



Glocalizing across the Sacred Place: Exploring Linguistic Landscape of Wat Maha That, Ayutthaya, Thailand การสร้างอัตลักษณ์ท้องถิ่นร่วมสมัยในสถานที่ศักดิ์สิทธิ์: การศึกษาภูมิทัศน์ภาษาของ วัดมหาธาตุ จังหวัดพระนครศรีอยุธยา ประเทศไทย

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาภูมิทัศน์ภาษาของวัดมหาธาตุ สถานที่มรดกทางวัฒนธรรมที่สำคัญในจังหวัดพระนครศรีอยุธยา ประเทศไทย เพื่อเข้าใจการผสมผสานระหว่างองค์ประกอบท้องถิ่นและระดับโลกผ่านป้ายสาธารณะ การวิจัยนี้ใช้ระเบียบวิธีเชิงปริมาณและเชิงคุณภาพในการวิเคราะห์ป้าย จำนวน 48 ป้าย ที่วัดมหาธาตุ ในเชิงปริมาณป้ายถูกจัดกลุ่มเป็นป้ายภาษาหนึ่งภาษา สองภาษา และหลายภาษา ซึ่งพบว่าป้ายสองภาษา (ไทย-อังกฤษ) มีจำนวนมากที่สุด และมีป้ายหลายภาษาที่ผสมภาษาญี่ปุ่นและภาษาจีนในระดับที่น่าสนใจ ส่วนในเชิงคุณภาพ การวิเคราะห์เน้นไปที่องค์ประกอบทางภาษา โดยพิจารณาขนาด ตำแหน่ง และความโดดเด่นของแต่ละภาษาในเชิงภาพ รวมถึงบทบาทหน้าที่ของป้าย เช่น การให้ข้อมูลหรือการควบคุมพฤติกรรมนักท่องเที่ยว ผลการวิเคราะห์เชิงคุณภาพชี้ให้เห็นว่าภาษาไทยได้รับการให้ความสำคัญซึ่งสะท้อนถึงความสำคัญทางวัฒนธรรม ในขณะที่การใช้ภาษาต่างประเทศช่วยเพิ่มความสะดวกให้กับนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ นอกจากนี้ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า การใช้ภาษาต่างประเทศในป้ายที่เกี่ยวข้องกับข้อบังคับไม่เพียงแต่เพิ่มความน่าสนใจและความเข้าถึงได้ในระดับสากล แต่ยังเน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญทางวัฒนธรรมและศาสนาของสถานที่ การผสมผสานระหว่างองค์ประกอบท้องถิ่นและระดับโลกเป็นสิ่งสำคัญ ในการรักษาความศักดิ์สิทธิ์และความแท้จริงของวัดมหาธาตุในขณะที่รองรับนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติ การศึกษานี้เน้นย้ำถึงความสำคัญของการสมดุลระหว่างมาตรการข้อบังคับกับประสบการณ์ของผู้เยี่ยมชมเพื่อหลีกเลี่ยงความรำคาญที่อาจเกิดขึ้นและเพิ่มความพึงพอใจโดยรวม ข้อมูลเชิงลึกเหล่านี้มีส่วนช่วยให้เข้าใจวิถีที่ภูมิทัศน์ทางภาษาสามารถเอื้อให้เกิดการผสมผสานระหว่างอิทธิพลระดับโลกและบริบทท้องถิ่น รักษาคุณค่ามรดกทางวัฒนธรรมในขณะที่ส่งเสริมการท่องเที่ยวระหว่างประเทศ

คำสำคัญ : การสร้างอัตลักษณ์ท้องถิ่นร่วมสมัย ; ภูมิทัศน์ภาษา ; ภาวะหลายภาษา ; สถานที่ศักดิ์สิทธิ์ ; การท่องเที่ยว



ABSTRACT

This study examines the LL of Wat Maha That, a significant cultural heritage site in Ayutthaya, Thailand, to understand the process of glocalization through public signage. This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to analyze 48 signs at Wat Maha That. Quantitatively, the signs were categorized into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual groups, revealing a predominance of bilingual Thai-English signs and a notable presence of multilingual signs incorporating Japanese and Chinese. Qualitatively, the analysis explored the linguistic composition, focusing on the size, placement, and visual prominence of each language, as well as the functional roles of the signs, such as providing information or regulating visitor behavior. The qualitative findings highlighted how Thai was prioritized, reflecting its cultural significance, while foreign languages enhanced accessibility for international tourists. The findings also indicate that the strategic use of foreign languages in regulatory signage not only enhances the site's global appeal and accessibility but also underscores its cultural and religious significance. This interplay between global and local elements is crucial for maintaining the sanctity and authenticity of Wat Maha That while catering to international tourists. The study highlights the importance of balancing regulatory measures with visitor experience to avoid potential irritation and enhance overall satisfaction. These insights contribute to the broader understanding of how linguistic landscapes can facilitate the integration of global influences into local contexts, preserving cultural heritage while promoting international tourism.

Keywords : Glocalization ; Linguistic Landscape ; Multilingualism ; Sacred Place ; Tourism

Introduction

Wat Maha That or Maha That temple in Ayutthaya, Thailand, stands as a crucial element of the Ayutthaya Historical Park, a recognized UNESCO World Heritage site (UNESCO, n.d.), captivating tourists with its rich history and cultural significance. Established in the 14th century, this temple functioned as a religious, political, and social hub during the Ayutthaya Kingdom, attracting those interested in the relics of ancient civilizations. The site is celebrated for its architectural wonders, including an array of chedis, prangs, and Buddha statues that exemplify early Siamese artistry. Notably, the sandstone Buddha head entwined within the roots of a Bodhi tree has become a symbolic and extensively photographed feature, representing Ayutthaya itself. More than its visual allure and historical importance, Wat Maha That continues to be a respected site where visitors partake in spiritual practices, enriching their experience. Its proximity to Bangkok ensures it is a frequent choice for day trips, appealing to international tourists and local visitors alike. The site also offers substantial educational value, making it a crucial destination for students and scholars studying the history, archaeology, and religious evolution of Southeast Asia. The temple's status as a key tourist destination makes it an ideal location to explore the linguistic landscape (LL) and the process of glocalization, as it offers a rich context where global influences intersect with deeply rooted local traditions.

As such, Wat Maha That serves as an exemplary case of how a historical site can preserve its local culture while simultaneously attracting international tourists. As one of Ayutthaya's most esteemed sites, it plays a crucial role in maintaining Thai cultural heritage, offering insights into the nation's past for both locals and tourists. The temple's distinct architectural features, such as its iconic prang and Buddha statues, display the unique Ayutthaya style, which integrates various historical influences. Efforts to enhance accessibility for international visitors include improved infrastructure, such as better signage and visitor centers, and promotional activities that spotlight the temple in global tourism campaigns. Educational materials further elucidate the site's historical and cultural relevance for a worldwide audience. However,

balancing tourism with cultural preservation necessitates sensitivity; it is vital that activities and visitor behavior respect the site's religious and historical significance to prevent commercialization that could detract from its authenticity. By preserving its cultural roots and offering authentic experiences, Wat Maha That not only safeguards but also shares its rich heritage with the world, illustrating a successful blend of local culture preservation and international appeal. This is what Robertson (1994) coins as glocalization.

According to Andrews & Ritzer (2007) ; Swyngedouw (1997), glocalization represents the dynamics between cultural homogenization and heterogenization, indicating a dual process where universal corporate or cultural practices are particularized to fit local contexts. Robertson (1994, 2014) further elaborates this concept by suggesting that glocalization blends universalizing tendencies with particularizing trends, indicating that what is globally recognized can be distinctly expressed in local terms. However, the central focus of this paper is from a bottom-up perspective, particularly emphasizing how Wat Maha That engages in the process of globalizing while simultaneously localizing. In simpler terms, it examines how the local site is actively glocalizing itself. To do so, there are various approaches used in investigating how places are glocalized, but in terms of linguistic approach, exploring linguistic landscape is one of the pervasive methods.

LL studies investigate glocalization by examining how languages are visually represented in public spaces, such as signs, billboards, and street names, to reflect the interaction between global and local elements. By analyzing the choice, placement, and prominence of languages in LL, researchers can determine how global forces, like tourism or economic activity, influence local practices.

Objectives

To elucidate the applications of linguistic landscape (LL) studies in glocalizing sacred places such as temples and historical sites, this study focuses on the linguistic landscape of Wat Maha That in Ayutthaya. The research aims to explore what languages are used on public signs at Wat Maha That and how these languages are employed to glocalize Wat Maha That.

Literature Review

Linguistic Landscape

The term “linguistic landscape” (LL) refers to the visible language objects within public spaces, encompassing public and commercial signage within a defined geographic area. This concept was initially defined by Landry & Bourhis (1997), who highlighted the “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory” including elements such as road signs, billboards, street names, shop signs, and government buildings. The framework established by Landry & Bourhis (1997) has been expanded by scholars like Shohamy & Gorter (2009) to include additional visual elements such as images, icons, graffiti, slogans, and mottos, which contribute to the socio-cultural and linguistic representation of public spaces.

LL studies in sociolinguistics investigate the visual presence of languages in multilingual settings, providing insights into language policy (Dal Negro, 2009), societal multilingualism (Backhaus, 2007), and language vitality (Supramani et al., 2013). Furthermore, LL research explores identity construction in multi-ethnic and multilingual contexts (Curtin, 2009; Wang et al., 2017), the impact of colonial legacies on ethno-cultural identities (An & Zhang, 2022), and the role of language in tourism development (Gu, 2024 ; Lin, 2023). These studies underscore LL's significant role in shaping social and cultural dynamics, illustrating how public language use reflects broader historical and socio-political narratives and influences perceptions and behaviors in various settings, particularly in tourism where the language of signage can enhance the cultural identity and appeal of destinations (Lu et al., 2020).



Research into LL in Tourism

In international contexts, research on LL in tourism has revealed various dimensions of language use, reflecting the intricate interplay between local, national, and global forces. In Macao, studies on heritage and gaming tourism signposts and brochures revealed the commodification of multilingualism for profit under neoliberal ideologies, featuring reductive translanguaging (Yan, 2019). Another study in the Bay of Palma used a corpus-based approach to analyze English texts, discovering the coexistence of two English varieties linked to the backgrounds of holidaymakers and local sign initiators, indicating social class influence (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2019).

In Beijing's Palace Museum, a sociolinguistic approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods showed significant English presence for public services and touristic information, driven by market factors, government policies, and natural environments (Xiao & Lee, 2019). Similarly, a multi-case study in Phnom Penh hotels highlighted the dominance of English, with Chinese and Khmer also visible, influenced by language policy and attitudes within the tourism industry (Lin, 2023). Research on Wailingding Island's public signs and posters emphasized the dynamic relationship between LL and place-making, suggesting that the cultural connotations of LL are deeply tied to the social environment (Li et al., 2023).

The use of local dialects and English in LL has been shown to impact tourists' emotional experiences, with local LL stimulating higher arousal and global LL providing pleasure, according to construal level theory (Chang et al., 2022). An analysis of Jerash's historical sites indicated that English, despite being the official language, enjoyed higher visibility in unofficial signs, establishing it as the lingua franca in tourism discourse (Alomoush, 2022).

A study in Cyprus employed geo-semiotics to analyze multilingual LL, revealing positive attitudes towards multilingualism and a complex LL reflecting the political economy of language and space (Karpava, 2022). In Mojokerto, East Java, analysis of 600 signs indicated the dominance of the Indonesian language, aligned with national language policies, while Javanese was rarely used, demonstrating loyalty to government policies and the absence of language commodification (Rohmah et al., 2024). Kuala Lumpur International Airport's LL study found Malay dominant, followed by English and other languages, with most users favoring the bilingual signage (Woo & Riget, 2020). Finally, in Kupang, Indonesia, English expressions on public minivans displayed high error rates and variations, serving multiple functions such as attractiveness and social criticism, but not constituting a new English variety (Akoli et al., 2022).

Recent LL studies in Thai tourism continue to highlight the dominance of Thai and English in tourist areas. Low (2022) mapped the LL of Bang Saen Beach, finding a predominance of monolingual Thai signs and a significant presence of bilingual Thai-English signs. Choeirod & Chanthao (2023) used the conceptual framework of Landry & Bourhis (1997) to analyze the multilingual LL of Patong Beach, emphasizing the relationship between language use on signs and the tourist demographics of Phuket. Rini & Budiman (2023) utilized Google Street View to analyze signs in Chinatown, focusing on the prevalence of monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs.

Currently, studies have expanded their scope by incorporating diverse methodologies and exploring new areas. Wing-Yu Tam (2024) explored the economic implications of bilingual Thai-English menus in Bangkok restaurants, linking language choice to menu pricing. Rungswang (2023) combined quantitative analysis of shop signs with in-depth interviews with shop owners on Khaosan Road, providing a richer understanding of language functions and perceptions.

While recent LL studies in Thai tourism maintain the thematic focus on multilingualism and the prominence of English seen in past research, they differ by incorporating broader scopes, diverse methodologies, and deeper economic analyses. These studies reveal a growing complexity in the linguistic



landscapes of Thai tourist destinations and underscore the evolving dynamics of language use driven by both local and global influences.

However, while recent studies focus on urban tourist destinations, resorts, and airports, there is a notable gap in research focusing on sacred places like temples and historical sites with the focus on glocalization. More interdisciplinary approaches combining sociolinguistics, semiotics, and cultural studies are required to fully understand the role of LL in sacred and historical contexts.

Roles of LL in Glocalizing the Tourist Destinations

Glocalization, combining “global” and “local,” describes the interplay between global influences and local specificities, where global phenomena are adapted to fit local contexts (Robertson, 2014). It integrates global elements into local settings, blending universal themes with local variations. For instance, McDonald’s adapts its menu to local tastes, such as McFalafels in Egypt and Kiwiburgers in New Zealand, while maintaining its global brand identity (Ritzer, 2003). This duality enhances acceptance and success in different markets (Appadurai, 1996 ; Robertson, 2001). In guided tours, storytelling integrates local histories with global influences, shaping a glocalized urban image that merges global and local elements, as seen in Northern European capitals like Copenhagen and Berlin (Nilsson & Zillinger, 2020).

LL studies, examining language use in public spaces, reflect and influence the interaction between global and local cultures. LL, comprising text and sign systems, is crucial in tourist destinations, attracting visitors and shaping experiences (Artawa et al., 2023 ; Yao et al., 2024). Multilingual signs evoke authenticity and cultural richness, enhancing tourists’ emotional engagement and satisfaction (Shohamy et al., 2010 ; Siziba & Maseko, 2024 ; Yao et al., 2024). Local dialects in signage stimulate positive emotional responses and foster a sense of belonging, influencing tourists’ behavioral intentions (Hannum, 2022).

In tourism, LL plays a symbolic role by reflecting language policies, social psychology, and cultural values (Phan & Starks, 2020). Governments and tour operators use LL to mold tourist spaces and convey local characteristics and traditional culture, creating unique, memorable experiences (Lu et al., 2020). Familiar words in LL make tourists feel comfortable and welcomed, while local dialects enhance perceived authenticity (Yan, 2019 ; Alomoush, 2022). The dynamic between global languages like English and local languages in LL demonstrates glocalization, balancing global presence with local features to cater to diverse tourists (Xiao & Lee, 2019).

Glocalization in LL highlights cultural homogenization and heterogenization, where global themes are localized to fit specific contexts (Robertson, 1994 ; Andrews & Ritzer, 2007). In tourism, destinations use both global and local languages on signage to attract international visitors while preserving local identities (Artawa et al., 2023). Research consistently shows that English frequently appears on public signs in tourist areas, symbolizing a global ideology that integrates with local linguistic varieties to glocalize these spaces (Akoli et al., 2022 ; Alomoush, 2022 ; Chang et al., 2022 ; Karpava, 2022 ; Woo & Riget, 2020). The strategic use of English alongside local languages enhances accessibility and appeal, blending global influences with local identities and creating a culturally rich environment.

In conclusion, LL studies in tourism illustrate glocalization, where integrating global and local linguistic elements enhances tourist experiences and promotes cultural diversity. By examining language presence and function in public spaces, LL studies provide insights into how global influences like the English language adapt to local contexts, reflecting broader socio-cultural and economic dynamics. This understanding of glocalization through LL reveals the complexities of cultural exchange and the importance of balancing global and local identities in an interconnected world.



Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is rooted in the exploration of linguistic landscapes (LL) as a tool for understanding the process of glocalization in historical and sacred sites. The framework integrates key concepts from sociolinguistics, cultural studies, and tourism studies to examine how public signage in these sites reflects the interplay between global and local elements. The study investigates the use of languages in public signs, focusing on how the inclusion of foreign languages alongside the local language contributes to the site's accessibility, appeal, and cultural authenticity (Akoli et al., 2022 ; Alomoush, 2022 ; Chang et al., 2022 ; Karpava, 2022 ; Woo & Riget, 2020). The analysis of LL in this context is guided by the principles of glocalization, which emphasize the adaptation of global influences to fit local contexts while maintaining the integrity and identity of the local culture (Robertson, 2014). The conceptual framework thus connects the linguistic elements of public signage with broader socio-cultural and economic dynamics, offering insights into how cultural heritage sites can balance global and local demands as presented in Figure 1.

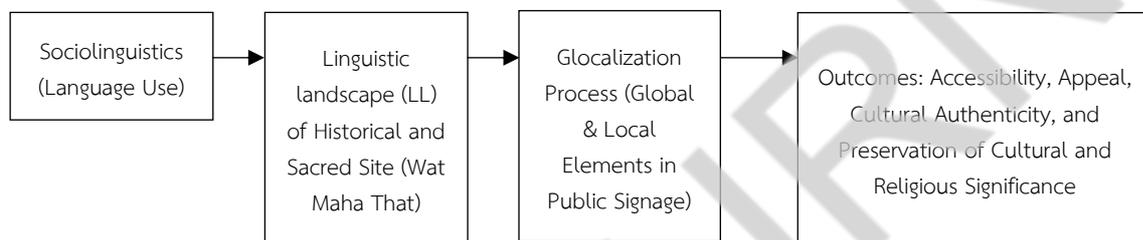


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Data

While LL studies have encompassed both visual displays of languages (e.g. Akoli et al., 2022 ; Alomoush, 2022 ; Chang et al., 2022 ; Karpava, 2022 ; Landry & Bourhis, 1997 ; Woo & Riget, 2020) and images (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009), this research concentrates exclusively on public signs containing linguistic features, with or without accompanying images since the objective is to explore the glocalization of languages in selected areas. Hence, any signs containing only non-linguistic features such as images and graffiti were then excluded. The data includes signs and artifacts from both official entities ('top-down' signs) and local shops ('bottom-up' signs), representing the global and local influences respectively, thereby reflecting different perspectives on language use in the area. In addition to this, repeated signs were excluded from the collection to ensure a diverse and representative dataset. The fieldwork for this study was carried out in May 2024. Following the criteria, there were 48 signs collected.

Research Instrument

The research instruments for this study on the linguistic landscape (LL) of Wat Maha That in Ayutthaya, Thailand, include a mobile device for photographing signs, an observation checklist, and field notes. The mobile device is utilized to capture images of various public signs, including multilingual, monolingual, and bilingual signs, providing a visual record of the language presence within the study area. To ensure systematic data collection, an observation checklist is employed to document specific details about each sign, such as the languages used, font size, and positioning of the text. This checklist was created as a table encompassing of columns language used, a kind of sign and position of text. This could help maintain consistency and comprehensiveness in the data gathering process. Additionally, field notes are

taken as free writing to record contextual information and observations about the environment, as well as any relevant interactions or behaviors related to the signage. These field notes offer qualitative insights that complement the visual data, enriching the overall analysis of the linguistic landscape.

Data Collection

Wat Maha That is chosen as a research site since the place presents a unique opportunity for exploring LL in the context of glocalization. This site has been relatively overlooked in LL investigations in Thai context, which have traditionally focused on urban tourist destinations, and commercial areas. As a place that maintains both local and global elements, Wat Maha That offers a compelling case for examining how global influences are adapted and integrated into local contexts. The temple's prominence as a center of Buddhism during the Ayutthaya Kingdom and its enduring religious significance makes it a rich site for studying the interplay between local traditions and global tourism.

To collect the data, signs in the Wat Maha That area were photographed using the researcher's mobile phone. As depicted in Figure 2, the research site encompassed the entire area in blue square as well as the commercial zone where local shops are located.

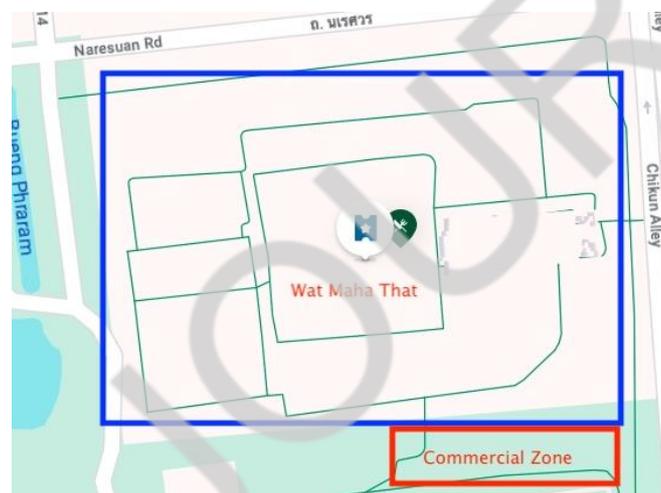


Figure 2 Scope of research site (Tripadvisor, 2024)

Data Analysis

The approach adopted in this study was both quantitative and qualitative since its aims were to explore language use through frequency and to identify language's functions of glocalizing the place using content analysis. The data obtained were analyzed in two parts to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic landscape at Wat Maha that. The first part focused on the use of language in the signs. Each sign was classified according to its language content: monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual. As shown in Figure 3, a monolingual sign contains only one language, a bilingual sign features two languages (see Figure 4), and a multilingual sign displays three or more languages illustrated in Figure 5. This classification allowed for a detailed examination of how different languages are used in the signage, providing insights into the linguistic dynamics present at the site. To accurately interpret the signs written in languages other than English, language experts, including lecturers and translators proficient in the languages found on the signs, were recruited to provide precise translations of the words and sentences. The second part of the analysis examined how languages and pictures contribute to the glocalization of the place, highlighting the integration of global linguistic elements into the local context.



Figure 3 A monolingual sign



Figure 4 A bilingual sign



Figure 5 A multilingual sign

Results and Discussion

To response first objective of this study aiming to explore what languages are used on public signs at Wat Maha That, the 48 signs from Wat Maha That were categorized by their linguistic composition into monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs. The analysis reveals that 6 signs are monolingual, exclusively featuring Thai. A significant portion of the signage, 35 signs, are bilingual, incorporating both Thai and English. The multilingual signs, totaling 7, display a combination of three or more languages. Specifically, 3 signs are in Thai, English, and Japanese, 1 sign includes Thai, English, and Chinese, and 3 signs feature Thai, English, Japanese, and Chinese. The details of signs were summarized in Table 1. This distribution indicates a predominant use of bilingual signs, particularly in Thai and English, while also highlighting the presence of multilingual signs that cater to a diverse international audience, integrating languages such as Japanese and Chinese along with Thai and English. This linguistic diversity underscores the site's role as both a cultural heritage location and an international tourist destination.

Table 1 Details of the Signs

Type of Sign	Number of Signs	Language Use (Frequency)
Monolingual sign	6	Th (6)
Bilingual sign	35	Th-Eng (35)
Multilingual sign	7	Th-Eng-Jap (3) Th-Eng-Ch (1) Th-Eng-Jap-Ch (3)
Total	48	

Note: Th (Thai), Eng (English), Jap (Japanese), Ch (Chinese)

The results also potentially yield the place's target visitor demographic. The predominance of bilingual signs in Thai and English (35 out of 48) indicates a strategic focus on catering to both local Thai visitors and international tourists who use English as a lingua franca. This suggests that a substantial proportion of the visitors are likely English-speaking, either as native speakers or as international tourists proficient in English.

The presence of multilingual signs, incorporating Japanese and Chinese along with Thai and English, further reflects the temple's effort to accommodate tourists from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Specifically, the inclusion of Japanese in 6 signs and Chinese in 4 signs suggests a significant number of visitors from Japan and China, both of which are key sources of international tourists in Thailand.

The sole use of Thai in monolingual signs, albeit a small number (6 signs), emphasizes the temple's continued relevance and accessibility to local Thai visitors. However, the overall linguistic diversity in the signage points to a clear orientation towards an international audience, aiming to enhance the visitor experience by providing information in multiple languages.

Composition and Position of Languages Used on the Signage

When analyzing the composition and positioning of different languages on the public signs at Wat Maha That, it was observed that Thai and English predominated, with Thai generally appearing above English on most bilingual signs, as depicted in Figure 6. Additionally, the font size for Thai was consistently larger than that for English. On multilingual signs, as illustrated in Figure 7, Thai and English maintained their primary positions, while Japanese and Chinese were added below in smaller fonts. Occasionally, the positions of Japanese and Chinese were interchanged.



Figure 6 Composition of bilingual sign



Figure 7 Composition of multilingual sign

At Wat Maha That, the linguistic landscape (LL) features multiple languages written in their respective scripts: Thai in Thai alphabets, English in Latin alphabets, Japanese in Japanese characters, and Chinese in simplified characters. Thai, prominently positioned at the top and displayed in the largest size, is given the most visual prominence. This hierarchy reflects the importance of the Thai language and its cultural significance, while also accommodating the diverse linguistic needs of international visitors. However, as simplified Chinese characters, rather than the traditional Chinese characters used in Hong Kong, appear on these signs, this leads to the speculation that the sign creator's decision to include Chinese was a reflection of the temple's target guest demographic of mainland Chinese.

As depicted in Figures 8 and 9, bilingual and multilingual signs were utilized to display regulations that visitors must strictly adhere to, while bilingual signage alone was used to convey historical background information and general details such as directions, area maps, and contact information (see Figure 10). Monolingual signs written in Thai were established exclusively in the parking areas, indicating where to park, drop off, and pick up vehicles as shown in Figure 11, targeting Thai drivers.



Figure 8 A bilingual sign for regulation



Figure 9 A multilingual sign for regulation



Figure 10 Bilingual signs for regulation the place's historical background and directions



Figure 11 A monolingual sign in the parking areas

Roles of LL in Glocalizing the Area of Wat Maha That

According to the second objective, the linguistic landscape (LL) at Wat Maha That exemplifies the process of glocalization by integrating foreign languages such as English, Japanese, and Chinese with local elements to emphasize the site's sacredness. The inclusion of these languages reflects the temple's global appeal and accessibility to international tourists, while its cultural and religious significance embodies

local authenticity. This interplay between global and local elements is strategically manifested in the LL to uphold and promote the sanctity of Wat Maha That.

As shown in Figure 5, a multilingual sign created by the Ayutthaya Historical Park, written in Thai, English, Japanese, and Chinese, states, “*This is a sacred place. Please respect the place and its materials,*” underscoring the need for strict adherence to regulations. The LL at Wat Maha That primarily employs foreign languages in regulatory signage (16 out of 48 signs) to guide and control tourist behavior, ensuring respect for the sacred site. For example, Figure 12 depicts a sign in Thai and English instructing visitors on appropriate conduct, such as prohibitions against wearing strapless tops, tank tops, and other forms of disrespectful attire, as well as forbidden behaviors like smoking, climbing, and scratching. However, the phrase “no sitting” on the sign is ambiguous, potentially confusing visitors about whether sitting in the area or on the ruins is prohibited. This sign is placed at the entrance next to the ticket counter, where the gatekeeper carefully screens visitors, pointing to the sign and asking those who do not follow the rules to change their outfits.



Figure 12 A regulatory sign



Figure 13 A “Do not climb” sign

Additionally, a multilingual sign in Thai, English, and Japanese stating “*Do not climb on monuments*” is positioned after the entrance, as shown in Figure 13. Visitors encounter this sign immediately upon entering the temple area. To ensure compliance, this sign is replicated seven times and placed around the area. The inclusion of Japanese suggests that Japanese visitors, who may unconsciously climb on the monuments, are a primary target.

At the popular site where the sandstone Buddha head is entwined within the roots of a Bodhi tree, many visitors queue to take photos with the Buddha head. A multilingual sign on the floor, written in Thai, English, Japanese, and Chinese, targets a broad audience, instructing, “*Please do not stand over the Buddha’s head (Pay respect).*” Despite this, many visitors miss the sign and stand over the Buddha’s head



while photographing. Staff promptly warn these visitors, pointing to the sign and asking them to sit in the designated area for photos.

Furthermore, there are other regulatory signs ensure appropriate behavior during visits. Figure 14 illustrates a bilingual sign in Thai and English stating “*Please keep off the grass,*” duplicated 11 times and placed around the area. Another bilingual sign in Thai and English warns not to climb specific areas, as shown in Figure 15, different from the sign in Figure 13, and replicated 7 times around the area. “No drones” sign written in Thai and English as shown in Figure 16 prohibits visitors to use drone without permission.



Figure 14 A “Keep off the grass” sign



Figure 15 A “Do not sit and climb” sign



Figure 16 A “No drones” sign

These signs serve a dual purpose: they clearly communicate rules to a diverse audience and reinforce the temple’s cultural norms and values. This use of LL demonstrates the glocalization process, where global linguistic elements are adapted to maintain and enhance the site’s local cultural integrity through a discourse of command. By doing so, the LL at Wat Maha That not only facilitates communication with international visitors but also preserves and respects the local traditions and the sacredness of the place.

The linguistic landscape (LL) study at Wat Maha That reveals significant insights into the process of glocalization, integrating foreign languages like English, Japanese, and Chinese with local elements to enhance the site’s sacredness and accessibility. This research aligns with previous studies highlighting the role of LL in glocalizing tourist destinations by blending global influences with local contexts (Robertson, 2014 ; Lu et al., 2020). However, it also presents unique findings that differentiate it from earlier works.

The predominant use of bilingual Thai-English signs (35 out of 48) at Wat Maha That underscores the strategic focus on catering to both local and international tourists, reflecting similar observations in studies by Xiao & Lee (2019) that emphasize the importance of English as a lingua franca in tourist settings. As a global lingua franca, English facilitates communication and interaction across diverse linguistic and cultural boundaries, promoting international connectivity and economic exchange (Canagarajah, 2007 ; Jenkins, 2009 ; Jenkins et al., 2011). In tourism, for instance, English signage is often adapted to include local dialects and cultural references, enhancing the authenticity of the tourist experience, fostering a sense of

place (Artawa et al., 2023), and reducing cultural gaps (Cappelli, 2013). Moreover, the inclusion of multilingual signs with Japanese and Chinese further supports the temple's effort to accommodate tourists from diverse linguistic backgrounds, aligning with the findings of Karpava (2022) on the positive impact of multilingualism in LL. Nevertheless, the inclusion of certain languages, such as Japanese and Chinese, on some regulatory signs suggests a targeting of specific audiences who have previously engaged in prohibited behaviors. This selective language use may inadvertently create a perception of language bias, potentially fostering negative impacts on the visitors' overall experience and perceptions of the temple.

The composition and positioning of languages on the signage at Wat Maha That, with Thai generally appearing above English and in larger fonts, reflect the temple's prioritization of local cultural significance while maintaining global accessibility. This mirrors the dual role of LL in both reflecting and shaping cultural identities, as discussed by Phan & Starks (2020) and Yan (2019). The strategic use of regulatory signs in multiple languages to guide tourist behavior ensures respect for the sacred site, exemplifying the symbolic role of LL in maintaining cultural norms and values (Lu et al., 2020).

One of the unique aspects of this study is the detailed analysis of the LL's effectiveness in regulating tourist behavior. The use of multilingual signs to communicate rules and expectations to a diverse audience demonstrates a practical application of LL in managing tourist interactions with cultural heritage sites. This focus on behavioral regulation through LL is less emphasized in previous studies, which often concentrate on the linguistic and cultural implications of signage (Shohamy et al., 2010 ; Alomoush, 2022).

Moreover, the inclusion of Japanese in regulatory signage suggests a specific targeting of Japanese tourists, who are a significant demographic for Thailand. This targeted approach highlights the understanding of visitor demographics and the tailored use of LL to enhance tourist experience and compliance with site regulations. This finding aligns with Chang et al. (2022), who noted the importance of understanding the emotional and psychological impact of LL on different tourist groups.

Overall, this study contributes to the existing body of LL research by providing a comprehensive analysis of how global and local elements are integrated in the signage at a significant cultural heritage site. It emphasizes the practical applications of LL in regulating tourist behavior and preserving cultural integrity, offering new perspectives on the strategic use of language in glocalizing tourist destinations. However, the frequent use of regulatory signs, while essential for maintaining the site's sanctity and order, may inadvertently cause irritation among visitors, potentially detracting from their overall experience. This concern aligns with findings in previous studies where the over-regulation through signage was noted to create a restrictive atmosphere, potentially impacting the tourist's sense of freedom and enjoyment (Shohamy et al., 2010 ; Alomoush, 2022). The constant reminders of rules and prohibitions, such as those instructing visitors on appropriate attire and behavior, can make the environment feel less welcoming and more controlled, which might not be conducive to a relaxed and immersive tourist experience.

In the context of Wat Maha That, where the primary aim is to preserve the cultural and religious integrity of the site, this balance between regulation and visitor experience is particularly delicate. The study's findings indicate that signs prohibiting behaviors like smoking, climbing, and inappropriate attire are necessary to protect the site, yet they must be strategically placed and designed to minimize visitor discomfort. For example, while the multilingual signs are crucial for clear communication with international tourists, the redundancy or overly prescriptive nature of some signs, such as the ambiguous "no sitting" instruction, could confuse or frustrate visitors.



Conclusion

This study on the linguistic landscape (LL) of Wat Maha That in Ayutthaya, Thailand, reveals the intricate interplay between global and local elements through the use of multilingual public signage. The analysis of 48 signs, predominantly bilingual in Thai and English, alongside multilingual signs incorporating Japanese and Chinese, underscores the site's strategic adaptation to cater to an international audience while maintaining its cultural and religious significance. The study highlights the role of LL in glocalizing sacred spaces, demonstrating how the integration of foreign languages in regulatory signs enhances accessibility and global appeal without compromising local authenticity. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of how LL can balance global influences with local traditions in promoting cultural heritage within the context of international tourism.

Contribution

The implications of these findings suggest that by highlighting the strategic use of foreign languages in regulatory signage to balance global accessibility with local cultural preservation, the study fills a theoretical gap in understanding how multilingualism functions in sacred spaces. Furthermore, it contributes to discussions on how language in public spaces not only reflects global-local dynamics but also actively shapes visitor experiences and reinforces cultural identity. It can be also noted that while regulatory signs are vital for the site's preservation, there is a need for a more visitor-friendly approach in their design and placement. This could involve using more welcoming language, incorporating culturally sensitive symbols, or providing clearer explanations for certain rules. Additionally, engaging visitors with interpretive signage that explains the cultural and historical significance of the regulations could enhance their understanding and appreciation, thereby reducing potential irritation.

In conclusion, while the strategic use of LL at Wat Maha That successfully integrates global and local elements to maintain the site's sanctity and accessibility, careful consideration is needed to balance regulation with visitor experience. By refining the design and implementation of regulatory signage and incorporating more interactive and educational elements, the site can better achieve its dual goals of preservation and positive tourist engagement.

Suggestions

Future research should incorporate visitor feedback and reflections on the regulatory signage at Wat Maha That and similar historical and sacred sites. Investigating how tourists perceive and react to these signs can provide a more holistic understanding of their effectiveness and impact. Additionally, it would be beneficial to explore alternative approaches to conveying rules and guidelines that balance the need for preservation with enhancing visitor experience. This could include the use of more engaging and less intrusive communication methods, such as digital signage or interactive guides. By incorporating these perspectives, future studies can offer recommendations for managing linguistic landscapes in a way that respects both the cultural significance of the site and the comfort of its visitors.

Limitations

This study provides valuable insights into the linguistic landscape of Wat Maha That, particularly in the context of glocalization. However, several limitations should be noted. One significant limitation is that the study did not include visitors' opinions and reflections on the regulatory signs. The frequent use of such signs, while intended to preserve the sanctity of the site and ensure appropriate behavior, may cause irritation among visitors and potentially detract from their overall experience. This aspect of visitor



experience was overlooked, which limits the study's comprehensiveness in understanding the full impact of the linguistic landscape on tourist satisfaction and behavior.

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