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Indexical order and language ideology in the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong: Chungking Mansions and its surroundings

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Abstract: This study undertakes an investigation into the linguistic landscape of tourism in the tourist areas of Chungking Mansions and its surrounding environs in Hong Kong and intends to reveal similarities and differences in the linguistic signs in the two areas by employing a statistical analysis of a comprehensive database of public signs. The results show that official signs in the two areas prioritize the use of Chinese and English, and Chinese has a marginally higher representation in the surrounding areas. In contrast, private signs in Chungking Mansions exhibit a distinctive linguistic diversity, with over 20 languages represented, and English occupying dominant position, followed by Arabic, Hindi, and other languages. In the surrounding areas, private signs are displayed in eight languages, with Chinese being the predominant code, followed by English, Japanese, Korean, and other languages. It is found that the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong is diversified, contextualized by historical, political, cultural, and economic factors, and characterized by indexical ordering and ideological implications, and English plays a crucial role in distinguishing Hong Kong from other Chinese cities. In addition, the study offers insights into the complexity and importance of linguistic diversity in the context of tourism and urban development.

Keywords: language policy; linguistic diversity; official sign; private sign

1 Introduction

Tourism, especially international tourism, is widely acknowledged as an essential economic and social activity (Kallen 2009), which is inextricably linked with language (Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau 2009; Kallen 2009). The proliferation of

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tourism has transformed Hong Kong into a desired destination and a place of residence marked by a remarkably diverse linguistic landscape that reflects its spatial dimensions of language (Blommaert 2013) and contributes to an understanding of the construction of meaning (Scollon and Scollon 2003) in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, one of the two special administrative regions of the People's Republic of China (PRC), was occupied by the British in 1842 after the First Opium War and was a British colony until 1997, when China resumed sovereignty over it. As a vibrant harbor city and a world-renowned tourist destination, Hong Kong has tourism as one of the pillars of its economy, along with financial services, trading, and logistics (Hong Kong Tourism Commission 2020). According to the WorldData database (2022), Hong Kong had a total of 55.91 million tourists in 2019, ranking 10th in the world in absolute terms. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the tourism industry worldwide, including Hong Kong. In 2020 and 2021, the number of visitor arrivals to Hong Kong sharply decreased to 3.57 million and 0.09 million, respectively. However, in recent years, the tourism sector in Hong Kong has been showing steady signs of recovery, with a notable increase in the volume of tourists.

Hong Kong's unique geographical location and distinctive historical, economic, political, and cultural contexts have given rise to a complex and intricate linguistic environment. The coexistence of different languages and dialects in Hong Kong is the result of the region's language policy evolution over time. Prior to 1974, English was the sole official language of Hong Kong. After the transfer of sovereignty in 1997, the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) established both Chinese and English as official languages. Article 9 of the Basic Law states that "in addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature, and judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (Hong Kong Basic Law 1997). Despite this recognition of Chinese as an official language, English continues to play a significant role in Hong Kong's society due to over 150 years of British colonial rule and as an indicator of the "one country, two systems" policy¹ after Hong Kong's handover.

Since 1997, Hong Kong has adopted a language policy known as biliteracy and trilingualism, which refers to the ability to read and write in both Chinese and English (biliteracy) and the ability to speak Cantonese, English, and Mandarin (trilingualism). In 1999, Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa emphasized that the HKSAR government's principle was to cultivate more competent individuals who were

¹ "One country, two systems" is a basic policy of the Chinese government to realize peaceful reunification of the country, indicating that there is but one China, and Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan are inseparable parts of the PRC. However, they will retain their existing economic system for a prolonged period of time as special administrative regions, while the rest of China implements a socialist system (China.org.cn 2022).

proficient in both biliteracy and trilingualism (Lee and Leung 2012). Biliteracy and trilingualism have become overarching language policies that influence all aspects of Hong Kong's economy and social life, including its linguistic landscape, which encompasses "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings in a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (Landry and Bourhis 1997: 25).

This paper aims to examine the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong, using Chungking Mansions and its surroundings as a case study. It seeks to conduct a comparative analysis with a statistical approach to uncover the similarities and differences between official and private signage, and to investigate the indexical order and the implied language ideology of the public signs in the two areas, and to find out how the indexical order interacts with language ideology in the collected data of linguistic signs. Ultimately, the paper intends to provide an interpretation of the current state of the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong, taking into account political, economic, cultural, and historical perspectives.

2 Indexical order and language ideology in linguistic landscape of tourism

Language serves as a critical medium for communication in the context of tourism, enabling tourists to gain a multifaceted understanding of a destination from various perspectives, including geography, socioculture, economy, and history. Mathieson and Wall (1982) recognized the importance of language in tourism studies, considering it a crucial indicator of sociocultural changes related to international tourism. The language of public signs in a tourist destination provides valuable insights into the impact of tourism on the host community (Lu et al. 2020). Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau (2015) argued that the economic value of tourism as a service-providing industry is closely linked with language, as linguistic aesthetics and exoticism are used to customize the public space to tourists' preferences and expectations. Tourism authorities and business owners often tailor the selected languages for potential tourists, and public signs play a significant role in providing first-time tourists with an authentic, exotic, and memorable experience. As Jaworski and Thurlow (2010: 257) aptly point out, "tourism is a semiotically embedded service because a key part of what is actually produced or consumed in tourism is the semiotic context of the service."

Tourism is inherently situated and contextualized in the linguistic landscape and the field of language contact. A tourist destination, as a public space, serves as a site of language contact, where public signs in different languages and linguistic

varieties coexist spatially. Public signs serve two main functions: an informative function, which involves conveying information, and a symbolic function, which often conveys social status, power relations, and ideology (Landry and Bourhis 1997). Public signs are further divided into official signs and private signs. Official signs are those authorized by the government, such as street names, names of government institutions, signs on government buildings, and public road signs, while private signs refer to those in the commercial or personal sectors, such as storefronts, café signs, and signs for shopping malls.

Public signs in the linguistic landscape are characterized by indexicality and identification, as indexicality is fundamental in verbal language (Ponzio 2006), and language is often seen as indexical in its basic form (Silverstein 1998). Silverstein (2003) provides a systematic description of indexical order from micro and macro perspectives. He defines “indexical order” as a medium for relating the micro-social to the macro-social frames of analysis in any sociolinguistic phenomenon (Silverstein 2003: 193). Within Silverstein’s (2003) framework of indexical order, first-order indexicality connects linguistic forms with a particular social category (the micro-social or contextualized language use), while second-order indexicality rationalizes ideological links (macro-social frames of interaction). Indexicality and ideology are interwoven, with ideology being a quality of a sign (Pavlenko 2010). In fact, ideology “construes indexicality by constituting its metapragmatics” (Silverstein 1998: 128) and indexicality is a completely ideological mechanism (Bucholtz and Hall 2003). Blommaert (2005) further explains that the indexical order, or the order of indexicality, reveals stratified social meanings in communication.

In this study, ideology is best understood as language ideology, which can be defined as a “superstructure” consisting of “a system of beliefs, assumptions, presuppositions, ideas, values, and attitudes” (Zhou 2017: 99–100) about linguistic practices, such as multilingualism or monolingualism. Lanza and Woldemariam (2009: 189) define language ideology as “a set of shared attitudes and beliefs about language, underpinned by certain social/cultural values,” and it “serves to rationalize existing social structures and dominant linguistic practices, particularly through their institutionalization in official language policy.” The indexical order of public signs can be seen as manifesting an ideological engagement that reflects the orientations, values, attitudes, and beliefs of the designers, makers, or users of public signs. Similarly, official signs are often a product of a nation’s language policy, which is associated with the ideology of the nation or country (Lu et al. 2020).

Despite the inherent connection between tourism and language, language as a positive factor in tourism has received limited attention in tourism studies (Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau 2015; Kallen 2009). The existing literature covers several aspects, including the positive role of tourism development in the proliferation of multilingual signs and the creation of a rural village image in Huangshan City, China

(Lu et al. 2020), the influence of high-quality English on tourists' experiences, and the impact of minority languages on the tourist–host interaction in Mallorca, Spain (Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau 2009, 2015), the impact of tourism on the linguistic landscape in Macao in light of tourists' perceptions (Yan and Lee 2014), and language choices and commodification of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of Macao's heritage tourism (Yan 2018). In fact, there is a need for more research to explore the relationship between language and tourism and to understand the potential positive impacts of language on tourism.

The linguistic landscape of Hong Kong has attracted academic interest. Jaworski and Yeung (2010) conducted a study of signs in public spaces in Hong Kong, particularly regarding the addresses and names of residential properties, with a focus on their semiotic meanings. Finzel (2013) investigated the linguistic landscape of several streets of Hong Kong, while Lai (2013) studied public signs in four selected areas of Hong Kong after China reclaimed sovereignty over the city. Wong and Chan (2017) examined the history of bilingualism in the linguistic landscape of Hong Kong from 1957 to 2014 by analyzing the digital photo archive of the Hong Kong Yearbook collection to identify changes in language preferences over nearly six decades. Previous studies have conducted detailed analyses of collected data in selected streets and areas or from photo archives, with a particular focus on multilingualism and the prevalence of English. However, the symbolic function of linguistic signage in the context of tourism in Hong Kong has not been emphasized, particularly with regards to indexical order and language ideology.

3 Methodology

3.1 The location of research areas

The present study focuses on Chungking Mansions and its surroundings in Tsim Sha Tsui, located in the Kowloon area of Hong Kong. Chungking Mansions is situated at 36–44 Nathan Road in Tsim Sha Tsui, the heart of Hong Kong and the center of the bustling commercial district.² Built in 1961, it is a 17-story commercial and residential building with five connected blocks, each with a ground floor. The first two floors are occupied by shops and restaurants, while the upper floors are filled with mini hotels and residential apartments. Mathews (2011) has described it as a ghetto at the center of the world, a hybrid complex made up of hotels, hostels, food sellers, and retailers from various parts of the world, especially South Asia and North Africa. Chungking Mansions has been nicknamed the United Nations of Hong Kong, where people from

² Source: <https://www.Hongkong.net/info/chungking-mansions> (accessed 20 September 2022).

over 120 countries and regions can be found visiting or doing business. It is a melting pot of various cultures and a display of Hong Kong's diversity. In 2007, *The Times* described Chungking Mansions as the “best example of globalization in action,” and *The Economist* dubbed it “home to the world” (Xing 2012: 74). It is well-known among global budget travelers and backpackers for its cheap accommodations and convenient shops and restaurants.

Since its construction, Chungking Mansions has evolved into a commercial residential building with over 400 low-end hotels, shops, and restaurants, including numerous foreign exchange stores. It has witnessed the footprints of tourists from over 120 countries and regions. Among the travelers and businessmen who frequent the building, the largest proportion originates from India, Pakistan, and other South Asian countries, as well as from various African countries.

The study selected the surrounding areas of Chungking Mansions, which includes the following streets: Nathan Road, Middle Road, Minden Row, Mody Road, Bristol Avenue, Carnarvon Road, Hanoi Road, Peking Road, Lock Road, and Hankow Road (see Figure 1). These areas are predominantly populated by Hong Kong locals and features four- and five-star hotels and high-end shopping centers that focus on luxury commodities. Consequently, the landscape of the surrounding areas presents a sharp contrast to that of Chungking Mansions (see Figure 1).

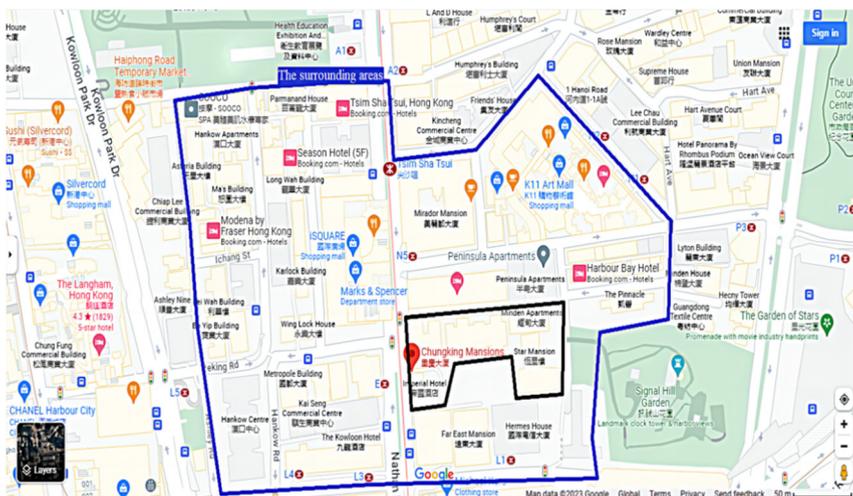


Figure 1: Map showing the research areas (source: Google Maps, <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Chungking+Mansions> [Using Google Maps, we delineated the research areas. The area framed in black indicates Chungking Mansions and the area framed in blue outlines its surrounding areas]).

3.2 Data collection

To collect data for the study, we selected as research objects the linguistic landscape of the interior area of Chungking Mansions and its surrounding areas. We collected images of public signs in the selected areas of Chungking Mansions and its surroundings from January 19 to 25 and February 13 to 20, 2019, using two mobile phones, the Xiaomi 8 and iPhone 6, to take digital photographs.

To ensure consistency in data collection, we only collected samples that were clearly visible on or from the ground floor. Four criteria were adopted for data collection in this study. Firstly, the linguistic landscape on moving vehicles within the selected areas was excluded. Secondly, labels without clear content or obvious physical boundaries were not included. Thirdly, if a public sign had two or more surfaces, each surface was considered as an independent sample. Finally, samples with identical content were not counted more than once.

We conducted two rounds of data collection, one in late January and the other in mid-February 2019. The second data collection was conducted during the Chinese Lunar New Year, resulting in numerous festival greetings appearing in almost every store. Due to the time-limited nature of these seasonal greeting signs and the fact that they were mainly aimed at Chinese customers, they were not included in the data. Before analyzing the collected data, it was important to clarify the unit of analysis for the linguistic landscape study. In this study, the unit of analysis refers to a sign with clear physical boundaries, such as a store sign, light box advertisement, publicity poster, banner, notice, road sign, indicator, and so on.

A total of 2,101 units of analysis were collected, of which 2,008 were valid and 93 were invalid based on the criteria mentioned. We divided the collected signage into two categories based on the sign-setters: official signs and private signs. Official signs were those set up by the government or institutions, such as the management committee of Chungking Mansions, while private signs were set up by companies, retailers, vendors, non-governmental organizations, and so on. Private signs were further divided into the following categories based on their functions and aims: commercial shop signs, which were hung in front of stores to indicate the name and business content of the store; advertising billboards and posters to display the merits of a good or service, aiming to promote profits; public notices to act as a reminder for caution or warning; and signs specifying relevant information for recruitment or rental.

Of the 829 units from the interior of Chungking Mansions, 93 were official signs and 736 were private signs. Among the 736 private signs, 324 were commercial shop signs, 209 were advertising billboards and posters, 196 were public notices, and 7 were signs for rent or recruitment. In comparison, of the 1,179 units from the

surroundings of Chungking Mansions, 127 were official signs and 1,052 were private signs. Among the 1,052 private signs, 329 were commercial shop signs, 486 were advertising billboards and posters, 203 were public notices, and 34 were signs for rent or recruitment.

3.3 Data identification

Identifying languages in the data proved to be a primary challenge during the research, as our proficiency was limited to Chinese, English, French, and Japanese. We are grateful for the assistance of Abbie Wang, Carmen Li, Jessica Ren, Matthew Li, and Queena Yam, multilingual Hong Kong residents fluent in languages such as Arabic, Malay, Korean, Thai, French, and Russian. We would also like to recognize the contributions of our friends at Beijing Foreign Studies University. To ensure the accurate classification of multilingual signs, we verified the multilingual data three times.

In identifying the collected data, the standard used was the written script of a language. For instance, Hindi, the national and official language of India, is written in Devanagari script. It is crucial to note that a distinction was made between Malay and Indonesian. Malay (Bahasa Melayu) is widely spoken in Southeast Asian nations such as Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore and has been treated as the national and official language of these countries. Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), as the official language of Indonesia, is often regarded as a standardized register of Riau Malay. Although Malay and Indonesian are similar and mutually intelligible, they have some differences in vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, and grammar.³ Therefore, we identified these signs based on their written forms.

In this study, we used traditional criteria to classify code type, which included monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual codes. Signs in only one language were classified as monolingual signs, signs in two languages were classified as bilingual signs, and signs in three or more languages were classified as multilingual signs (Lai 2013). Code selection in our study refers to the language choice in a sign. For example, a monolingual sign reflects the choice of one language, while a bilingual sign reflects the use of two languages, and a multilingual sign reflects the use of several languages (see Figure 2a–c).

Code preference or priority code is an important dimension of linguistic landscape analysis which refers to the priority relationship between languages on bilingual or multilingual signs that reflects their social status within the linguistic

³ Source: "What are the basic differences between Malay and Indonesian?" <https://thinkbahasa.com/difference-between-indonesia-and-malay-language/> (accessed 10 October 2022).



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 2: Different shop signs in Chungking Mansions. a. Monolingual commercial shop sign in Chungking Mansions. b. Bilingual commercial shop sign in Chungking Mansions. c. Multilingual commercial shop sign in Chungking Mansions.

community (Shang and Zhao 2014). Geosemiotics, as proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2003), determines the dominant codes through daily writing order, printing, and typesetting habits. In an encircled text arrangement, the priority codes are placed in the center, while non-priority ones appear at the edge. When words are arranged horizontally, the priority codes should be placed above or at the top of the sign, and non-priority ones below or at the bottom. In vertical order, the priority codes are



Figure 3: The priority codes of signs in the area surrounding Chungking Mansions. a. The priority codes of a bank sign in the area surrounding Chungking Mansions. b. The priority codes of a sign at Imperial Hotel in the area surrounding Chungking Mansions. c. The priority codes of a sign in Taishan Hotel in the area surrounding Chungking Mansions.

placed on the left and non-priority codes on the right (see Figure 3a–c). The arrangement of signs follows an order of indexicality.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 The linguistic landscape of Chungking Mansions

A total of 829 signs in Chungking Mansions were obtained, consisting of 93 official signs and 736 private signs, including shop signs, advertising billboards and posters, public notices, and signs for rent or for recruitment. Of the 324 commercial shop signs, six languages were involved: English, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, Malay, and Japanese. Over 20 languages were present in Chungking Mansions to varying degrees, including English, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, Malay, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean, Russian, French, Thai, German, Spanish, and 13 other languages. In terms of code types, there were three monolingual codes (English, Chinese, and Hindi), five bilingual codes (English and Chinese, English and Arabic, English and Hindi, Arabic and Hindi, and English and Malay), and five multilingual code combinations involving five languages (English, Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, and Japanese) (see Table 1). In total, there were 13 code types, with the proportion of monolingual (49.38 %) and non-monolingual signs (50.62 %) being similar, but bilingual/multilingual signs showing a full diversity of language combinations. English had the

Table 1: Languages on shop signs in Chungking Mansions.

Code type	Languages	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	English	147	45.37 %
	Chinese	12	3.70 %
	Hindi	1	0.31 %
Bilingual	English and Chinese	136	41.98 %
	English and Arabic	5	1.54 %
	English and Hindi	9	2.78 %
	Arabic and Hindi	1	0.31 %
	English and Malay	1	0.31 %
Multilingual	English, Arabic and Hindi	4	1.23 %
	English, Arabic and Chinese	2	0.62 %
	English, Chinese and Hindi	4	1.23 %
	English, Chinese and Japanese	1	0.31 %
	English, Chinese, Arabic and Hindi	1	0.31 %
Total		324	100 %

highest frequency in the monolingual type, accounting for 45.37 % of the total, followed by English–Chinese bilingual signs, which made up 41.98 % (see Table 1). English (57.32 %), Chinese (40.24 %), and Hindi (2.44 %) were the three main languages in the code preference of signs.

There were 209 advertising billboards and posters in Chungking Mansions, involving ten languages: English, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, Malay, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Russian, and French. In terms of code combination, there were eight monolingual signs in English, Chinese, Arabic, Korean, Malay, Japanese, Hindi, and Indonesian; six bilingual signs composed of English and Chinese, English and Arabic, English and Hindi, English and Japanese, English and Russian, and English and Indonesian; and ten multilingual signs. In total, there were 24 different code combinations (see Table 2). Monolingual signs in English ranked first, accounting for 40.19 %, followed by bilingual signs in English and Chinese at 25.36 %. The top three code preferences for advertising billboards and posters were English (57.30 %), Chinese (32.58 %), and Arabic (5.62 %).

Among the 196 public notices in Chungking Mansions, nine languages were found, including English, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Russian, and Indonesian. Monolingual signs were in four languages: English, Chinese, Hindi, and Arabic; bilingual signs were composed of two types: English and Chinese, and English and Hindi; and multilingual signs were diverse and in six code combinations (see Table 3 and illustrations in Figure 4a and b). In terms of code preference, English had the highest proportion at 81.63 %, followed by Chinese (53.06 %), Hindi (8.67 %),

Table 2: Languages on advertising billboards and posters in Chungking Mansions.

Code type	Languages	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	English	84	40.19 %
	Chinese	25	11.96 %
	Arabic	4	1.91 %
	Malay	2	0.96 %
	Japanese	2	0.96 %
	Korean	1	0.48 %
	Hindi	1	0.48 %
	Indonesian	1	0.48 %
Bilingual	English and Chinese	53	25.36 %
	English and Arabic	9	4.31 %
	English and Hindi	5	2.39 %
	English and Japanese	3	1.44 %
	English and Russian	1	0.48 %
	English and Indonesian	1	0.48 %
Multilingual	English, Chinese and Hindi	5	2.39 %
	English, Chinese and Arabic	3	1.44 %
	English, Arabic and French	2	0.96 %
	English, Chinese and Japanese	1	0.48 %
	English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean	1	0.48 %
	English, Chinese, and Korean	1	0.48 %
	English, Arabic, Hindi, Indonesian and Persian	1	0.48 %
	English, Chinese, Arabic and Hindi	1	0.48 %
	English, Chinese, Arabic and Japanese	1	0.48 %
	English, Hindi and Indonesian	1	0.48 %
Total		209	100 %

and Arabic (3.57 %). Bilingual codes (41.84 %) and multilingual codes (3.57 %) accounted for lower proportions than monolingual codes (54.59 %). Bilingual signs in English and Chinese were the most commonly used, with a percentage of 41.33 %. In addition, two multilingual signs presented the most diverse combination of more than seven languages.

Out of the seven signs for rent or recruitment in Chungking Mansions, six were in both English and Chinese, and only one was in English. Regarding official signs, Chinese and English kept the same ratio. Among them, there were five monolingual signs in English and five in Chinese, respectively. There were also 83 bilingual signs in English and Chinese, which made up 89.25 %.

Indexical order and language ideology intersect to create a unique linguistic environment in Chungking Mansions. English, Chinese, Hindi, and Arabic appear more prominently than other languages, and this indexical order shapes linguistic

Table 3: Languages of public notices in Chungking Mansions.

Code type	Languages	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	English	71	36.22 %
	Chinese	16	8.16 %
	Hindi	14	7.14 %
	Arabic	6	3.06 %
Bilingual	English and Chinese	81	41.33 %
	English and Hindi	1	0.51 %
Multilingual	English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Russian, Indonesian and others	2	1.02 %
	English, Chinese and Hindi	2	1.02 %
	English, Chinese and Arabic	1	0.51 %
	English, Chinese and Japanese	1	0.51 %
	English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean	1	0.51 %
Total		196	100 %

and social hierarchies, at the same time reflecting a combination of inclusivity, cosmopolitanism, and intercultural exchange.

The use of English, as an international language and as the most salient language in Chungking Mansions, suggests that it is a lingua franca for communication across diverse linguistic communities. Chinese, as one of the two official languages of Hong Kong, has gained increasing visibility in the linguistic landscape of Hong Kong and become more prominent due to political and economic factors. And the comparative salience of Arabic and Hindi can be attributed to the presence of a South Asian and Middle Eastern community with their specific cultures and ethnicity within the complex.

3.4.2 The linguistic landscape of the surroundings

A total of 1,179 units of analysis were collected in the surroundings of Chungking Mansions, including 127 official signs and 1,052 private signs. Among the 1,052 private signs, 329 shop signs were obtained in five languages: English, Chinese, Japanese, French, and Korean. English had the highest proportion of signs at 81.46 %, followed by Chinese at 61.40 %. It is notable that there were no monolingual or bilingual public signs in Hindi or Arabic in the surroundings. In terms of code type, there were four monolingual signs in English, Chinese, Japanese, and French; three bilingual signs in three languages (English and Chinese, English and French, and Chinese and French); and two multilingual signs in four languages. The proportion of monolingual signs (54.40 %) was slightly higher than that of non-monolingual signs (45.60 %). Bilingual



(a)



(b)

Figure 4: Multilingual signs in Chungking Mansions. a. Multilingual advertising billboard of a restaurant in Chungking Mansions. b. Multilingual poster of Center for Refugees in Chungking Mansions.

signs in English and Chinese had the highest proportion, accounting for 43.77 % of the total number, followed by monolingual signs in English at 36.47 % (see Table 4).

There were a total of 486 advertising billboards and posters in the surroundings of Chungking Mansions featuring eight languages: English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, Italian, French, and Thai. There were 20 code types: four monolingual code types involving English, Chinese, Japanese, and French; nine bilingual code types, including the dominant English and Chinese type; and seven multilingual code types, with the prominent combination of English, Chinese, and Japanese (see Table 5). Chinese (76.13 %), English (66.05 %), and Japanese (3.70 %) were the top three languages in terms of code preference. Monolingual codes (54.73 %) were slightly higher than non-monolingual codes (45.27 %). The code type of English and Chinese had the highest proportion, accounting for 40.33 %, followed by monolingual Chinese and English, with percentages of 32.30 % and 21.81 %, respectively. Despite the diversity of code types, the priority languages for advertising billboards and posters mainly included Chinese (69.55 %), English (28.18 %), Japanese (1.36 %), Arabic (0.45 %), and Thai (0.45 %) (see Table 5).

There were 203 public notices in the surroundings of Chungking Mansions that used four languages: English, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino. Specifically, there were six code types, including three monolingual codes in English, Chinese, and Filipino, two bilingual codes in English and Chinese or Chinese and Japanese, and one multilingual code in English, Chinese, and Japanese. In terms of code preference, English accounted for 84.24 %, slightly lower than Chinese at 87.68 %. The proportion of bilingual codes was much higher than that of monolingual codes. The combination of Chinese and English or English and Chinese was the most commonly used, accounting for 71.92 %. For public notices, Chinese was the dominant language at 81.08 %, followed by English at a distant 18.92 %.

Table 4: Languages of shop signs in the surroundings.

Code type	Languages	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	English	120	36.47 %
	Chinese	54	16.41 %
	French	3	0.91 %
	Japanese	2	0.61 %
Bilingual	English and Chinese	144	43.77 %
	English and French	2	0.61 %
	Chinese and French	2	0.61 %
Multilingual	English, Chinese and Korean	1	0.30 %
	English, Chinese and Japanese	1	0.30 %
Total		329	100 %

Table 5: Languages on advertising billboards and posters in the surroundings.

Code type	Languages	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	Chinese	157	32.30 %
	English	106	21.81 %
	Japanese	2	0.41 %
	French	1	0.21 %
Bilingual	English and Chinese	196	40.33 %
	English and Italian	2	0.41 %
	English and Arabic	1	0.21 %
	English and French	1	0.21 %
	English and Japanese	1	0.21 %
	Chinese and Thai	1	0.21 %
	Chinese and Japanese	1	0.21 %
	Chinese and French	1	0.21 %
	Japanese and Korean	1	0.21 %
Multilingual	English, Chinese and Japanese	7	1.44 %
	English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean	3	0.62 %
	English, Chinese, Japanese and Thai	1	0.21 %
	English, Japanese, and Korean	1	0.21 %
	English, Chinese, and Korean	1	0.21 %
	Chinese, Japanese and Korean	1	0.21 %
	English, Chinese, and Arabic	1	0.21 %
Total		486	100 %

In the surroundings of Chungking Mansions, there were 34 signs for rent or recruitment, where Chinese had a 100 % proportion. In terms of code combinations, Chinese was the only monolingual type, accounting for 70.59 %, followed by the bilingual combination of Chinese and English at 29.41 %.

Regarding the official signs in the surroundings, there was not a significant difference between the proportions of Chinese and English. However, the official signs demonstrated a preference for Chinese, which accounted for 64.96 %, while English accounted for 35.04 %, representing just over half as much. The code combination type for official signs was relatively simple, mainly consisting of Chinese or English as monolingual or the bilingual type of English plus Chinese.

In fact, the prevalence of English and Chinese in the surroundings of Chungking Mansions not only shows the indexical order in multilingual context, but also reveals language ideology, indicating the exact result of official language policy prescribed in the Basic Laws of Hong Kong under the principle of “one country, two systems.”.

4 Findings and discussions

The detailed analysis of the collected data in the two areas allows the identification of similarities and differences between them and facilitates a closer examination of the symbolic functions of the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong, specifically the formation of indexical order and the implied language ideologies.

The similarities between the public signs of the two areas are apparent in three aspects. Firstly, both areas exhibit remarkable linguistic diversity beyond the two official languages of English and Chinese. Hong Kong's favorable geographical location and relatively liberal visa policy have attracted people from different nationalities for sightseeing, business, and even immigration. Multilingual signage not only enhances the aesthetics of public spaces to meet tourists' expectations but also serves as a strong expression of personal ethnic identity in Hong Kong. In the process of urban construction and development, various foreign ethnic groups and the Chinese majority inevitably communicate and cooperate with each other, promoting cultural integration and shaping the unique urban culture of Hong Kong. This phenomenon is also reflected in the linguistic landscape of the selected areas.

Secondly, the official signs in both areas predominantly feature Chinese and English, with Chinese occupying a relatively higher proportion. It is noteworthy that official signs are in compliance with the Basic Laws of Hong Kong, which recognize both Chinese and English as official languages. Most signs are bilingual, conveying information in both languages simultaneously. This indexical order of the main official signs reflects the change in language policy after the handover of Hong Kong. The internal official signs of Chungking Mansions, such as fire alarms and emergency exits, were mostly in English, which is consistent with the building's construction in the 1960s. While the restoration and the investigation of safety hazards in the building were carried out in 2004 after the handover, public signs on mechanical and electrical systems and bulletin boards in the building tended to prioritize Chinese as the code type. Therefore, official signs are a result of the language policy of Hong Kong and are closely connected with the language ideology of the Hong Kong government, as they reflect the government's commitment to preserving both Chinese and English as official languages while also promoting the use of Chinese in public spaces.

Thirdly, English enjoys *de facto* prominence in both official and private signs in the two areas. Hong Kong, as an international metropolis, has attracted people from all over the world with its open attitude. According to the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department (2016), approximately 7.7 % of Hong Kong's permanent residents were from other countries and regions, which means that nearly 8 out of 100

people were not native speakers of Chinese or did not use Chinese as their first language. The major ethnic groups included Filipinos, Indonesians, British, South Asians, Australians, Thai, Japanese, Korean, among others. Most Filipinos and Indonesians work as foreign domestic helpers (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2016). Therefore, the inclusion of English as one of the codes in private signs effectively meets the demands of all groups, maximizing the benefits of shop owners and retailers while also reflecting the international character of Hong Kong.

In fact, the differences between the signs in the two areas are apparent. At first, Chungking Mansions exhibits greater diversity in its code selection and language choice, with more languages featured on its signs than in its surroundings. The building has attracted tourists from various countries, covering most of the nationalities in the world, mainly from South Asia and North Africa. Compared to the surroundings, the linguistic diversity inside Chungking Mansions is more prominent. Spolsky and Cooper (1991) proposed the theory of language selection for public signs, which highlights three factors involved: (1) setting signs in a known language(s), (2) using language(s) that the target reader is supposed to know, and (3) performing signs in their own language(s) or language(s) that can indicate their personal identity. Generally speaking, the authorities, shop owners, and retailers in Chungking Mansions consciously or subconsciously consider these three factors when selecting languages for signage. Second, despite the linguistic diversity of public signs in both areas, it is noticeable that, apart from English and Chinese, Arabic and Hindi signs are prominent in Chungking Mansions, while Japanese, followed by Korean, accounts for the larger proportion in the surroundings.

The influx of businesspeople and tourists from North Africa, including Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt, brought many Arabic speakers to Hong Kong (Xu 2005). Additionally, the presence of Indians in Hong Kong today is closely related to the early history of the territory. Erni and Leung (2014) point out that South Asians made their earliest settlement in Hong Kong during the expansion of the British Empire. According to Weiss (1991), four factors contributed to the settlement of South Asians in Hong Kong: military service, labor, trade, and the need for government clerks. The first Indians and Gurkhas in Hong Kong were recruits of the British army (Weiss 1991). Furthermore, trade was the primary factor that connected British and Indian interests in Hong Kong (White 1994: 12). This history explains to a significant extent the presence of Hindi and other South Asian linguistic signs in Chungking Mansions.

Currently, the active businesspeople, tourists, and residents in Chungking Mansions are predominantly from India, Pakistan, and other South Asian, North African, and Middle Eastern countries, with Arabic and Hindi being their common languages. This linguistic landscape closely reflects the demographic and ethnic identity composition of the tourist population, residents, and business community in the building.

The noticeably high proportion of Japanese and Korean in the collected database can be attributed to two factors. On the one hand, the Japanese invasion and occupation of Hong Kong during the Pacific War from December 1941 to August 1945 left a cultural imprint of Japan on the city, which is reflected in the linguistic landscape. On the other hand, the increase in tourists from Japan and South Korea led to a demand for Japanese and Korean language services in shops and businesses.⁴ To meet the purchasing and service demands of these tourists, shop operators have responded by adding Japanese and Korean to their posters and prompts. This not only brings convenience to Japanese and South Korean tourists but also creates a sense of familiarity and thus promotes consumption. This trend is evident in the linguistic landscape of tourist areas, where private signs increasingly include Japanese and Korean, as well as other languages, reflecting the needs and preferences of the city's diverse tourist population.

Moreover, the two areas differ in their code preferences. The signs in Chungking Mansions prioritize English, supplemented by Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, and other languages, while the surrounding areas are dominated by Chinese, closely followed by English, Japanese, Korean, and other languages. This code preference reflects an order of indexicality, where the languages of public signs present a hierarchy that is inherently intertwined with ideology. The official signs in both areas demonstrate the efficacy of Hong Kong's language policy after the handover and the associated language ideology. The public space is often considered an arena for ideological battles, and signage in the public space reflects the actual language policy and language practice (Shohamy 2006).

Following the handover of Hong Kong, the Basic Law of HKSAR stipulated that both Chinese and English are the official languages of Hong Kong and should enjoy equal status and power. Our data analysis of the two areas illustrates that both languages are prioritized with the highest proportion in the database, but they display their spheres of unique priority. In Chungking Mansions, English is more salient, whereas in the surrounding areas, Chinese enjoys a slightly higher percentage. As a result, English plays a vital role in both areas, and other languages in the two areas present their own indexical order in various ways. Specifically, in Chungking Mansions, Arabic and Hindi signs are more prominent than other languages, while Japanese and Korean have a more significant presence than other languages in the linguistic landscape of the surrounding areas.

⁴ According to the Statista Database, the number of Japanese travelers visiting Hong Kong increased steadily between 2013 and 2018, with over 1.29 million visitors in 2018, up from 1.23 million in 2017, dropping slightly to 1.08 million in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic began and stopped almost all travel. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1142843/number-japanese-travelers-to-hong-kong/> (accessed 18 April 2024).

In sum, indexical order and language ideology are combined together to shape language choices and perceptions within the linguistic landscape and carry social meanings and convey social relationships, identities, and attitudes. In Hong Kong, language ideologies reflect the historical, political, and social dynamics of the region. These ideologies influence the indexical order of the linguistic signs, in other words, the expression of the social meanings associated with the public and private signs in different languages, and reveal the hierarchies and power relations in the multilingual context of tourism in Hong Kong.

5 Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong is complex and diverse, shaped by a range of historical, political, cultural, and economic factors. Our analysis of the public and private signs in two tourist areas in Hong Kong has shown that official signs in both prioritize the use of Chinese and English, reflecting the official language policy of Hong Kong. English, in particular, has assumed a critical function as a marker of Hong Kong's unique identity within China.

Private signs in Chungking Mansions exhibit a highly diverse linguistic landscape, with over 20 languages represented, highlighting the multicultural and multilingual character of the area. The prominence of English, Chinese, and other languages such as Arabic and Hindi in private signs reflects the linguistic preferences and practices of the diverse communities that reside and do business in the area. In contrast, private signs in the surrounding areas are displayed in a smaller number of languages, with Chinese being the predominant code, followed by English, Japanese, Korean, and other languages.

Our findings suggest that the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong is complex and nuanced, with indexical ordering and ideological implications. The presence of English in both official and private signs points to its enduring prestige and influence, and the highlighting proportion of Chinese attests to its essential role as the official language, while the use of other languages reflects the multicultural and multilingual character of Hong Kong. Overall, the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong is shaped by a range of historical, political, cultural, and economic factors, and offers a rich and diverse experience for tourists to explore and potentially shape.

By and large, the linguistic landscape of tourism in Hong Kong is expected to play an increasingly critical role in the city's positioning as a global center for tourism, commerce, and finance. To maintain its competitiveness as a destination for international visitors, Hong Kong will need to continue investing in language education

and training, as well as developing effective language policies and practices that promote multilingualism and linguistic diversity. This will be especially important given the growing demand for language services and the increasing linguistic diversity of the city's tourist population. It is believed that by prioritizing language education and promoting linguistic diversity, Hong Kong will continue to differentiate itself as a unique and welcoming destination for visitors from around the world.

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