capital letters. But the Thai script above is relegated to small print. The influence of English at the lexical and syntactic levels is obvious. The Thai script "เซ็นทรัล แอร์พอร์ต พลาซ่า" is totally transliterated from the English word "CENTRAL AIRPORT PLAZA" which is the name of the shopping mall. This reflects and reinforces lexical borrowing in Thai language. At the syntactic level, it shows that the branching direction (modifier-head word order) is affected. What is less obvious is the influence of English at the orthographic level. Thai orthography uses no spaces between words. Here we see spaces between Thai words.

These contribute to the prominence of the English language. There is no doubt that English is the dominant language on codemixng signs in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas. Inclusion of bilingual codemixng script challenges Smalley's claim (1994) that English in the public space is directed at foreigners. It aims to attract both Thais and foreigners. Thai script containing English lexicon and /or syntax is definitely directed to a general Thai audience. For

a class of educated Thais, it might have no problem to understand the function of those Thai scripts in English words and syntax. But for common people, these signs are for modernity internationally. They might get the function of these scripts from other information such as pictures on the shop window, etc.

Conclusion

The results showed that Thai-English and codemixing scripts were mainly used on the signs in Chiang Mai tourist attraction areas. The essential LL functions performed in the target areas were informational function and commercial function. Surprisingly, even there is no English speaking community around the areas English has a great influence on signs. Five types of codemixng were found on the signs. Furthermore, the increasing number of single English signs as well as Thai-English signs which the Thai script is codemixing type indicates that English is becoming the dominant language in particular on commercial signs, as Ross (1997, p. 31) stated "The simple reason for most of these shop signs (in Milan) is that English today is seen as an attractive and fashionable language. An English name lends an aura of chic prestige to a business, suggesting that it is part of the international scene, following the latest trends, up-to-date with the newest ideas".

Limitations of the study and recommendations for further studies

This study just touches the surface of the field of linguistic landscape research. Therefore, the researcher should examine if the different areas affect the language use of signs. Moreover, the researchers should investigate the language use on signs based on different sources. In addition, more areas might be studied in order to get diversity of the linguistic landscapes.

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