

## การศึกษาภูมิทัศน์ภาษาศาสตร์ของเสื่อยึดบนเพจเฟซบุ๊กในประเทศไทย

ทิวาพร ธงทอง<sup>1</sup>ฐิติมา สุแก้ว<sup>2</sup>

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## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้พัฒนาจากคำกล่าวของคลอร์ดเวลล์ (2017) ที่ว่า เสื่อยึดสามารถสื่อความในลักษณะเดียวกับป้ายในภูมิทัศน์ภาษาศาสตร์ งานวิจัยนี้จึงสำรวจหน้าที่ในการสื่อสารของเสื่อยึดโดยศึกษาองค์ประกอบทางภาษาและภาพในการออกแบบเสื่อยึดในบริบทไทยโดยใช้แนวคิดของคลอร์ดเวลล์ (2017) และ เครส และ แวน ลีวด์เวน (2021) โดยได้รวบรวมข้อมูลจากเพจเฟซบุ๊กจำนวน 5 เพจ ซึ่งผลการศึกษารูปหน้าที่ได้สามประการคือ 1) เพื่อแสดงความสนใจของผู้สวมใส่ในความหลากหลายของภาษา 2) เพื่อแสดงถึงการรวมกลุ่ม และ 3) เพื่อส่งเสริมการสื่อสารระหว่างบุคคล การศึกษานี้สนับสนุนองค์ความรู้ที่มีอยู่โดยการให้ข้อมูลเชิงลึกเกี่ยวกับการวิเคราะห์ภูมิทัศน์ภาษาศาสตร์ของเสื่อยึดและแสดงให้เห็นถึงกลวิธีทางภาษาและภาพบนเสื่อยึดที่ใช้ทำหน้าที่ในการสื่อสารในบริบทของไทย

**คำสำคัญ:** ภูมิทัศน์ภาษาศาสตร์ กลวิธีทางภาษาศาสตร์ การวิเคราะห์ภาพ หน้าที่ในการสื่อสาร การวิเคราะห์เสื่อยึด

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<sup>1</sup> ผู้เขียนชื่อแรก อาจารย์ประจำภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

อีเมล: tiwahporn.thong@cmu.ac.th

<sup>2</sup> ผู้เขียนชื่อหลัก อาจารย์ประจำภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ คณะมนุษยศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

อีเมล: thitima.s@cmu.ac.th

## A Linguistic Landscape Study of T-shirts on Facebook Pages in Thailand

*Tiwahporn Thongtong<sup>3</sup>*

*Thitima Sukaew<sup>4</sup>*

### Abstract

The research is based on Caldwell's (2017) assertion that T-shirts can convey messages in the same manner as signage in a linguistic landscape. It explores the communicative functions of T-shirts by investigating the linguistic and visual elements in the design of T-shirts within the Thai context using Caldwell (2017) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021). The data are collected from five Facebook pages. The findings summarized three functions: 1) to express wearers' interest in multilingualism, 2) to represent collectivism, and 3) to foster interpersonal communication. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insight into the linguistic landscape analysis of T-shirts and demonstrating textual and visual strategies on T-shirts that are used to carry out communicative acts within the Thai context.

**Keywords:** linguistic landscapes, linguistic strategies, visual analysis, communicative functions, T-shirt analysis

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<sup>3</sup> First author, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University

E-mail: tiwahporn.thong@cmu.ac.th

<sup>4</sup> Corresponding author, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University

E-mail: thitima.s@cmu.ac.th

## Introduction

In multilingual and multicultural communities, people are surrounded by many languages and language contact phenomena such as code-switching and code-mixing, which appear on T-shirts worn in public places. T-shirt wearers have left visible and non-verbal signs that communicate meanings and intentions in one way or another (Pütz & Mundt, 2018). Linguistic devices seem to play a crucial role in creating signs. Words, phrases, or sentences represent human thoughts, concepts, or ideas. Typically, signs aim to give information, promote, or advertise, and messages are conveyed as they are said. In some cases, they represent more than what they say.

In linguistic landscapes (LL), we usually use linguistic knowledge to explain the visuals and meanings of signs. Previous studies have analyzed data and shown both similar and different perspectives. For decades, studies in LL have extended beyond written texts displayed in public places. Developments in LL greatly expand what is understood under the umbrella of linguistic items, including images (e.g., Vingron & Gullifer *et al.*, 2017; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), road signs (e.g., Jolayemi & Mahmud, 2017; Rowland, 2013), shop signs (e.g., Nikolaou, 2017; Thongtong, 2016; Jingjing, 2013), sounds (soundscapes) (e.g., Pappenhagen & Scarvaglieri *et al.*, 2016; Hutton, 2011), tattoos (skinscapes) (e.g., Peck & Williams, 2018; Peck & Stroud, 2015), graffiti (e.g., Seloni & Sarfati, 2017; Sheivandi & Taghinezhad *et al.*, 2015). People are immersed and absorbed in spaces by interacting with the linguistic landscape in different ways. Still, there is a need for more explanations to keep the field of language open and allow it to grow in several diverse directions.

To Caldwell (2017), T-shirts are one of the most salient texts in the linguistic landscape due to their iconic fashion and the communicative functions of their prints. When a wearer conveys meaning by displaying it on their body, the act of wearing a T-shirt is comparable to carrying a sign or having a tattoo. Therefore, the study pertains to the linguistic landscape field, in which the wearer's body functions as a landscape for sending messages to observers who interpret these T-shirts as part of a larger linguistic landscape.

Previous studies on printed T-shirts, such as that of Caldwell (2017) and Aitto-Oja (2016), have demonstrated the analysis of texts associated with images on T-shirts. In Aitto-Oja's (2016, n.d.) view, T-shirt analysis is a means of becoming familiar with a language by taking in "what is seen, what is heard, what is spoken, and what is thought". The clothes

that people wear are; as a result, a huge part of the language used in their everyday lives. T-shirt wearers become moving signage as the public interacts with the emerging linguistic landscape on their clothing.

The study adheres to Caldwell's (2017) notion that the wearer's selection of a T-shirt is deliberate, that he or she is aware of the meanings of printed texts on T-shirts, and that the body is a landscape for communication and a broader linguistic landscape for the viewers. It intends to contribute to this field of linguistics by investigating the texts and visuals on T-shirts and examining the extent of their communicative function in the Thai context. This study aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

### Research questions

1. What are the potential functions of T-shirts?
2. How do texts and images on T-shirts contribute to these functions?

### Methodology

Data are gathered from publicly accessible Facebook pages of T-shirt shops. The established criterion is that those shops had at least 100,000 followers in 2021. According to the survey, there are altogether five stores consisting of at least 100,000 followers. All printed T-shirts from the five stores are chosen for data analysis, including 1,051 T-shirts. The analysis is divided into two parts, textual and visual. Nevertheless, they can overlap in some parts.

#### 1. Text Analysis

This study focuses mainly on linguistic strategies by examining the words, phrases, and sentences used in T-shirt designs and how they are utilized. The terminology used in Caldwell's (2017) study, including projection, label, and icon derived from Halliday's social semiotic theory, are listed below.

A *projection* is a clause that is either single or minor. The text on the T-shirt is presented as a single clause, or as a single minor clause, as an act of dialogue. This is accomplished by making an initiating move in the form of a projected thought or speech directed from the wearer of the T-shirt text to a viewer. For example, a wearer thinks or says, "Have a nice day."

A *label* is a single adjective, noun (other than proper names) or nominal group. In addition, a relational process (either attributive or identifying) links the hypothetically transitivity configuration of the shirt's wearer and the shirt's text. In this sense, the information printed on the wearer's T-shirt serves as their Value (Carrier) and their Attribute (Label). In other words, it labels the wearer in some way based on the words they're displaying: [Text for T-shirt] describes the wearer. For example, a wearer is "a boyfriend."

An *icon* can be used in the form of the proper noun. It is a special kind of noun. The first letter of a proper noun, whether it refers to a person, place, event, or thing, is always capitalized. In a standard taxonomy, proper names would make up a small subset of nouns. In this T-shirt classification, however, they are treated as a separate feature due to the transitivity configuration they share with the wearer. Wearing a T-shirt with a proper noun printed on it is a statement of identifying with those characteristics. For example, a wearer likes "NIKE."

## 2. Visual analysis

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021), similar to language, images are rich in potential meanings and are governed by frameworks of visual grammar that can be utilized to decode image meanings. Visual communication can, therefore, be equally meaningful as spoken communication. The sections that follow will provide a brief overview of the framework's components pertinent to this paper's examination. It focuses on two types of representations: narrative and conceptual representations proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2021).

It should be noted that in Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2021) terms, "participants" represent people, places, and things, including abstract "things." The study also follows Caldwell's (2017) study of T-shirts in which the wearer is taken as a participant in a transitive configuration while the text on the T-shirts acts as the second participant. In avoiding confusion, the study refrains from using the term *participants* in Caldwell's sense and adopts the term *wearers* instead.

## 2.1 The narrative representation

In order for an image to be categorized as a narrative representation, participants must be related to one another through vectors which are very pronounced diagonal lines formed by represented participants.

<b>Action processes</b>	<i>An Actor</i> is generally the most salient participant who forms the vector and from whom the vector originates. The participant at the end of the vector or the receiver of the action is called a <i>Goal</i> . If there is only a goal or the actor is not seen, the process is called <i>Events</i> .
<b>Reactional processes</b>	This is when a vector is generated by an eyeline and the direction of at least one participant's gaze. In this process, an <i>Actor</i> is referred to as a <i>Reactor</i> and a <i>Goal</i> is a <i>Phenomena</i> . This process varies from the Action Process in that vectors are generated only by the gaze of the participants in the image.
<b>Conversion structures</b>	It describes a chain of participants in which each is both an <i>Actor</i> and a <i>Goal</i> in regard to the others.
<b>Circumstances</b>	There may be secondary participants in narrative images who are related to the main participants in ways other than via vectors. In this case, some information might be lost if these participants are omitted, but the overall message will not be affected.

## 2.2 The conceptual representation

Vectors are absent from this type of representation since participants are represented in their stable or timeless nature in the conceptual representation.

<b>Classification structures</b>	Classification structures form hyponymical relations between participants in which at least one set of participants will act as <i>Subordinate</i> with respect to at least one other participant, the <i>Superordinate</i> .
<b>Analytical structures</b>	Meronymical relations between participants are created in this structure. They represent a <i>Carrier</i> (the whole) and <i>Possessive Attributes</i> to portray participants as parts of a whole (the parts).
<b>Exhaustive and inclusive analytical structures</b>	Analytical structures can be exhaustive, in the sense that they can represent <i>all</i> of the Possessive Attributes of a Carrier, taking up all of its space. In inclusive analytical structures, on the other hand, the Possessive Attributes occupy <i>only some of its space</i> , but other areas are still left blank and unanalyzed.

### 2.3 The representation and interaction

The section is concerned with the representation and interaction. Images have two types of participants: represented participants, who are the people, locations, and things being depicted in the images and interactive participants, who are the real people communicating with each other through images, namely the producers and viewers of images.

<b>The image act and the gaze</b>	Images can fulfill similar functions to speech acts when represented participants form vectors with their eyelines or gesture to form connections with the viewer. The gaze can acknowledge the observers by addressing them as <i>you</i> . The image can, then, perform <i>an image act</i> by demanding the viewer to do something by using the participant's gaze and facial expression.
<b>Power and Vertical Angle</b>	Images viewed from a <i>high</i> angle provide a sense of power or significance because the subject appears larger than life and towers above the viewer's line of sight. On the other hand, images viewed from a <i>low</i> angle typically represent a relationship of inferiority or separation. If the image is <i>at eye level</i> , the perspective is one of equality, and no power disparity is implied

### 2.4 The meaning of composition

The positions of the represented participants can also entail some meanings.

<b>Given (left) and New (right)</b>	What is placed on the left could be considered <i>Given</i> or the side of <i>the past (or bad)</i> and the right side represents <i>New</i> or <i>the present or future (or good)</i> .
<b>Ideal (top) and Real (bottom)</b>	What is positioned at the top is considered the <i>Ideal</i> which illustrates the idealized or generalized essence of the information. On the other hand, the bottom is presented as the <i>Real</i> which tends to offer more practical and informative information.
<b>Centre and Periphery</b>	The central element is referred to as the <i>Centre</i> , while the surrounding components are called the <i>Margins</i> . The Center is presented as the central component to which all other parts are related. The other aspects are connected to the core, from which they derive meaning and cohesion.
<b>Framing</b>	Groups of elements can be disconnected, marked off from one another, or they are connected, tied together by various types of frame-lines as well as by empty space. It provides internal consistency and cohesion, while clearly distinguishing it from other units or occurrences of the same nature.

<b>Salience</b>	Salience can generate a hierarchy of importance among items, selecting some as more significant and worthy of attention than others, regardless of where they are positioned or how closely they are connected to one another.
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## Findings

In meeting the study's objectives regarding the texts and images on the design of printed T-shirts, the findings reveal three functions of the T-shirts: 1) to express wearers' interest in multilingualism, 2) to represent collectivism, and 3) to foster interpersonal communication.

### 1. To express wearers' interest in multilingualism

The section starts with the use of multiple languages on the T-shirts. Since the T-shirts' texts could serve as signage, multilingual texts on T-shirts can contribute to constructing an international landscape. The inclusion of multiple languages for aesthetic purposes could implicate how wearers see and represent themselves as being knowledgeable of those languages. Therefore, wearing T-shirts could be a means for the wearers to communicate their interest to the viewer and potentially present themselves as participants in a multicultural community.

**Table 1: Language Choices and visual representation on T-shirts**

Monolingual	Bilingual	Multilingual	Visual Representation (no printed texts on T-shirts)
Thai (n=147, 13.98%)	Thai - English (n = 110, 10.47%)	Thai-English-Chinese (n= 8, 0.76%)	(n= 173, 16.46%)
English (n= 425, 40.44%)	Thai - Chinese (n= 30, 2.86%)	Thai-English-Japanese (n= 2, 0.19%)	
Chinese (n=24, 2.29%)	English - Chinese (n= 33, 3.13%)		
Japanese	English - Japanese		



(n= 12, 1.14%)	(n=74, 7.04%)		
Korean (n=11, 1.05%)	Thai - Korean (n=2, 0.19%)		
N=619 (58.90%)	N=249 (23.69%)	N=10 (0.95%)	N=173 (16.46%)
Total 1,051 (100%)			

In Table 1, English (40.44%) is the most frequently selected language for monolingual texts, whereas Thai (13.98%), Chinese (2.29%), Japanese (1.14%), and Korean (1.05%) tend to be less frequently used. For bilingual texts appearing on T-shirts, Thai and English (10.47%) are more dominant than English-Japanese (7.04%), English-Chinese (3.13%), Thai-Chinese (2.86%), and Thai-Korean (0.19%). In addition, Thai-English-Chinese (0.76%) and Thai-English-Japanese (0.19%) are chosen for multilingual texts printed on T-shirts. From this quantitative analysis, English is considered the most prominent language appearing on printed T-shirts. However, the other languages—Thai, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—probably also play a crucial role in the T-shirt design in Thailand.

It should be noted that the T-shirts on which this study is based are expected to be for Thai customers. English accounted for almost half of the T-shirts used in this study (40.44%), which could confirm that English is a dominant and international language. In comparison, Thai as a monolingual (13.98%) is almost equivalent to Thai-English as a bilingual language (10.47%). An observation made is that the inclusion of multiple languages could indicate the significance of multiple languages in the design of the T-shirts. Since the selection of the T-shirts is treated as an intentional choice, a variety of languages could suggest the wearer's personal preference for the language, which reflects the appreciation of other cultures.

Apart from the inclusion of multiple languages, the data also shows how the texts are used as designs on T-shirts. Besides being used alongside other visual strategies which will be mentioned in other sections, the linguistic strategies used for creative purposes are in the forms of transliteration and word pun.

### 1.1 Strategy: transliteration

Transliteration is the visual conversion of words or phrases written in one language into the characters of another orthography.

#### Example (1)



Texts printed on T-shirts can be represented in another language's orthography. As shown in (1), the Thai sound "อย่านะคะ" are transliterated in English orthography in "YAH-NA-KA." Sign initiators possibly aim at showing how to pronounce words or phrases printed on the T-shirts. The transliteration is not transcribed according

to the American Phonetic Alphabet; the sign creator seems to use a karaoke technique instead. With limited context, it is unclear what "YAH-NA-KA" ('do not... please') means in this context. The text on the T-shirt is presented as a single clause, as an act of dialogue. This is accomplished by making an initiating move in the form of a projected thought or speech directed by the wearer of the T-shirt text to a viewer. The Thai text is salient, and with Thai particle (นะคะ NA-KA) suggests that the wearer, who is the first participant, uses the T-shirt text (second participant) to perform an interpersonal relation with (any) readers. The T-shirt text can be read as a projection, whereby the wearer says or thinks "อย่านะคะ". The speech act involves politeness with the particle, but the message is concerned with forbidding someone to do something. In this context, the "YAH-NA-KA" is much smaller in size, which means that the Thai language is dominant. Moreover, the text appears to form the interpersonal relationship to inform prospective readers or audiences how to pronounce the sentence and what it means. The Thai language is, therefore, more important here.

#### Example (2)



The Thai text in (2) is much more salient. However, the Thai text is written in the Northeastern dialect, which is considered a sub-Thai culture. The term could be a projection in Caldwell's taxonomy referring to phrases or sentences used to carry thoughts and convey information. In (2), it could mean I am confused or the wearer is confused. However, the English translation with

a question mark could also suggest an interpersonal or an act of dialogue, an initiating move as a projected thought or speech directed from the wearer of the T-shirt text to a viewer. In this context, it could mean that the prospective audience or whatever is happening at the moment confuses the wearers.

### 1.2 Strategy: word pun

The phenomenon of puns is one of the types of wordplay and its specific features at phonological, graphological, morphological, lexical, syntactic, and textual levels. Leppihalme (1997) pointed out that wordplay can be based on several different features of the language or languages involved. These features are pronunciation, spelling, morphology, vocabulary, or syntax. According to its form, wordplay can be expressed in ambiguous verbal wit, orthographic peculiarities, sounds, and forms of words, breaking the grammar rules and other linguistic factors. It should also be said that context is very important for wordplay (puns) to work because their practical role, which is usually to be funny, satirical, sarcastic, etc., is fulfilled and worked out in a certain context.

#### Example (3)



The use of code-mixing in (3), translated as Happy New Year, but not a new wife, is considered hybridization, or the use of linguistic elements from another language within a unit such as a noun phrase, an adjective phrase, or a compound verb of the base language (Kachru, 1978).

A combination of different languages is found on the printed shirt, although the orthography is in Thai. The phrases แฮปปี้ นิว เยียร์ (Happy New Year), นี้อท (not), and นิว (new) are English words, whereas แต่ (but) and เมีย (wife) are Thai words. The use of code-mixing in (3) may serve the purpose of wordplay operating at phonological and pragmatic levels. Concerning the phonological level, the words เยียร์ (year) and เมีย (wife) are alliterations. The two words share the same vowel sound [ia], making the words sound catchy and appealing to T-shirt readers. Regarding the pragmatic level, the printed texts on T-shirts, such as "new year" and "new wife", might not be associated with people's new year resolutions. Therefore, the texts are probably humorous for T-shirt readers.

The wearer thinks or says, "Happy New Year, but I don't have a new wife," and this may be what is projected.

It should be noted that the intention for including several languages does not seem to be about conveying meanings, but more about the creative purposes. In other words, to achieve the purposes of the messages, the understanding of Thai language is crucial. However, without the knowledge of English, the T-shirt texts might not make sense at all.

## 2. To represent collectivism

Collectivism refers to the implication of a sense of collectivism that underlines the design. In other words, it concerns mutual understandings or stereotypes of a particular subject. In this study, images are the second most prominent, accounting for 16.46% of the overall data. It should be noted that determining the interlocutor's level of understanding is beyond the scope of the study. The section represents two ways that T-shirt designs can convey a sense of collectivism.

### 2.1 Strategies for constructing a sense of community through pop culture

Popular culture is a society's artifacts and symbols. According to Browne (2006, p. 7), pop culture is "our total life picture," which comes from everyday interactions, needs, wants, and cultural moments. T-shirt wearers seem to represent the culture that is the current trend in the society. In the following section, the images are involved in several layers of interpretation. However, comprehending the original messages (i.e., the nature of Disney princesses) allows us to understand the T-shirts' design in this context.

(4) Hipster Ariel

(5) Faith and Trust

(6) Pin Up Snow

(7) Glam Cinderella



### Examples (4) – (7)

The icons in (4) and (7) can all potentially enact an identifying process of the symbolic kind; that is, the wearer symbolizes or represents Ariel, Tinker Bell, Snow White and Cinderella, who are considered the main represented participants due to their large size and central positioning. In accordance with Caldwell (2017), these characters could be comparable to icons, which are realized by the proper nouns: they denote a particular person, place, event, or thing and are typically signified with an initial capital letter. All these proper nouns can be seen as construing a relational configuration between the wearer and the T-shirt text. More specifically, they can all enact an identification process of the symbolic kind; that is, the wearer symbolizes or represents a person, place, event, or thing. In this way, the icon is comparable in function to the label. The wearer takes on the particular attributes of the icon. The act of clothing oneself in the printed T-shirt and displaying the proper noun is an affinity between the attributes of the proper noun and the wearer. As a result, in (4), the wearer could say, "I represent or love Ariel".

These images can be interpreted within the conventional and unconventional traits of Disney characters. The immediate interpretation is that they are four classic Disney princesses. Even though only Ariel's and Cinderella's names are clearly spelled out and positioned within the same distinctive frames as the images, it is not difficult to recognize that the other two are Tinker Bell and Cinderella because of their tattoos. Due to their smaller size, these tattoos are Possessive Attributes to the Carriers or the Disney Characters: Ariel could be elaborated by sea creatures (4), Tinker Bell by Peter Pan (5), Snow White by seven dwarfs (6), and Cinderella with a mouse, two birds, and a pair of glass shoes (7). In examples (4), (6), and (7), the direction of the characters' faces and eyelashes form vectors to the text describing their characteristics, namely "Hipster" (4), "Pin up" (6), and "Glam" (7), which reaffirm their unique nature, predominantly portrayed by tattoos. Since tattoos are indicators of hypermasculinity (Peck, 2015), the insertion of tattoos into classic Disney princesses could be considered a challenge to the normative regime.

Overall, the mutual understanding of these designs embodies the idea of collectivism. The functions of these tattoos are indexical in that they connote an act of rebellion to the characters. Understanding the stereotyped characteristics of the princess, such as being ladylike, pleasant, and traditional, is nevertheless crucial in this context. Otherwise, the examples are just pictures of tattooed women.

## Examples (8) - (9)

(8)



(9)



Similar to (4) – (7), the design of T-shirts in (8) also makes use of the contrastive semantic features of "Gucci", a luxurious fashion brand known for its long history (established in 1921) and a man. The connection between this man and Gucci is evident, considering that they are positioned in the same frame. However, the connotation of Gucci appears to be out of place in this context. Considering that the Gucci logo covers his attire, the focus should not be on his fashion sense.

The man's face is salient and centered in the image. With this design, the potential wearer could perform an act of communication with the image of this guy gazing at the audience, possibly performing an image act demanding the viewer to interact with him. The image could also be interpreted that the wearer identifies with the man named Gucci, and he or she is initiating a conversation with any interactive participant.

Accompanied by an image of Einstein, projection (9) represents what wearers think or say that "NERD IS THE NEW TREND." The designer appears to borrow the semantic features of Einstein, an icon of a genius. The image, salient and positioned in the center, represents the "nerd," while a pair of gold glasses appear to represent the "new trend" in "NERD IS THE NEW TREND."

Two stereotypes are combined in the design. One is that, given his well-known brilliance, Einstein is a nerd. The phrase "a new trend" could signify a shift from the term's previous negative connotation of "nerd," which possibly meant it was not cool in the past, to its current positive connotation. Similar to the previous example, the message of this T-shirt implicates that I (the wearer) am a cool person (who is also a nerd).

## 2.2 Strategies for constructing a sense of collectivism through "celebration T-shirts"

In this study, "celebration T-shirts" refer to the kinds of T-shirts bought for specific occasions, namely ordination ceremonies or New Year celebrations. In Thailand, these kinds of T-shirts are sometimes purchased and worn together at a special event. In this context, the T-shirts serve similar functions to decorations to create a festive atmosphere for the event while being used as a mark of belonging to the same group or community.

T-shirts can also be considered timeless souvenirs for the wearers. As pointed out by Caldwell (2017), "the printed shirt has the potential to function as an authentic "souvenir" that construes a physical connection between the wearer and the respective proper name; a marker of somatic authenticity" (p.144). As a result, the "celebration T-shirts" serve as reminders of the event and perform an interpersonal function in which they link the wearers to the activity and the people they celebrate the events with. For this kind of T-shirt, it is the act of being there, the association of specific time and occasion, and the connotation of the celebrations that matter.

### Examples (10) – (14)



These T-shirts represent collectivism, as there appear to be occasions where T-shirts appear to be required to show oneness. According to Caldwell (2017), the characteristics of an icon are fulfilled by a proper name and a proper noun. Proper nouns have the capacity to connote not only relational processes but also material and mental transitivity configurations. These proper nouns constitute a relational arrangement between the wearer and the T-shirt text. They can execute a symbolic identification process in which the wearer represents a person, location, or item. They are capable of "doing" (in the physical world) and "sensing" (in the world of consciousness) in addition to "being" (in the world of abstract relations).



Examples (10) – (14) could, therefore, be interpreted as "I went to," "I love," or "I am at the retirement party or ordination ceremony."

The purposes of the T-shirts in celebrating certain special occasions might overshadow the texts and images. For instance, in (10), the design should be about wearers saying, 'Happy New Year', but the image of a moose holding a Christmas tree is more about Christmas. This could mean that the reason for buying the T-shirts: to celebrate the occasion (possibly as a group), could be more important than whether the design of the T-shirt is accurate or not. Besides, the inclusion of Christmas symbols could include an atmosphere of celebration rather than ignorance. In other words, it is the implication of the event that matters.

The visual images seem to elaborate or portray the activities done on those occasions. Since the texts are primarily written in Thai, and some events are specifically held in Thailand, images illustrate what they are about. For example, images of a temple in (13) and a monk in (14) indicate that the events are Buddhism related. Besides, all main represented participants in (10) - (14) appear also to perform an image act through their gazes, probably to demand or invite the viewers to join the events. The fact that they are monolingual and in Thai could also mean that the T-shirts are made for a specific audience who knows the language. However, the viewer can still have an idea of what the activity is about because of these images.

### 3. To foster interpersonal communication

Two types of relationships could be identified from the data. To start with, the internal relation between the pair, which is referred to as *a Couple T-shirts*, in this study. This means the interpersonal relationship is between the pair. The other kind of interpersonal relation is the external relation between the T-shirt's wearer and the viewer. The T-shirt's interpersonal relation is initiated by the wearer and addressed to the viewer.

In line with Caldwell (2017), the wearer of the printed T-shirts is the projecting clause, while the printed T-shirt is the projected one. In other words, the wearer takes on the participant role of either *Senser* or *Sayer*, while the T-shirt text takes the participant role of *idea* or *locution*, respectively. In this type of T-shirt, two participants (or *Sayers*) are projecting a message (or *idea* or *locution*) onto each other. At the same time, the viewer could be treated as an *observer* or *third person* in the *interlocution*.



### 3.1 Strategies for constructing the internal relationship between the pair

(15)



(16)



The relation is represented through the narrative representations in which gazes and vectors are significant to form an interpersonal relationship between the pair, the participants in (15) – (16) and the Actors and Goals to each other. For instance, the relationship could be indexically portrayed through a lightbulb and

a socket connected by an electrical wire, serving as a vector. The images in both T-shirts can signify the couple's strong relationship and that they rely on each other to be complete. Similarly, the relation between the pair in (16) is also visualized by a girl walking a dog, connected with a leash treated as a vector that links the girl to the dog. The images in (15) and (16) appear to be incomplete when the pairs are not in the same setting.

#### Examples (17) – (19)

(17)

(18)

(19)



When represented in the same frame, exactly as shown in (17) – (19), the interpersonal relationship between the couples can be straightforwardly expressed through the gaze and the exchange of hearts between the boy and girl in (17), the vector forming by Ultraman's hand and the Godzilla's gaze in (18) and the vectors created by hands pointing at each other, accompanied by the projection, "She's mine" and "He's mine" in (19). As a result, the wearer of the boy design in (17) could represent himself as "I am her boyfriend", while that of the girl design could say "I am his girlfriend" in (17). The image act performed

by "Hey!" and "Hi!", indicating the initiation of the conversation in (18) appears to be between the pair only.

The physical location and context of the wearers are essential for the couples to display their relationship to viewers. For the message to be successfully delivered, all the participants in the Couple T-shirts should be together and standing in the right position. The meaning can change, especially in (19), when the wearer stands next to other people due to the functions of vectors and gazes mentioned above.

### Examples (20) – (21)

(20)



(21)



Example (20) also shows that the Couple T-shirts could be realized through the lexical relationship. Words or phrases on printed T-shirts are used to represent lexical relations, which are relationships between the meanings of words. It is noticeable that T-shirt initiators presented the use of antonyms in an interesting way. In (20), the words "devil" and "angel" are opposites within the context of the relationship, making "devil" and "angel" converse antonyms. In (21), the bilingual texts in Korean and Thai indicate the oppositional relationship of 여자친구 (girlfriend) and 남자 친구 (boyfriend). The interpersonal relationship is not as strong in this context when the wearer is on his or her own. In this context, the label T-shirt text works as the Attribute or Value of the wearer. In other words, it characterizes, identifies, or labels wearers based on the texts in (20) and (21); they are displaying wearers are "devil", "angel", "girlfriend", or "boyfriend".

### 3.2 Strategies for expressing relation between the T-shirts' wearers and the viewers

Text on printed T-shirts can perform different actions. Sign creators generate phrases or sentences that might carry their thoughts and convey information, act, or provoke some action from sign readers.

According to Caldwell (2017), the language and graphics on the T-shirt are very indicative of a casual tone. The phrase used on the printed T-shirt is typically American English slang. Despite being written, the printed T-shirt content is often believed to be much more spoken-like due to the context in which it is enacted, and the range of languages represented on the T-shirts.

#### Example (22)



The projection feature in (22) indicates that wearers think or say, "Stop causing drama. You are not Shakespeare." The projection is elaborated by an image of Shakespeare blowing bubble gum, considering a casual and relaxing post. The interpersonal relation is constructed by a command in the imperative form, "Stop making drama." The speech act of command seems to suggest that people should avoid treating

a particular situation as if it is more severe or exciting than it is. The T-shirt creator seems to relate William Shakespeare with the concept of drama since he was a renowned English poet and produced many famous dramas, including Macbeth, Hamlet, and King Lear. Without this knowledge, some creative meaning can be lost. In this example, the image appears to support the text because there is not enough context to identify the characters as Shakespeare without the projection.

#### Example (23)



In the image (23), the projection of what wearers say or ask, "Do you have PROBLEM?" is illustrated with an image of money and a gun. The image may be salient, but it is the text that conveys the meaning. It is possible to assume that money and a gun can be a solution to the problem since the readers

can draw on background knowledge that people can solve problems by using money and

violence (by using a gun). The projection is considered a speech act that offers a solution to the viewer. However, it is also possible that money and violence are the problems. In this context, the message seems open for interpretation. In addition, example (23) seems to suggest that the T-shirt wearers ignore the essence of ungrammaticality, but what they tend to be interested in might be the image or the key message on the printed T-shirt.

### Examples (24) – (26)

(24)



(25)



(26)



Examples (24) to (26) are concerned with impoliteness. "Impoliteness" is defined as "the intentional performance of face-threatening acts (FTAs) that are both gratuitous and disagreeable" (Bousfield, 2008). In this case, the T-shirt's text could be a projection: the wearer saying "damn!" in (24) to express their amazement, irritation, or exasperation. The communicative function is interpersonal, regardless of the receivers' responses. Additionally, printed texts on T-shirts are probably ways to name or address someone inappropriately, such as utilizing a disrespectful name in (25) "อีดกทง" (Golden Flower), referring to being a slut, or in (26) a bilingual text of the word "idiot." Obviously, taboo language is employed. It can be assumed that T-shirt wearers do not desire to be polite or do not want to be accepted by T-shirt readers, and positive impoliteness strategies are used in (26) to (26) to attack the hearer's positive face. In other words, T-shirt wearers tend not to care about T-shirt readers' faces.

### Example (27)



Printed texts on T-shirts show the employment of the politeness strategy, which denotes any behavior or action of interlocutors, including language, to maintain the face of people with whom they are interacting (Huang, 2014). In (27),

"Please wear a mask before you speak." is an example of the negative politeness strategy in projecting wearers' thoughts or words. It attempts to address the reader's desire not to be imposed upon with the politeness marker "กรุณา," meaning "please," indicating in Thai that sign readers are not forced or imposed on. The printed texts in (27) are relevant to the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. People should keep social distance and avoid social gatherings.

### Discussion

The study has both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it gives an insight into the analysis of T-shirt landscapes. Caldwell's (2017) research on the role of printed T-shirts as background to spoken discourse, gestures, and other communicative events is supported by analyzing texts and images on T-shirts. The printed T-shirt texts and images reflect and complete any immediate, action-oriented task. The study builds on what Caldwell has done (2017) by including images to explore the topics of cultural and traditional events, festive occasions, word puns, entertainment, and interpersonal and intrapersonal communication.

The study indicates some correlations between T-shirts and gender expectations since the designs of some T-shirts can be gender specific. For instance, even though the designs make use of unconventional representations of Disney characters in examples (4) to (7), they might not be appealing to men due to the primary interpretation of the images: that they are about famous princesses. The findings align with Aitto-Oja's (2016) study, which finds that there are distinctive designs specifically for boys and girls. Girls' clothing has cheerful texts and positive quotes. This leads to the assumption that happiness and sophistication are some of the characteristics emphasized by being a girl. On the other hand,

boys' clothing features phrases about pursuing dreams without giving up, as well as clearly recognizable sports team logos, numbers, country logos, and symbols that provide a sense of belonging.

Wearing T-shirts as a couple and a group appears to reflect a collectivist society since some T-shirts are probably intended to be worn as a group to celebrate special occasions. For instance, the term 'retirement party' in (11) and (12) does not normally seem to be an attractive design for personal and daily use due to the specific nature of the retirement party that does not happen very often. The practice is in line with a collectivist society (Hofstede, 2011) in that the needs and goals of the group are prioritized over the needs and desires of individuals. Interdependence and one's place in the group are highly valued in such societies, as is the importance of personal relationships with others. In examples (10) – (14), attending events as a group, such as a New Year's celebration, an ordination ceremony, or a retirement party, while all wearing matching T-shirts, may be interpreted as a sign that group loyalty is valued, that family and community rights are prioritized over individual rights, and that the common good is more important than personal gain. Additionally, wearing Couple T-shirts in (15) – (16) and (20) – (21) can be considered of importance in a collectivistic culture to preserve peace and harmony among individuals.

Some may interpret the practice of identifying oneself through wearing a T-shirt as a reflection of individualism that places emphasis on one's rights. In this sense, "I" refers to a person's sense of self (Hofstede, 2011). The analysis of texts and images can be interpreted that the wearers intend to communicate that they are a princess in (4) to (7), and that they are nerdy in (8). T-shirt wearers seem to show a belief in personality. They believe that they make their own decisions in choosing T-shirts and that those decisions are intended to reflect their personal identities.

The study also has pedagogical implications in that teachers can use authentic signs to integrate content into classroom activities. In that case, students may find learning foreign languages more motivating and engaging because linguistic landscapes reflect genuine language use in diverse ways that are familiar to them (Bradshaw, 2014). Therefore, linguistic landscapes help students learn proper and improper language use found on the printed T-shirts and how language affects how people talk to each other by improving their critical thinking and language skills. In addition, according to Sayer (2010), students can learn about their community's social communication networks through linguistic landscapes. The linguistic

landscape can also be used as an educational tool to connect students' school lives to their communities by engaging them in authentic activities outside the classroom. Learners can collect the data from T-shirts in their local communities and analyze the languages and images used on the signage.

## Conclusion

The combination of textual and visual strategies performs three primary functions: 1) to express wearers' interest in multilingualism, 2) to represent collectivism, and 3) to foster interpersonal communication. Consistent with Caldwell's (2017) findings, T-shirt texts can serve communicative purposes. The investigation also reveals numerous linguistic strategies, including code-mixing, language hybridization, transliterations, word puns, proper names, antonyms, speech acts, politeness strategies, and impoliteness strategies. The examples demonstrate that linguistic strategies are beneficial tools for enabling T-shirts to engage in communicative acts. They attract the viewer's attention, communicate interpersonal messages, captivate the reader, and represent the wearers' identities.

The visual strategies include orthography, cartoons, tattoos, images of famous people, pictures of special celebrations, and symbols that also reveal images' functions in reflecting what the wearers think or say. They can either replace the text entirely or work alongside the text. For example, in (9), the projection "Nerd is the new trend" is illustrated by the image of Einstein, portrayed in a trendy way. On the other hand, the image act performed by the guy in the image (8) appears to demand the viewer's attention in a manner similar to the speech act without textual explanation.

Though the act of wearing a T-shirt is considered a personal choice, the intention to wear it can also say something about collectivism. T-shirts can express group harmony with the celebration T-shirts (10) – (14) when each member is expected to wear the same thing to the same event. This type of T-shirt appears to say something about the special occasions, not the wearer's identity. Additionally, in the Couple T-shirts, the couple is strongly connected by a vector in the form of an electric cord in (15) and a leash in (16), images can display a strong bond between a couple. Moreover, collectivism is concerned with T-shirts that are designed with complex connotations requiring mutual understanding to completely understand the message, namely the association of Shakespeare and the term "drama" in (22).

All in all, the T-shirts are additional tools in the multimodal world for the wearers to display messages about their interests and individual and collective identities among other forms of communication, namely face-to-face interaction, and social media.

Future research could concentrate on the perspectives of T-shirt manufacturers and T-shirt wearers. Data from interviews with manufacturers and T-shirt wearers should be included to provide more information on manufacturers' and customers' points of view, such as why manufacturers create specific designs of T-shirts, what designs T-shirt wearers typically choose to buy, and to what extent T-shirt wearers understand texts and images on their T-shirts. The results may provide predictions about the current or future trends in the T-shirt industry. The aspects of creating and purchasing T-shirts could give us better insights into the phenomena of societies, communities, and other potential functions of T-shirts.



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