JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE
2026, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 129-149

RILCA OPEN ACCESS

Does the Visibility of Migrant Languages Mean Inclusion? Migrant Adaptation, Institutional and Market Accommodation, and Asymmetrical Incorporation in Linguistic Landscape Research

Mitsuko Ono[a]

[a]Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University

ABSTRACT

Research on migrant linguistic landscapes has expanded in recent years across diverse cities and migrant populations. It shows how migrant-language displays mediate access to goods and services, ethnic and transnational identities, commercial activity, and interactions between migrants and receiving societies (Blommaert, 2013, 2014; Nambu, 2024; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009; Yochim, 2020). Yet whether such public visibility signifies institutional recognition, substantive access to services, and social belonging remains insufficiently examined. This critical integrative review asks how linguistic landscape research conceptualizes migrant visibility, identity, belonging, commercial activity, and relations with receiving societies, and under what conditions receiving institutions and markets adapt to migrants. It traces the field's development from language counts and ethnolinguistic vitality to ethnographic, spatial, and multimodal approaches attentive to mobility, superdiversity, sign producers, audiences, and material form. The findings show that linguistic visibility may facilitate access and recognition, but may also reflect commodification, social separation, surveillance, or selective market responses (Ager & Strang, 2008; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Nambu, 2024). Existing research commonly treats adaptation as migrants' movement towards the language and society of the receiving context, while giving less systematic attention to adaptation by markets, institutions, and local communities. The article therefore proposes asymmetrical incorporation as a framework that distinguishes linguistic visibility from social inclusion and examines who adapts to whom, through which actors and infrastructures, and under what power relations. Comparing marginalized migrants with privileged mobile populations, including affluent expatriates, reveals how unequal forms of belonging are produced spatially, sustained commercially, and governed institutionally.

KEYWORDS

Linguistic landscape, migration, belonging, transnational urban space, language adaptation, asymmetrical incorporation

CORRESPONDENCE

Mitsuko Ono (mitsuko.ono@mahidol.ac.th)

INTRODUCTION

International migration does more than alter cities' demographic composition. It also changes the languages through which urban space is organized, navigated, marketed, and claimed (Scollon & Scollon, 2003; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009). Shopfronts, school notices, advertisements, signs at religious institutions, municipal notices, menus, and handwritten postings make some people recognizable in public space while leaving others

relatively invisible (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Such signs may help newcomers access services and sustain social networks, but they may also become objects of regulation, commercial appropriation, and local conflict (Leeman & Modan, 2009; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). Linguistic landscapes are therefore not neutral reflections of diversity. They are material sites in which relations among migrants, receiving institutions, local residents, and markets are produced and negotiated (Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009).

Landry and Bourhis (1997) offered an influential formulation, defining it through the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs and distinguishing its informational and symbolic functions. Their approach established a basis for examining how the relative presence of languages relates to ethnolinguistic vitality. Subsequent research broadened the field beyond language inventories and comparisons between official and non-official signs. Scholars increasingly examined sign producers and intended audiences, their emplacement and material form, the histories sedimented in particular neighborhoods, and the wider political economy that assigns unequal value to linguistic resources (Backhaus, 2007; Blommaert, 2013; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009). From this perspective, written language in public space is not simply evidence of a group's presence. It helps make social categories, identities, and spatial boundaries meaningful.

This expanded perspective makes linguistic landscape research especially relevant to migration studies. Migrants create businesses, institutions, places of worship, schools, and informal networks whose signs can materialize transnational connections and practical infrastructures of settlement. At the same time, public authorities and local businesses address migrants through multilingual information, regulation, and targeted services. Research in migrant neighborhoods shows that linguistic landscapes can register rapid population change, historical layering, commercial networks, contested legitimacy, and divergent understandings of the same urban space (Blommaert, 2013, 2014; Nambu, 2024; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009; Yochim, 2020).

Yet the conceptual relationship between linguistic landscapes and migrant incorporation remains underdeveloped. Much migration research has treated linguistic adaptation primarily as a change undertaken by migrants: newcomers acquire the dominant language, learn institutional norms, and become more capable of participating in the receiving society. Linguistic landscape studies complicate this assumption by making changes in the receiving environment visible. Municipalities translate information, schools introduce community languages, landlords and service providers target migrant clients, and commercial districts reorganize around mobile consumers and entrepreneurs. In Dubai's Souk Naif, for instance, multilingual commercial practices reflect a migrant-majority urban setting in which English functions as a lingua franca and languages become detached from a simple correspondence between territory and national identity (Karolak, 2022). In Bangkok's Huai Khwang district, new Chinese migrants (Xinyimin) view Chinese-dominant signage as a practical resource for organizing economic and social networks, while some Thai residents interpret the same signs as the displacement of commercial space or questionable regulatory compliance (Wu et al., 2026). Such findings show that a sign's social meaning cannot be inferred from language choice alone; it depends on who produced it,

whom it addresses, how it is received, and what institutional and economic relations sustain it.

These cases show that linguistic accommodation is only one domain of integration and that its effects vary with the receiving conditions and resources available to different migrant groups. Ager and Strang's (2008) framework distinguishes language and cultural knowledge as facilitators of substantive access to employment, housing, education, and health, social connections, and rights. This distinction shows why understanding translated information does not necessarily mean that migrants can use services or develop sustained relationships with receiving institutions and residents. Community-language signs may lower linguistic barriers, but eligibility, legal status, cost, and service capacity may still restrict access. Portes and Zhou's (1993) concept of selective acculturation further demonstrates that maintaining heritage languages, family norms, and ethnic networks need not signify withdrawal from the receiving society. When combined with institutional participation, these ties can provide information and support for socioeconomic mobility. Fechter's (2007) ethnography of Western expatriates in Jakarta presents a contrasting pattern. Corporate provision of housing, mobility, health care, education, and other services enabled expatriates to participate extensively in employment and consumption without depending on average local income levels or public services. Yet everyday life could remain concentrated in expatriate housing, international schools, specialist services, and co-national networks, with limited use of the local language and limited reciprocal contact with Indonesians. Economic incorporation and social distance could therefore coexist. From a linguistic landscape perspective, expatriate-oriented signs and service information form an environment in which institutions and markets can partly substitute for migrants' adaptation to the local language.

The contrast across these cases concerns who bears the costs and labor of adaptation. For refugees, low-wage migrants, and the second generation, migrants themselves, their families, and community organizations often carry the burden of language learning, information seeking, institutional mediation, and the construction of mutual-support networks. For commercially valued mobile groups such as corporate expatriates, by contrast, employers, schools, health-care providers, property markets, and commercial services may reorganize the receiving environment around migrants' languages and lifestyles, reducing the burden of local-language learning and institutional adaptation. The article develops asymmetrical incorporation to analyze this unequal distribution of who adapts—migrants or the receiving environment—and who pays the associated costs. The concept asks who is expected to change linguistic practices, which institutions or market actors provide accommodation, and whose mobility generates commercially valued infrastructure. It also distinguishes visibility from inclusion. Migrant-language signs may provide access to information or recognition, but warnings and prohibitions may position migrants as subjects of regulation, while advertising and neighborhood branding may commodify their culture (Leeman & Modan, 2009; Nambu, 2024). Their visibility therefore cannot, by itself, grant access to public services or equal membership. Conversely, migrants may participate extensively in employment, consumption, education, and health-care markets through migrant-oriented services while remaining socially and linguistically distant from the wider

receiving society (Fechter, 2007; Nambu, 2024). Linguistic landscapes can expose these divergences by showing who produces signs, whom they address, and which forms of access and participation they enable or restrict (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Leeman & Modan, 2009).

The review asks the following four questions. RQ1: How has linguistic landscape research conceptualized relations between migrant communities and receiving societies? RQ2: What do signs reveal about migrant visibility, identity, belonging, and commercial life? RQ3: Which assumptions about adaptation and incorporation structure the existing literature? RQ4: And how might a migration-centered approach account for cases in which receiving environments adapt to migrants, including privileged mobile populations? To answer these questions, the article critically synthesizes foundational scholarship and empirical studies of migrant, refugee, return-migrant, and transnational urban settings. It first traces the field's development from ethnolinguistic vitality to ethnographic and spatial approaches. It then examines migrant visibility and belonging, commercial landscapes and migrant economies, and the unequal politics of accommodation. The final sections propose asymmetrical incorporation as a comparative framework and identify an agenda for research on transnational Asian cities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From Linguistic Landscape to Migrant Space

The early formulation of linguistic landscape research provided a direct way to connect visible language with relations between social groups. Landry and Bourhis (1997) defined the linguistic landscape through the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs within a territory. They distinguished two functions of the linguistic landscape. The informational function refers to how the languages used on public and commercial signs identify where a language can be used, which goods and services are available, who the intended readers are, and where geographical boundaries between language groups may lie. For example, a concentration of shop signs in a migrant language can indicate where its speakers can obtain goods, practical information, and community support. The symbolic function, by contrast, concerns how a language's public prominence affects the social status, legitimacy, institutional recognition, and perceived capacity for continued collective existence of its speakers (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In this review, this distinction means that signs communicate not only where particular languages can be used but also whose presence is treated as a legitimate part of public space. This distinction provides a starting point for the review's later analysis of visibility, recognition, access, and belonging. Signs can function as practical infrastructure through which migrants reach information, goods, and services, while their authorship and prominence can also indicate whether speakers are treated as legitimate participants. However, as later analysis shows, public linguistic visibility does not automatically guarantee effective access to public services or belonging in the receiving society.

Early linguistic landscape studies of urban settings operationalized these propositions by recording the frequency, order, size, and combination of languages on signs and by comparing official, top-down signs with commercial and community-produced, bottom-up signs. This work made language hierarchies empirically observable. In Israel, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) interpreted the linguistic landscape as a symbolic construction of public space shaped by communicative considerations, identity claims, and power relations. Backhaus's (2007) study of Tokyo similarly classified multilingual signs by producer and displayed language, revealing differences between official language policy and everyday commercial practice. In Bangkok, Huebner (2006) documented the extensive presence and mixing of Thai and English and linked environmental print to globalization and language change. Together, these studies showed that urban multilingualism is neither random nor adequately explained by census categories: different actors select languages for different audiences and purposes.

These studies of urban linguistic landscapes established methods for examining language hierarchies and power relations among actors in public space, thereby providing an important foundation for analyzing migrant communities (Backhaus, 2007; Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Huebner, 2006). However, neither language frequency nor the top-down/bottom-up distinction directly translates into a migrant population's size or its degree of social inclusion (Leeman & Modan, 2009). Applying these methods to migration therefore requires attention to the limits of counting named languages. For example, English on a sign does not necessarily indicate the settlement of migrants from English-speaking countries; it may index international modernity, sophistication, elite consumption, tourism, or a practical lingua franca (Huebner, 2006; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Karolak, 2022). In Thailand, English may appear not only in Latin script but also in Thai-script transliteration, thereby becoming localized while conveying modernity and sophistication to both tourists and Thai consumers (Phanthaphoommee & Gu, 2026). Nor do bottom-up signs automatically express resistance to a dominant order. In Bulawayo, citizen- and business-produced shop signs reproduced an established ideology of English as the legitimate language (Siziba & Maseko, 2024). High visibility of a heritage language does not necessarily indicate frequent everyday use. Ethnic restaurants and grocery stores may use a heritage language in names, menu items, typefaces, and national symbols to communicate authenticity even when service encounters occur in the receiving society's language (Leeman & Modan, 2009). Conversely, migrants may play an important role in the local economy yet remain publicly less visible when their homes and workplaces are dispersed, and heritage-language literacy practices remain within households or digital spaces such as messaging applications and community social-media groups rather than appearing on street signs (Backhaus, 2007; Blommaert, 2013). Administrative regulation may also restrict minority-language display through laws or ordinances requiring the inclusion of an official language, rules governing scripts, sign area and placement, permit requirements, or demands to alter or remove non-compliant signs (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009; Wu et al., 2026). Visibility is therefore evidence requiring interpretation, not a direct measure of inclusion (Backhaus, 2007; Huebner, 2006; Leeman & Modan, 2009).

The spatial and semiotic turn supplied theoretical tools for interpreting visible language in relation to sign producers, intended audiences, placement, and the surrounding environment rather than treating it as a direct measure of migrant population size or inclusion. Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotic approach understood meaning as a relationship among discourse, visual form, social interaction, and emplacement. A sign's meaning varies with where it is placed, how people move around it, what activities occur there, and which other signs surround it. Subsequent research on semiotic landscapes extended analysis beyond written language to images, typefaces, architecture, objects, and spatial design (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). These approaches are important for analysing migrant spaces because community formation is rarely expressed through language choice alone. A grocery store, clinic, religious institution, or school may combine scripts, national symbols, commodities, photographs, and spatial arrangements to address several audiences simultaneously. The resulting landscape may orient newcomers, reassure established community members, attract local customers, and commodify cultural difference at the same time. Research on place-making in tourist destinations likewise shows that signs' symbolic meaning is not fixed by their producers but remains fluidly constituted through the perceptions and interpretations of government agencies, private businesses, and visitors (Li et al., 2023).

Scholarship on mobility and materiality further shifted this understanding. Stroud and Mpendukana (2009) argued that static conceptions of language and territory could not capture the complexity of transnational multilingual mobility in rapidly changing South African townships. Their material ethnography foregrounded the social histories, economic conditions, and spatial practices through which signs acquire meaning. Blommaert's (2013, 2014) ethnographic approach similarly treated linguistic landscapes as infrastructures of superdiversity. Signs are produced at particular moments and, as they remain, are overwritten or removed, forming temporal layers that record neighborhood change. In Blommaert's (2013) Antwerp study, professionally produced window lettering coexisted with a handwritten theft warning apparently written ad hoc by a shopkeeper. The former indicated access to professional production skills and retail infrastructure; the latter represented a short-term sign practice improvised in response to a particular event. The relevant difference is therefore not an abstract notion of institutional permanence, but the extent to which sign producers have access to continuing display space, professional means of production, and resources for maintaining signs (Blommaert, 2013).

The concept of superdiversity helps explain why this shift was necessary. Vertovec (2007) used the term to describe diversification not only by ethnicity or country of origin but also by legal status, migration channel, labor-market position, gender, age, and patterns of transnational connection. From this perspective, a "migrant community" cannot be assumed to share a single language, a common migration history, or a common relationship to the receiving society. People associated with the same national category may differ in generation, class, visa status, mobility, literacy, and length of residence. Linguistic landscapes can register parts of this complexity, but only when signs are situated within the

social organization of the neighborhood rather than treated as self-explanatory tokens of group presence.

This reconceptualization changes what counts as migrant space. Migrant space is not limited to a bounded ethnic enclave marked by the repeated display of one minority language. It may be a network that supports migrants' everyday lives by connecting restaurants, clinics, schools, religious institutions, real-estate services, and transport routes dispersed across several parts of a city through digital platforms such as messaging applications, community groups on social media, and migrant-oriented information websites. Nor is migrant space produced only by migrants. Municipalities, schools, and hospitals decide which languages appear in public information and which are translated; landlords and developers control where and under what conditions signs may be installed; and businesses and local organizations produce signs for customers and members. These actors possess unequal funding, personnel, access to space, and authority to decide which languages are displayed or translated. Linguistic landscapes are therefore co-produced by actors with unequal resources and regulatory authority (Blommaert, 2013; Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

Commercial landscapes make this point particularly clear. Kasanga's (2012) study of central Phnom Penh linked language distribution in a commercial neighborhood to economic change and the audiences businesses imagined. Research on migrant cities also shows that English and other highly mobile linguistic resources can operate across national and ethnic boundaries. In Dubai's Souk Naif, linguistic diversity is organized around extensive migrant commerce, and English functions as a lingua franca among groups with limited motivation or opportunity to learn Arabic (Karolak, 2022). Such cases complicate a territorial model in which the national language represents the receiving society, and each additional language represents a separate migrant community. Urban markets generate multilingual repertoires organized around mobility, exchange, and differentiated consumer value.

To understand migrant space through linguistic landscapes, established methods are insufficient; the unit of analysis must change. The central object is not the isolated sign or the quantitative distribution of languages, but the relationship among mobile people, sign producers, readers, material and institutional infrastructures, and regimes of value. The relational placement of signs within these connections among people, actors, and spaces draws on Blommaert (2013) and Stroud and Mpendukana (2009). Ager and Strang (2008), by contrast, organize access to employment, housing, education, and health, together with social connections and linguistic and cultural knowledge, as domains of migrant and refugee integration. Connecting these two bodies of work, this article poses an original analytical question. When shops, schools, hospitals, and government offices provide signs and guidance in migrant languages, enabling migrants to access necessary goods, services, and information without relying exclusively on the dominant language, whose adaptation makes that access possible? Is it the result of migrants learning the dominant language, institutions translating essential information, firms pursuing profitable consumers, or communities constructing their own systems of support and information? These processes may coexist,

but their balance varies with migrants' legal status, class position, and commercial value. The analysis below uses this distinction to separate linguistic visibility from social inclusion and to examine how migrant groups may remain unequal in access to public services, rights, decision-making, and social recognition even when their languages appear in public space.

METHODOLOGY

Review Design and Scope

This article uses a critical integrative review to connect two bodies of scholarship that have often developed in parallel: linguistic landscape research and migration research. An integrative review is appropriate when the purpose is not to estimate a common effect across comparable studies, but to combine theoretical and empirical work, identify assumptions that organize a field, and develop a new conceptual framework (Torraco, 2005, 2016). The present review therefore does not claim the exhaustive coverage associated with a systematic review or meta-analysis. Its objective is conceptual synthesis: to examine how linguistic landscape studies represent migrants and receiving societies, and to use that literature to reconsider the direction, burden, and inequality of linguistic adaptation.

The review corpus combined foundational works that established the principal concepts and methods of linguistic landscape research with empirical studies in which international migration, migrant communities, refugees, diasporas, return migration, transnational mobility, or migrant-oriented commercial districts were central to the analysis. Literature searches used Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, combining "linguistic landscape" with migrant*, migration, immigrant*, refugee*, diaspora, transnational*, expatriate*, ethnic business, belonging, integration, and incorporation. No publication-year restriction was imposed; the final review corpus included publications published between 1993 and 2026. Backward citation tracing from foundational collections and forward citation tracing from influential empirical studies were used to identify works that did not describe themselves primarily as migration research. Duplicate records were removed, after which titles and abstracts were screened for relevance. The full texts of potentially relevant publications were then assessed against the review's conceptual scope. Studies were included when they analyzed publicly visible language or semiotic displays and made a substantive claim about mobile populations, community formation, access, identity, belonging, commercial activity, regulation, or relations with a receiving society. Only English-language publications were included. Studies concerned only with language teaching, tourism, or multilingual signs without a relevant mobility dimension were used selectively for conceptual context rather than treated as part of the migration-focused core (Torraco, 2016).

The analysis proceeds through iterative thematic coding. Each text is read for six dimensions: the actors who produce or regulate signs; the audiences imagined or addressed; the functions assigned to visible language; the infrastructures that sustain a linguistic environment; the forms of power or value attached to languages and mobile groups; and the social outcome inferred from the landscape. It pays particular attention to whether

adaptation is represented as a responsibility of migrants, an accommodation by receiving institutions and markets, or a negotiated process involving both. The synthesis first reconstructs the field's conceptual movement from language visibility and ethnolinguistic vitality toward emplacement, materiality, mobility, and superdiversity. It then compares how studies explain migrant identity, belonging, commerce, and governance. The final stage develops asymmetrical incorporation as a framework for analyzing unequal directions of adaptation. The six coding dimensions served as cross-cutting analytical lenses across Sections 4.1 and 4.2, whereas the four dimensions proposed in Section 5.1—direction, mediation, resource position, and consequence—were derived from the findings in Section 4 and are not Results headings. This approach has two limitations. First, the field uses overlapping terms, including linguistic landscape, semiotic landscape, schoolscape, servicescape, and ethnographic linguistic landscape; no single search string can recover all relevant work. Second, English-language publication databases privilege particular regions and academic traditions. The conclusions are therefore analytical rather than bibliometric: they identify recurring concepts and neglected questions but do not measure the global prevalence of particular findings. The review corpus was finalized on 8 October 2026 and comprises 27 works.

RESULTS

This section directly answers RQ1 and RQ2 and provides the empirical basis for RQ3 and RQ4. Section 4.1 examines how signs mediate relations between migrant communities and receiving societies, including commercial life and access to services. Section 4.2 analyses visibility, identity, recognition, and belonging. Section 5.1 then uses findings from both sections to answer RQ3 and RQ4 concerning the direction of adaptation and unequal resource distribution.

Migration, Language, and the Urban Landscape

The reviewed literature shows that migration becomes legible in urban space through a combination of community practices, institutional responses, and market activity. Migrant languages appear on shopfronts, school notices, religious buildings, health information, advertisements, menus, and informal announcements. These signs do practical work: they direct people to services, circulate information, identify trusted providers, and connect newly arrived residents to social and economic networks. At the same time, they symbolically position particular populations within the city. A language may signal that a neighborhood is accessible to its speakers, that a group has developed durable institutions, or that a commercial district expects continued demand from a mobile population (Blommaert, 2014; Nambu, 2024; Yochim, 2020).

This relationship cannot be explained solely as a one-way process in which migrants bring a language used in the country of origin into a receiving city and display it for members of the same origin group. In migrant neighborhoods, businesses may differentiate among

several audiences, using a migrant language for community members, the national language to meet administrative requirements or address local residents, and English for transactions across language groups. In his study of a commercial district in central Phnom Penh, Kasanga (2012) found that Khmer, Cambodia's national language, was the most common language on signs, followed by English. English expanded rapidly in a city once strongly influenced by French and where the teaching and use of foreign languages had also been tightly restricted, gradually displacing French. This shift did not directly indicate the size of an English-speaking resident population. Rather, it reflected the growing commercial value of English amid globalization, redevelopment of the city center, generational changes in language attitudes, and changes in education policy.

Dubai's Souk Naif is home to migrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and many other places, and numerous languages are spoken on its streets. Yet the signs Karolak (2022) studied were dominated by Arabic and English; most other languages used in migrants' everyday lives appeared rarely. Migrants selected English as a lingua franca for transactions, while Arabic appeared in line with official-language requirements. The result shows that languages spoken in a city do not appear on signs in the same proportions. Legal requirements, language status, and businesses' decisions to reach a broad clientele narrow the displayed repertoire largely to Arabic and English. The transliteration of English into Thai script in Bangkok offers a further example. It lets Thai readers pronounce English-derived business names and expressions while businesses retain the ability to advertise a foreign or international image. The receiving society's businesses thus do not merely display a foreign language unchanged; they reshape it into a form that local readers can understand and pronounce (Phanthaphoommee & Gu, 2026).

Ethnographic research adds a temporal dimension to this account. Blommaert (2013, 2014) treats signs as part of infrastructures that emerge, change, and sometimes disappear with shifts in neighborhood populations and economic activity. Handwritten notices, professionally printed signs, telephone numbers, scripts, and production technologies may reveal unequal resources and different migration histories. Yochim's (2020) study of unofficial signage in a US refugee-resettlement city likewise identified both the presence of new languages and layers left by earlier migrant populations. Migrant space is therefore historical rather than static. Visible languages can record continuing arrival, institutionalization, commercial consolidation, and sometimes replacement. A comparison of historical postcards with contemporary fieldwork in Slavonia and Baranja similarly showed that language status and predominance changed with political, economic, and migratory transformations, and that linguistic landscapes record both continuity and change in spatial identity (Melem Hajdarović, 2024).

Displays of migrant languages perform different functions depending on who produces them and whom they address. Signs made by migrants, community businesses, religious institutions, and associations communicate information about goods, worship, housing, work, and local affairs to people who use the same language, supporting everyday life and internal community networks. On Islamic Street in Shin-Ōkubo, multilingual signs functioned as information supporting migrants' everyday needs and transnational activities.

In Koreatown in the same neighborhood, by contrast, signs in Korean that displayed Korean language and culture also served as commercial resources, offering Japanese visitors a sense of authenticity and intercultural experience (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Signs for migrants produced by schools, hospitals, municipalities, and other receiving-society institutions translate how to access classes, medical consultations, disaster evacuation, and administrative procedures, thereby creating points of entry to public services. Translation alone, however, does not establish that migrants are recognized as equal social members. In Japanese Brazilian communities, Portuguese signs installed by the receiving society reveal language policy and responses to cultural difference, whereas signs installed by Brazilians publicly express and construct Brazilian identity (Nambu, 2024). The meaning of the same sign may also vary by reader. In Bangkok's Huai Khwang, Chinese-dominant signs helped new Chinese migrants locate businesses and social networks, but some Thai residents interpreted them as evidence that Chinese-owned businesses were replacing existing commercial space or that sign regulations were not being observed (Wu et al., 2026). Multilingual signs can therefore be treated as evidence of inclusion only after examining their producers and intended readers, the services they actually make accessible, and whether they support everyday life, sell cultural difference, or regulate conduct.

Even when markets adjust language, adaptation does not proceed in only one direction. Fechter's (2007) study of Western expatriates in Jakarta documented an environment in which companies paid for housing, mobility, health care, and children's education, while expatriate-oriented schools, housing, imported goods, specialized services, and co-national social circles supported everyday life. Fechter did not study street signage, so the book cannot be used as evidence about the number of signs in particular languages. Nevertheless, the expatriate infrastructure it documents identifies conditions under which linguistic landscapes may emerge in real-estate advertising, school and health-care information, and shop signs as host markets accommodate expatriates' languages and partly substitute for migrants' acquisition of the local language (Fechter, 2007). This pattern differs from Koreatown in Shin-Ōkubo, where ethnic businesses use Korean and Japanese to sell goods and services to Japanese visitors while retaining the cultural authenticity associated with Korean language and culture. In the former, the receiving society's market shifts toward privileged migrants; in the latter, migrant or ethnic businesses target consumers in the receiving society (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Islamic Street, although located in the same neighborhood, has a different intended audience: its multilingual signs primarily support migrants' everyday lives and transnational activities rather than targeting tourists from the receiving society (Nambu & Ono, 2025).

Across the reviewed cases, four functions connect migration to linguistic landscapes. First, signs in migrant languages communicate information about shops, health care, education, religious institutions, housing, and work, creating pathways through which migrants can live in the city (Blommaert, 2014). Second, the repeated presence of migrant languages in public space makes their users recognizable to others and may assert a claim to a place in the neighborhood (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Third, sign producers select languages for particular customers and users, assigning different commercial values to the same

migrant language. In Shin-Ōkubo, multilingual signs on Islamic Street communicated information migrants needed in everyday life, whereas Korean signs in Koreatown also conveyed the authenticity of Korean culture to Japanese visitors and helped sell commodities and dining experiences (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Fourth, installation standards, business permits, municipal and property-management policies, residents' complaints, and demands to alter or remove signs shape where and in which languages signs may appear. Displays of migrant languages therefore do not arise naturally or persist simply because migrant populations grow. Their form and durability depend on whether public institutions provide translation, businesses use a language to attract customers, and local residents accept or contest the display (Nambu, 2024; Wu et al., 2026).

Identity, Visibility, and Belonging

The visibility of migrant-language signs in public space does not necessarily mean local society accepts their users. A sign on a migrant-owned shop may tell customers who use the same language where they can find goods and services. By contrast, a multilingual sign produced by a municipality or school communicates administrative procedures or educational information to migrants. Migrant languages may also stage the authenticity of a local culture and attract tourists or general consumers (Leeman & Modan, 2009; Nambu & Ono, 2025). However, when prohibitions or warnings appear in migrant languages, the language simultaneously conveys information and marks a particular migrant population as a target of regulation (Nambu, 2024). Chinese new migrants may read Chinese signs as information needed for everyday life and business, while Thai residents may interpret the same signs as evidence of rapid commercial change or regulatory violations (Wu et al., 2026). Analysis must therefore establish not merely whether a sign exists, but who produced it, who reads it, and what actions and evaluations follow from it (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006).

Japanese Brazilian communities show that the visibility of Portuguese does not mean Brazilians are treated as equal members of society. Portuguese signs installed by Japanese public agencies and local institutions convey information about evacuation, everyday rules, and public services to Brazilian residents. By contrast, signs installed by Brazilians in shops and community settings advertise goods and services while publicly expressing Brazilian cultural identity. Although both use Portuguese, the former show how the receiving society supports or manages Brazilians, whereas the latter show how Brazilians present themselves within the locality (Nambu, 2024).

Distinguishing these processes requires attention not only to the language of a sign but also to its producer and purpose. When a public institution provides service information in Portuguese, Brazilian residents may find it easier to access the relevant institution. However, when only prohibitions and warnings about everyday conduct repeatedly appear in Portuguese, Brazilians are positioned less as recipients of support than as a population whose behavior requires supervision. Signs Brazilians produce for businesses and cultural activities facilitate local information exchange and make their presence and culture visible to others.

Inclusion therefore cannot be inferred from translation alone; analysis must ask what is translated and what role migrants are assigned (Nambu, 2024).

In Bangkok's Huai Khwang, migrants and local residents read the same Chinese-language signs in opposing ways. Wu et al. (2026) documented 204 signs and interviewed 14 people, including Chinese new migrants and Thai residents. For Chinese new migrants, Chinese shop names and information about goods and services helped them locate businesses and connect with commercial and social networks among people from the same places of origin. Some Thai residents, however, saw the growth of Chinese-dominant signage as evidence that Chinese-owned businesses were displacing established local commerce or that sign regulations might not be followed. A sign intended by its producer as useful information is therefore not necessarily accepted locally when surrounding residents or public authorities interpret it as evidence of neighborhood change or regulatory problems (Wu et al., 2026).

These cases require distinguishing between participation in the local economy and being treated as an equal member of local society. Migrants may run businesses, rent housing, work, consume, and widely use their languages without participating in local decision-making, accessing public services, or interacting with neighboring residents. Conversely, migrants may use the receiving society's dominant language extensively while remaining disadvantaged in employment, housing, or education because of racialization or national origin (Portes & Zhou, 1993). In Shin-Ōkubo, comparison between two districts makes this distinction visible. Korean signs in Koreatown presented Korean cultural authenticity to Japanese visitors and encouraged dining and shopping; Korean visibility was therefore tied to active commercial contact with the receiving society. Multilingual signs on Islamic Street, by contrast, provided migrants with information about food, worship, remittances, housing, and other everyday needs. They supported life within the community without necessarily demonstrating expanding interaction between migrants and Japanese residents (Nambu & Ono, 2025). In Huai Khwang, likewise, commerce expanded, supported by Chinese signs, alongside opposition from some Thai residents (Wu et al., 2026).

On this basis, the analysis distinguishes three dimensions. Visibility concerns whether migrant languages appear on signs and notices, where and how extensively they appear, and who installs them. Recognition concerns whether schools, hospitals, municipalities, and local residents treat migrants as legitimate users and residents. Concrete indicators include whether essential information is translated, whether migrants can actually use public services, and whether local authorities tolerate migrant-language signs. Belonging concerns whether migrants participate in local decision-making, build relationships with residents, and experience the locality as a place where they live rather than merely as temporary customers or workers. These dimensions do not necessarily coincide. In Shin-Ōkubo, migrant languages could have high commercial value, while interaction with the receiving society varied by district (Nambu & Ono, 2025). In Huai Khwang, Chinese signs were prominent and supported migrant commerce, yet some local residents saw them as regulatory problems and signs of neighborhood change (Wu et al., 2026). This article

therefore does not infer integration from sign counts alone, but analyses how signs relate to actual service use, relations among residents, and local participation.

DISCUSSION

Beyond One-Directional Adaptation

In answer to the third research question, the findings in Section 4 identify two assumptions that commonly structure existing research: linguistic adaptation is treated primarily as a task for migrants, and linguistic visibility is readily used as an indicator of inclusion. Yet the visibility, recognition, and belonging distinguished in Section 4.2 do not necessarily coincide. Substantive access is not a separate fourth category, but a concrete indicator of recognition. Therefore, it is necessary to determine not only whether schools, hospitals, government offices, and other institutions translate information, but also whether migrants can actually attend classes, receive medical care, and complete administrative procedures. These findings call for a broader understanding of linguistic adaptation. Migration research often measures adaptation through migrants' acquisition and use of the receiving society's dominant language. Because proficiency in that language affects access to employment, education, public services, and interpersonal interaction, this remains important (Ager & Strang, 2008). Linguistic landscapes also show that adaptation can occur in the opposite direction. Schools translate notices, clinics hire multilingual staff, municipalities redesign information, and businesses adopt migrant languages. Receiving actors installed Portuguese signs in Japanese Brazilian communities (Nambu, 2024), while shops and service providers in Shin-Ōkubo used Korean and other migrant languages in response to their users (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Changes in surrounding institutions and markets, not only in migrants themselves, can therefore expand the information and services available to migrants.

In answer to the fourth research question, adaptation by the receiving environment can be explained as a question of resource distribution and direction: who provides linguistic accommodation, who bears its costs, and whose language needs are being addressed. For marginalized migrants, insufficient public translation may require migrants, families, religious institutions, and community organizations to produce their own practical information and support networks. By contrast, for expatriates with purchasing power or corporate status, employers, real-estate firms, schools, hospitals, and retail and leisure industries may bear the costs of adapting services to expatriates' languages and lifestyles. Fechter's (2007) Jakarta study shows how company-funded housing, mobility, health care, and education, along with expatriate-oriented markets, create an environment where everyday life can be maintained without extensive use of the local language. This is adaptation from the host market towards migrant consumers. In Koreatown in Shin-Ōkubo, by contrast, ethnic businesses used Korean to communicate cultural authenticity while using Japanese to sell goods and services to Japanese visitors. This reflects adaptation by migrant or ethnic businesses to consumers in the receiving society. The multilingual signs of Islamic Street primarily addressed everyday needs within the migrant population and thus represent

a third direction (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Asymmetrical incorporation must therefore be analyzed through the producers of signs and services, those who bear their costs, their intended readers, and the direction of adaptation—not through the presence of multilingual signs alone. Host markets may approach privileged migrants and substitute for migrants' own linguistic adaptation, while businesses in tourist-oriented ethnic enclaves approach consumers in the receiving society. Both processes produce market-led multilingual landscapes, but the beneficiaries and consequences for migrants' social belonging differ.

This framework does not assume that providing translation or multilingual services automatically deepens social relations between migrants and the receiving society. An environment in which migrants can use grocery stores, schools, clinics, housing services, and remittance services entirely in their own language may make everyday life easier. However, if everyday life remains contained within that environment, conversation with local residents, participation in neighborhood activities, and involvement in administrative decision-making may not increase. In Shin-Ōkubo, Korean signs in Koreatown facilitated commercial contact with Japanese visitors, whereas multilingual signs on Islamic Street primarily supported migrants' internal everyday lives and transnational activities (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Nor can limited use of the local dominant language alone establish isolation, because migrants may participate through multilingual intermediaries, workplaces, transnational networks, or English as a lingua franca (Karolak, 2022). Analysis must therefore distinguish who provides translation or multilingual accommodation, which schools, health-care services, administrative institutions, and commercial facilities migrants can access as a result, and whether interaction with local residents and participation in the locality have expanded.

The review proposes four analytical dimensions for comparison. The first is direction: whether migrants adapt to the receiving environment, the environment adapts to migrants, or both processes occur. The second is mediation: whether accommodation is provided by the state, employers, markets, community organizations, or personal networks. The third is resource position: whether migrants possess the economic, legal, and institutional capacity to generate demand for accommodation. The fourth is consequence: whether the resulting landscape expands access and interaction or sustains selective participation, separation, surveillance, and conflict.

This approach is particularly relevant to transnational Asian cities. Research has extensively documented migrant workers, refugees, and ethnic minorities, but affluent expatriates, corporate transferees, lifestyle migrants, and other privileged mobile populations raise different questions. Their languages may become prominent not because of demographic dominance or political recognition, but because firms and institutions anticipate profitable demand. A highly accommodating landscape can therefore coexist with limited social and linguistic adaptation by migrants. Comparing such cases with less privileged migrants makes the power relations supporting linguistic accommodation more visible (Karolak, 2022; Fechter, 2007).

Implications for Linguistic Landscape Research

A migration-centered linguistic landscape approach must combine sign mapping with evidence about production, ownership, reception, and regulation. Photographs and language counts can identify spatial patterns, but interviews with sign producers, intended readers, local residents, and public officials are necessary to establish how those patterns are understood. Observation can show who actually uses a space and how linguistic resources enter interaction. Analysis of policy documents, business histories, real-estate change, and service provision can identify the institutional conditions that sustain a landscape. Because accommodation, conflict, and community infrastructure change over time, longitudinal research is particularly important (Blommaert, 2013; Nambu, 2024; Wu et al., 2026). Diachronic comparison, linking historical materials with contemporary fieldwork, offers a concrete method for tracking changes in language status, spatial identity, and sign producers alongside demographic and political-economic change (Melem Hajdarović, 2024).

The central question is therefore not only which languages appear on signs. Analysis must ask which municipalities, schools, hospitals, businesses, and migrant organizations provide signs or translation; which information and services migrants can access as a result; and how interaction with local residents and participation in the locality change. This question avoids reducing linguistic adaptation to migrants' individual language proficiency and brings the receiving society's adjustments into view. It also prevents misreading shops' use of migrant languages to attract customers as evidence that their speakers are socially accepted. In Shin-Ōkubo, even where migrant languages had commercial value, Koreatown and Islamic Street involved different forms of contact with the receiving society (Nambu & Ono, 2025). In Huai Khwang, Chinese signs supported Chinese new migrants' commerce and everyday lives, while some Thai residents saw them as signs of neighborhood change and regulation (Wu et al., 2026). Conversely, migrants may participate substantively through workplaces, schools, and neighborhood relationships even when their languages are not prominent on the street. Linguistic landscapes must therefore be compared through service use and relations among residents, not sign counts alone.

CONCLUSION

Linguistic landscapes do more than reflect the diversity created by migration. They participate in organizing access, visibility, identity, commerce, regulation, and claims to urban space. The field has developed from counting languages and estimating ethnolinguistic vitality towards ethnographic and spatial approaches that examine emplacement, materiality, mobility, and superdiversity. This development allows analysis of migrant space not as a bounded ethnic territory but as a relationship among mobile populations, institutions, markets, and local society (Blommaert, 2013; Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009).

This review nevertheless identifies a persistent limitation: researchers commonly understand linguistic adaptation as migrants' acquisition of the receiving society's language, while translation and multilingual accommodation by the receiving society have received insufficient attention. In Japanese Brazilian communities, Portuguese signs installed by

receiving actors and signs installed by Brazilians themselves served different purposes (Nambu, 2024). In Shin-Ōkubo, Korean signs facilitated commercial contact with Japanese visitors, whereas multilingual signs on Islamic Street primarily supported migrants' everyday lives (Nambu & Ono, 2025). In Huai Khwang, Chinese signs supported new migrants' lives and commerce while some Thai residents interpreted them as evidence of neighborhood change or regulatory problems (Wu et al., 2026). From these cases, the article conceptualizes asymmetrical incorporation as a condition in which the extent of linguistic accommodation that receiving institutions and markets provide to different migrant groups varies with those groups' economic value, legal status, and organizational resources. The concept distinguishes visibility—whether migrant languages appear on the street—from recognition—whether migrants can actually access essential information and public services—and belonging—whether they can participate in local decision-making and relationships among residents. It explains how extensive participation in economic activity can coexist with limited social and linguistic adaptation.

Market-based linguistic adaptation proceeds in at least two directions. First, receiving-society markets in real estate, education, health care, retail, and related sectors adjust to the languages and lifestyles of migrants, such as expatriates, who have purchasing power and corporate support. Market accommodation may partly substitute for migrants' acquisition of the local language, allowing extensive economic incorporation to coexist with social and linguistic distance from the receiving society (Fechter, 2007). In the second, businesses in tourist-oriented ethnic enclaves retain languages that convey the authenticity of migrant culture while adding a language accessible to consumers from the receiving society. Koreatown in Shin-Ōkubo illustrates this direction, whereas multilingual signs on Islamic Street in the same neighborhood primarily supported everyday life within the migrant population (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Analyses of market-led multilingual landscapes must therefore distinguish whether the host market adapts to migrants, migrant businesses adapt to consumers from the receiving society, or community organizations respond to internal demand.

The answers to the four research questions can be summarised as follows. First, linguistic landscape research shows that relations between migrant communities and receiving societies are formed through processes in which migrants, public agencies, schools, hospitals, businesses, and local residents produce, use, evaluate, and regulate signs (RQ1). Second, signs show whether migrants can access information about goods and services, whether public space recognizes their presence, and whether migrant languages are used as cultural and commercial resources. Yet even where migrant languages are prominent on shop signs, migrants may lack access to schools, health care, and administrative services, and neither interaction with local residents nor participation in decision-making is guaranteed. The article therefore distinguishes visibility, recognition, and belonging (RQ2).

Regarding RQ3, the review challenges two assumptions. The first is that linguistic adaptation is primarily a one-way process in which migrants learn the receiving society's principal language and adjust to the receiving environment. The findings instead show that receiving institutions and markets may also adapt to migrants. When municipalities,

schools, or hospitals translate information, receiving institutions adapt to migrants; when businesses use migrant languages to attract migrant consumers, markets adapt to them.

The second assumption is that the visibility of migrant languages indicates inclusion. This assumption must be evaluated separately from the direction of adaptation. Migrant-language signs may be produced by migrants to compensate for inadequate public services or by businesses seeking commercially valuable consumers. Their presence therefore does not necessarily indicate institutional recognition, interaction with local residents, or political participation (Fechter, 2007; Nambu, 2024; Nambu & Ono, 2025). RQ3 must consequently be answered by identifying who adapts to whom, the purpose of the adaptation, and the information and services migrants can actually access, rather than by recording the presence or absence of migrant-language signs.

Fourth, the conditions under which the receiving environment adapts, as asked in RQ4, become visible by comparing who accommodates which groups, to what extent, and with what consequences for migrants' lives—not by counting multilingual signs. When firms and markets adapt housing, schools, health care, and shopping to expatriates' languages and lifestyles, migrants may conduct everyday urban life without extensive use of the local language while remaining in limited contact with the receiving society (Fechter, 2007). In Koreatown in Shin-Ōkubo, by contrast, migrant or ethnic businesses combined Korean with Japanese to sell goods and cultural experiences to Japanese customers. This is not a case in which a host market adapts to migrants, but one in which migrant businesses adapt to consumers from the receiving society. Multilingual signs on Islamic Street primarily supported shopping, religious practice, and information exchange within migrant communities (Nambu & Ono, 2025). Even within multilingual landscapes, migrants' access and relations with the receiving society therefore vary according to whether the state, employers, markets, migrant businesses, or community organizations bear the costs of accommodation.

The framework of asymmetrical incorporation proposed in this article compares these differences across four dimensions: (1) the direction of adaptation; (2) the actors who provide and finance accommodation; (3) the legal, economic, and organizational resources of the migrant groups receiving it; and (4) the consequences for service use, interaction among residents, and participation in decision-making. It can therefore explain, without subsuming them under the same labels of 'multilingualism' or 'inclusion', both situations in which migrant languages are prominent but access to public services remains poor and situations in which markets accommodate some migrant groups extensively while leaving others to rely on community provision.

Future research should compare migrant groups with different legal statuses, class positions, migration channels, and forms of mobility, including privileged North-to-South and intra-Asian migration. Such comparison can identify the conditions under which multilingual landscapes expand participation and those under which they sustain selective access or parallel social worlds. The most productive question for migration-centered linguistic landscape research is therefore not simply whether migrants are visible and

integrated, but who adapts to whom, through which infrastructures, and under what relations of power.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author declares no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 21*(2), 166–191. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016

Backhaus, P. (2007). *Linguistic landscapes: A comparative study of urban multilingualism in Tokyo*. Multilingual Matters.

Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, E., Amara, M. H., & Trumper-Hecht, N. (2006). Linguistic landscape as symbolic construction of the public space: The case of Israel. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 3(1), 7–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668383

Blommaert, J. (2013*). Ethnography, superdiversity and linguistic landscapes: Chronicles of complexity*. Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783090419

Blommaert, J. (2014). Infrastructures of superdiversity: Conviviality and language in an Antwerp neighborhood. *European Journal of Cultural Studies, 17*(4), 431–451. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549413510421

Fechter, A.-M. (2007). *Transnational lives: Expatriates in Indonesia*. Ashgate.

Huebner, T. (2006). Bangkok's linguistic landscapes: Environmental print, codemixing and language change. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 3*(1), 31–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790710608668384

Jaworski, A., & Thurlow, C. (Eds.). (2010). *Semiotic landscapes: Language, image, space*. Continuum.

Karolak, M. (2022). Linguistic landscape in a city of migrants: A study of Souk Naif area in Dubai. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 19*(4), 605–629. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1781132

Kasanga, L. A. (2012). Mapping the linguistic landscape of a commercial neighbourhood in Central Phnom Penh. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 33*(6), 553–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2012.683529

Landry, R., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1997). Linguistic landscape and ethnolinguistic vitality: An empirical study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 16*(1), 23–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X970161002

Leeman, J., & Modan, G. (2009). Commodified language in Chinatown: A contextualized approach to linguistic landscape. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 13*(3), 332–362. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2009.00409.x

Li, Y., Mai, Z., & Lau, C. (2023). Linguistic landscape and place-making on a resort island in China. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change, 21*(5), 605–622. https://doi.org/10.1080/14766825.2023.2207551

Melem Hajdarović, M. (2024). Materialization of spatial identity in Slavonia and Baranja's linguistic landscape changes. *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, 73*(3), 231–247. https://doi.org/10.15201/hungeobull.73.3.2

Nambu, S. (2024). Linguistic landscape of immigrants in Japan: A case study of Japanese Brazilian communities. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 45*(5), 1616–1632. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2021.2006200

Nambu, S., & Ono, M. (2025). Linguistic landscape of Shin-Ōkubo, Tokyo: A comparative study of Koreatown and Islamic Street. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 22*(2), 650–668. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2024.2344181

Phanthaphoommee, N., & Gu, C. (2026). English passing off as Thai in twenty-first century Thai linguistic landscape. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 47*(2), 1182–1204. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2415399

Portes, A., & Zhou, M. (1993). The new second generation: Segmented assimilation and its variants. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 530(1)*, 74–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716293530001006

Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2003). Discourses in place: Language in the material world. Routledge.

Shohamy, E., & Gorter, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the scenery*. Routledge.

Siziba, L., & Maseko, B. (2024). Multilingual contestations and the reproduction of English legitimacy in bottom-up linguistic landscape: An analysis of shop signs in Bulawayo. *Cogent Arts & Humanities, 11*(1), 2364490. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2364490

Stroud, C., & Mpendukana, S. (2009). Towards a material ethnography of linguistic landscape: Multilingualism, mobility and space in a South African township. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 13*(3), 363–386. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2009.00410.x

Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review, 4*(3), 356–367. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283

Torraco, R. J. (2016). Writing integrative literature reviews: Using the past and present to explore the future. *Human Resource Development Review, 15(*4), 404–428. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484316671606

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30*(6), 1024–1054. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465

Wu, J., Chaisingkananont, S., & Chik, A. (2026). Perceptions of urban signage in an emerging Chinatown: Reading xinyimin's visibility and urban governance in Huai Khwang, Bangkok. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2026.2631052

Yochim, L. G. (2020). The changing landscape of unofficial signage in a U.S. refugee relocation city. *Linguistic Landscape, 6(*3), 237-264. https://doi.org/10.1075/ll.19021.yoc

BIODATA

Mitsuko Ono (0000-0002-1999-0396) is a lecturer in Cultural Studies at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University, Thailand. She holds a doctorate in sociology from Rikkyo University. Her research examines transnational migration, migrant communities, and linguistic landscapes.

How to cite this article:

Ono, M. (2026). Does the visibility of migrant languages mean inclusion? Migrant adaptation, institutional and market accommodation, and asymmetrical incorporation in linguistic landscape research. *Journal of Language and Culture, 46*(2), 129-149.

Received: 9 October 2026
Revised: 28 October 2026
Accepted: 2 November 2026

© The Author(s) 2026. *Journal of Language and Culture* published by Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University. This article is open access under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, permitting the use, sharing, adaptation, distribution, and reproduction in any medium or format. Users are required to provide appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, include a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if any changes were made. The images or other third-party materials included in this article fall under the article's Creative Commons license unless otherwise specified in a credit line. If the material is not covered by the article's Creative Commons license or if your intended use goes beyond what is permitted by statutory regulation, you must seek permission directly from the copyright holder.