| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Multilingualism in Australia: A Case Study of the Linguistic Landscape of Springvale, Melbourne

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| **ABSTRACT**

In this study, the linguistic landscape of Springvale was analyzed according to Ben-Rafael's (2009) principles. Quantitative and social semiotic approaches were used to examine how the local Asian speech communities were reflected in the area's linguistic landscape. A commercial street was sampled, and 143 signs were examined, with 107 being multilingual and displaying up to eight different languages on a single sign. The remaining 36 signs were monolingual and displayed only three languages. The signs were categorized by business domain, and the results showed that the type of business influenced the language choice of signs. The signwriters presented unique and authentic identities to the public through their signing, constructing various distinctive identities and revealing certain ideologies to potential customers through different modalities and language choices on signs. This study sheds light on the sociolinguistic situation of Springvale, demonstrating the impact of power across ethnicities, how identities are claimed through commercial signage, and how different groups settle in new places through the linguistic landscape. It is an important contribution to the linguistic landscape and multilingualism studies.

1. Introduction

Over the years, Australia has become a destination for people from various parts of the world. The diverse range of people made the country a multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual place. When such a situation occurs, speech communities or ethnic groups may compete to establish a presence in society, and their status or presentation could differ. One of the methods to reveal a place's linguistic diversity is by inspecting the language or languages displayed in its linguistic landscape (Baranova & Fedorova, 2019). According to Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), the linguistic landscape is any sign or statement visible inside or outside a public or private space in a specific territory. The field of the linguistic landscape has gained increasing attention in sociolinguistic and applied linguistic studies over the last few decades. Nevertheless, this area of research, as Gorter (2013) asserts, does not have "sharply demarcated disciplinary boundaries" (p. 194). Linguistic landscape research is interdisciplinary and related to different disciplines, such as education, social and human geography, politics, linguistics, landscape architecture, economics, literacy studies, psychology, and communication studies (Mensel et al., 2016; Gorter & Cenoz, 2017).

With that being said, the current research, guided by Ben-Rafael's (2009) four principles to analyse the linguistic landscape, followed quantitative and social semiotic approaches to examine how the linguistic landscape of Springvale, a suburb in Melbourne, reflects the local Asian speech communities. Moreover, it intended, with an explicit focus on restaurants' signs, to explore how the signs' designers make use of language and other semiotic resources on their signs to reveal specific identities and the factors involved in that. The following section is a literature review providing an overview of the linguistic landscape, the

linguistic landscape in multilingual contexts, the linguistic landscape in Australia, and the social and cultural importance of restaurants.

2. Literature review

2.1 Linguistic landscape

The linguistic landscape is an area of research that has prompted considerable interest due to its various contributions to the study of language and society (Mensel et al., 2016). One of the widely used definitions for linguistic landscape is by Landry and Bourhis (1997), who describes it as "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings [that] combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (p. 25). Similarly, Ben-Rafael (2009) defines it as "any written sign one finds outside private homes, from road signs to private names to names of streets, shops or schools" (p. 40). Additionally, Cenoz and Gorter (2008) argue that it is the visible display of language in particular parts of the public space. Nevertheless, unlike the static view of the linguistic landscape, other researchers suggest a broader scope and more inclusive view of the concept of the linguistic landscape.

Because the linguistic landscape is displayed in dynamic and changing spaces, Shohamy and Waksman (2009) "go beyond displayed 'written' texts of signs in multilingual versions and include verbal texts, images, objects, placement in time and space as well as human beings" when defining the linguistic landscape (p. 314). The linguistic landscape can serve informational and symbolic functions (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). The informative function is where signs in a specific language or languages imply the languages spoken in that business and can reveal the displayed languages' relative power. The symbolic function is primarily when the displayed language indicates likeness to a particular speech community and identity. In addition, Cenoz and Gorter (2008) argue that multimodality and multilingualism are two features of the linguistic landscape.

According to Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), the linguistic landscape can be divided into public (top-down) and private signs (bottom-up). The public signs are those put up by authorities, government, and public agencies, whereas private signs are those put up by individuals and private businesses (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). The main difference between top-down and bottom-up signs is that different actors put them up, and the difference between them is socially situated (Huebner, 2009). Furthermore, Rodriguez (2009) argues that bottom-up signs, such as the signs on private businesses and advertising, could reflect the local speech community's preferences. He believes that this is because these private businesses are owned by community members or by individuals who know about the languages used in the community. Although language policy could affect bottom-up signs, it mostly mirrors the business owner's preferences (Gorter & Cenoz, 2007).

The linguistic landscape can also contribute to how people perceive and use languages (Gorter, 2013). A place's linguistic landscape can distinguish it and contribute to how its residents and visitors perceive it (Ben-Rafael, 2009). Moreover, it can play a role in constructing the sociolinguistic situation of an area because passers-by and the public process what they see in the linguistic landscape, and, as they do, "the language in which signs are written can certainly influence their perception of the status of the different languages and even affect their own linguistic behaviour" (Gorter & Cenoz, 2008; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006, p. 68). Likewise, it "represents the décor of public life" and can be considered as the "symbolic construction of the public space" (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006, p. 10).

Another role of the linguistic landscape is that it can be a context for language learning. Many researchers (e.g., Malinowski, 2015; Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Starks et al., 2020; Al-Jarf, 2021; Algryani & Syahrin, 2021) have argued for the influential role of the linguistic landscape in enhancing learners' input in the target language. Cenoz and Gorter (2008) argue that the linguistic landscape displays "authentic, contextualized input which is part of the social context" (p. 274). It enhances the availability of the input learners receive and can, especially, improve their pragmatic competence. That is primarily due to the use of indirect language strategies and words in the linguistic landscape that have meaning associated with the local context (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). In the same vein, Starks et al. (2020) point out that the linguistic landscape can also help language learners understand the implicit meaning of messages in second or foreign languages as well as the languages' social and cultural uses. Additionally, the linguistic landscape could be an entertaining and effective resource for improving grammar, reading and vocabulary in the second language (Al-Jarf, 2021).

The linguistic landscape studies gain a great deal of importance because they can reflect the relative power and status of different languages used in society (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2008), and they become more critical or meaningful when considering conflict and contact between languages (Gorter & Cenoz, 2007). Moreover, the linguistic landscape could be the first and most noticeable indicator of a speech community's relative power and status in a particular area (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The visibility of the competing languages in a certain domain of the linguistic landscape could imply the weakness or strength of an ethnolinguistic group in society (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In that, the most dominant language or languages in a society are more displayed and used in private signs than other languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008).

The linguistic landscape can also reflect the language policy in an area and its role in promoting the status of the local minority languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). Although a linguistic landscape study could shed light on the vitality of minority languages in society and their contact with official and international languages in multicultural and multilingual contexts (Izadi & Parvaresh, 2016), they do not always reflect the actual linguistic repertoires used in an area (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Edelman, 2014). For example, the language choice on private signs could be affected by how shop owners perceive their desired customers (Huebner, 2009). Therefore, they do not always represent the local speech community; instead, they could symbolise an attractive image for the target audience. Scollon and Scollon (2003) found that the use of English in a sign in China was, in fact, a representation of "foreign taste and manners" (p. 118). Factors other than that could play a role in displaying the languages spoken by the local speech communities in the linguistic landscape of an area. Specifically, factors such as "power relations, prestige, symbolic value, identity issues, vitality and literacy" could contribute to that (Edelman, 2014, p. 19).

2.2 Linguistic landscape studies in multilingual contexts

Multilingualism has been increasing in the last decade due to different factors such as immigration, tourism, globalisation, and language shift (Gorter & Cenoz, 2008). One of the approaches to examining the linguistic diversity and multilingualism in an area is through the study of the language choices in its linguistic landscape. According to Gorter (2013), linguistic landscape research helps provide insight into societal multilingualism by examining language choices, the status of languages, language contact, and regulations. It is "a sociolinguistic factor distinct from other types of language contacts in multilingual settings" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 45). That is, the amount of language displayed in the linguistic landscape reveals the linguistic diversity of a place (Baranova & Fedorova, 2019). The linguistic landscape is very influential in that it could be equally informative to the census, interviews, or surveys about the sociolinguistic situation of an area (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

Backhaus (2006) studied the linguistic landscape in Tokyo, analyzing 28 areas to understand the city's multilingual reality. He found that top-down and bottom-up signs differed in terms of language choice, function, and prominence. Top-down signs displayed fewer diverse languages, with Japanese being more prominent on official signs. In contrast, bottom-up signs featured a variety of languages that complemented each other, and Japanese wasn't always the most prominent language. Chinese and Korean, the major minority languages, were also becoming more visible in Tokyo's linguistic landscape. Backhaus attributed the presence of languages other than Japanese on signs to official language policies promoting Tokyo's internationalization, an increase in foreign residents, and Japanese residents' preference for displaying foreign languages.

In Singapore, Tang (2020) investigated the status of official languages in the linguistic landscape; despite having four official languages (i.e., English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil), English dominated, appearing on 95% of monolingual signs in the predominantly monolingual landscape (66%). Chinese and Malay were used marginally on monolingual signs (4% and 1%, respectively), with Malay completely absent from such signs. All official languages were employed in bilingual signs, but English remained the dominant language. Tang concluded that English had adopted both a global and local language identity in Singapore, and the country appeared more oriented toward monolingualism than bilingualism or multilingualism, reflecting the influence of its bilingual policy.

2.3 Linguistic Landscape Research in Australia

Many Linguistic landscape studies have been conducted in Australia for various aims. Yao and Gruba (2020) conducted a study that examined the role and status of the Chinese language in Australia through the linguistic landscapes of Box Hill, a suburb in Melbourne with a large Chinese community. The researchers found that sign designers deployed several semiotic recourses such as language, images, drawings, colours, and fonts in order to present exotic and distinctive identities to attract potential customers. Additionally, they found that the area's linguistic landscape reflected the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Chinese community and revealed the superior status of the Chinese language in Box Hill. In another multilingual Australian city, Sydney, Izadi and Parvaresh (2016) inspected how and why the linguistic landscape of Persian stores was formulated in a particular shape. By examining the signs put up by the ethnic Persian business, they found that various semiotic means were used, reflecting cultural and ethnic identities and promoting the Persian language in the multilingual context of Sydney. They conclude that different economic, cultural, and linguistic factors influence the language choice of signs.

Unlike the previous urban contexts, Koschade (2016) examined the linguistic landscape of Hahndorf, a small town located in South Australia, and compared them to the town's languages spoken at home. Koschade inspected how the linguistic landscape of the town could be affected by socio-historical, socio-political, and socio-economic aspects. They found that the linguistic landscape of the area has changed due to socio-historical and socio-political factors. Other forces, such as socio-economic, were also found to be effective in shaping the linguistic landscape of the town. That could show how the sociolinguistic situation in a territory could be reflected by its linguistic landscape. In another rural context, Yao (2020) investigated the linguistic landscape of Euroa, a town in Victoria, to understand how nostalgia is ordered and employed through multimodal resources. The findings show that nostalgia

and feelings of the lost homeland were produced and offered through multimodal means on signs, and evocative aspects could be projected on the linguistic landscape to attract customers.

2.4 Linguistic landscape and restaurants

Restaurants, unlike many other businesses, are of cultural and social importance to people. Morris (2010) asserts that restaurants are considered, especially for immigrants, as a cultural resource and reproduction. They display identities and cultural resources through different means, such as signing, for different motives, including appealing to potential customers (Ben-Rafael, 2009; Morris, 2010). In similar ways, restaurants promote an authentic and exotic experience along with food and services to appeal to their imagined clients. According to Leeman and Modan (2010), "culture, products and services are bundled together and marketed as 'experiences'" by restaurants to attract customers (p. 185).

Abas (2019) argues that restaurants can create an exotic and attractive experience for foreign customers and a close to home one for those from related cultures or countries. By interviewing restaurant owners, Abas found that they use names and information on signs that symbolise their origins or homeland to display a distinctive and ethnic identity. Furthermore, imagery of space is a significant way for immigrants and away-from-home communities to sustain a connection to their national or ethnic identity to "express their longing and nostalgia for the lost homeland" (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2011, p. 8). For instance, Yao (2020) found in her study of the linguistic landscape in a rural Australian town that a Chinese restaurant, using bright red and yellow colours on its signing as well as lanterns and decorative patterns, offered an authentic and exotic experience of Chinese culture and food. Such different means of symbolisation employed by restaurant owners make them an interesting context for examining how identity and culture markers are used in the restaurant's linguistic landscape.

3. Site of the study: Springvale

Springvale is located within the City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), Springvale has a population of about 22,000, and the suburb is considered a culturally and linguistically diverse area. Over recent years, Springvale has received immigrants from different parts of the world, contributing to its diversity and multilingualism. Moreover, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) states that immigrants in Springvale account for 69% of its population, making it an exciting area to investigate the display of immigrants' languages in its linguistic landscape (Edelman, 2014). Besides English, more than 15 languages are spoken and actively used in the area. Interestingly, Vietnamese, the most spoken language, accounts for 25% of the population and outweighs English (18%). Other prominent languages are Cantonese (7%), Punjabi (6%), Mandarin (6%), and Khmer (5%), while various other languages such as Rohingya, Hindi and Korean account for less than 2% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

4. Rationale and objectives of the study

Springvale is considered a multilingual and multicultural suburb with many residents who migrated from other countries and spoke a variety of languages other than English. Additionally, according to Yao and Gruba (2020), there is no explicit statement by The National Policy on Languages governing the display of languages on the linguistic landscape in Australia. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the language choice on the linguistic landscape of Springvale would reflect the local Asian speech communities. Our second hypothesis is based on the assumption that because signs put up by restaurants have a great deal of cultural and social clues (Ben-Rafael, 2009), the linguistic landscape of restaurants in Springvale will reflect the identities and cultures of the Asian local speech communities in the area. In order to examine our hypotheses, we approached the study with the following two questions:

1. How does the linguistic landscape of Springvale reflect the Asian speech communities?
2. To what extent does the linguistic landscape of the restaurants in Springvale reflect the local Asian speech communities?

5. Data and methodology

5.1 Data

The documentation of the linguistic landscapes of Springvale was conducted on a field trip in 2019 by a group of Monash University graduate students under the supervision of Associate Professor Louisa Willoughby to create a data set for future research purposes. The students, including the research author, photographed the linguistic landscape of various streets and shopping areas within the suburb. However, Gorter and Cenoz (2007) argue that choosing a representative sample of an area is a challenging and vital aspect of studying the linguistic landscape, and it is determined by the study's aim (Huebner, 2009). According to Cenoz and Gorter (2008), the main commercial streets often have a great deal of signs (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Moreover, most of the signs put up by restaurants from the provided data were located on the main and commercial streets of Springvale. Therefore, in line with other researchers (e.g., Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Coluzzi, 2016; Abas, 2019), all the signs from both sides of a single

commercial street were chosen and examined to study the linguistic landscape of the suburb. Next, after counting the signs, they were categorised based on the language or language combination they displayed and their business type.

5.2 Methodology

To analyze the motives and reasons behind the design of signs, Ben-Rafael's (2009) four theoretical structuration principles were employed in studying the linguistic landscape of Springvale. According to Ben-Rafael (2009), the primary principle is the presentation-of-self, which pertains to how sign makers aim to present themselves distinctively among other businesses to attract passers-by. Businesses often seek to appeal to customers by presenting themselves as authentic or unique compared to competitors, especially when competing for public attention. The second principle, good-reasons, involves designing signs to cater to the potential needs and desires of expected customers, ultimately capturing their attention. This principle signifies that the linguistic landscape is constructed in a manner that aligns with the desires and values of target clients. The third principle, collective-identity, centers on sign makers shaping the linguistic landscape to convey their affiliation or solidarity with a specific culture or group in order to attract clients from that culture or group. Ben-Rafael (2009) suggests that this principle can reflect the vitality of a speech community or language, particularly in multicultural societies. Lastly, the power-relation principle addresses how a dominant language or group can impose its linguistic resources on inferior languages through the use of signs and through regulations and restrictions imposed by authorities (Ben-Rafael, 2009).

Quantitative and social semiotic approaches were utilized in this study. The quantitative approach was instrumental in data collection, providing an overview of the languages and language combinations featured in Springvale's linguistic landscape. It also enabled comparisons between the languages on signs and the demographic data of the local Asian speech communities, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of language presence in the area.

Our second approach to analyse the data is Scollon and Scollon's (2003) social semiotic approach. It allowed us to interpret how sign-makers employ various multimodal resources (e.g., place of language, visual images, drawings, colours and fonts) to convey messages as well as to project identities and ideologies. In the social semiotic approach, due to the discussed social and cultural importance of restaurants and the possibility of substantial sociolinguistic markers on their signs, as well as accounting for the highest domain signs, we focused on restaurants to examine how they reflect the local Asian speech communities within Springvale. It is important to mention that this study includes cafes and bakeries under the restaurants category.

To determine what counts as a sign, we adopted Cenoz and Gorter's (2006) procedure to identify the unit of analysis. They consider each business as one unit of analysis, meaning that storefront and other signs on the same institution were considered as one sign. This is because all the linguistic landscapes of the same business, even when using different languages, belong "to a larger whole instead of being clearly separate" (Cenoz & Gorter 2006, p. 71). We excluded opening hours, push and pull signs, and signs that were not clearly visible in the pictures. Gorter (2013) asserts that names displayed on signs are significant, but it could be problematic to determine in which language they are written. Thus, in order to enhance the reliability of our investigation and have a better understanding of the signs and their business domain, we searched on Google for the names of the businesses on signs. Then, by using Google Maps, Google Street View, the owner's business description, and customers' reviews, we clearly understood the language used on signs and the stores' domain.

6. Results and analysis

6.1 Quantitative analysis

Depending on the aim of linguistic landscape research, several approaches have been adopted to collect and analyse the data in linguistic landscape studies. However, the quantitative approach is one of the most adopted approaches to linguistic landscape research. This approach allowed us to have a general image of the linguistic landscape of private businesses in Springvale and the language choices for each business domain. There were 143 private business signs of various language choices on the street sampled. However, 36 of those signs were monolingual. They account for only around a quarter of signs (25%), meaning that multilingual signs seem to be the default in the local linguistic landscape.

6.1.1 Monolingual signs

As can be seen in Figure 1, English is dominating the monolingual signs, with 28 out of 36 (78%), although it is the second most spoken language at home in Springvale (18%). This makes intuitive sense given that it is the national language of Australia and is used at home by 68% of the population in Victoria (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This result is fairly consistent with Tang (2020), who found that most monolingual signs (95%) in Singapore were in English, and that was explained by the fact that 80% of the population could understand the language by itself or combined with another language or languages. Therefore, since the majority of the population may read the sign that is in English either by itself or along with another language or languages, shop owners who display their business signs through the use of only English may have considered their potential customers' ability to

read the signs and therefore displayed them in a language they could read (Tang, 2020). The good-reasons principle could be the most appropriate to explain the strong presence of English on monolingual signs (Ben-Rafael, 2009), especially as there is a train station located on the street from where the signs were collected, which may lead to more visitors to the area passing by these shops.
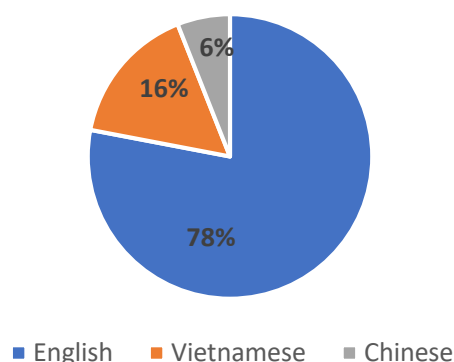
Figure 1. Language in monolingual signs.

We argue that such dominance of English on the linguistic landscape is attributed to the good-reasons principle and can be merely for economic reasons. This is because all the signs belonged to private businesses, and there are no clear guidelines that seem to control the language choice on them (Yao & Gruba, 2020) as well as that English is spoken by 18% of the local population at home in Springvale. This is supported by Lotherington (2003), who asserts that the strong presence of English on the linguistic landscape of businesses in Springvale is "to maintain economic viability in an English-speaking country" (p. 205). Vietnamese, the most spoken language in Springvale, comes second with six of the monolingual signs (16%), which could be considered as a strong presence compared to Chinese, which has only two signs (6%) and the absence of the other languages used in the surrounding community (e.g., Punjabi, Korean, Hindi). Although a few local Asian languages (Khmer, Burmese) were marginally present on the multilingual signs, as we will show below, the differences in language choices in the monolingual linguistic landscape of Springvale could be attributed to the power-relation perspective (Ben-Rafael, 2009).

6.1.2 Multilingual signs

The fact that the majority of signs (107 out of 143) contained multiple languages demonstrates the linguistic superdiversity of the area (see Table 1). According to Backhaus (2006), the diversity of language choices on signs is more prevalent on non-official signs than on official ones. This could explain why most of the collected signs were multilingual, as they are non-official. Besides English, the most widely used language on the multilingual signs, Chinese and Vietnamese were present on a prominent number of the multilingual signs. Additionally, trilingual English-Vietnamese-Chinese signs were clearly a notable phenomenon in the linguistic landscape of Springvale and could reflect the vitality of these speech communities in Springvale. Nevertheless, these findings are in contradiction with Lotherington's (2003) findings that Vietnamese and Chinese languages are more visible than English on the linguistic landscape of Springvale. This difference might be because our study was conducted a considerably long time after Lotherington's study, which might also reflect the dynamic nature of the public space.

Languages	Percentage
Multilingual signs (107)	74.8%
English - Chinese (31)	29%
English - Vietnamese (28)	26.2%
English - Vietnamese - Chinese (24)	22.4%
English - Vietnamese - Chinese - Khmer (8)	7.5%
English - Khmer (4)	3.7%
Vietnamese - Chinese (3)	2.8%
English - Burmese (2)	1.9%
Vietnamese - Chinese - Khmer (1)	1.9%
English - Chinese - Burmese (1)	1.9%
Uyghur - English - Chinese (1)	0.9%
English - Vietnamese - Khmer (1)	0.9%
Sign in 8 languages (1)	0.9%

Table 1. Languages on multilingual signs

As shown in Table 1, Khmer and Burmese were present on a notably low percentage of the multilingual signs, and Uyghur accounts for a trivial percentage of Springvale's linguistic landscape. The differences in language presence on the monolingual and multilingual signs of Springvale could indicate unequal power-relations between the local speech communities in the area (Ben-Rafael, 2009). According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), the absence of a language from the linguistic landscape of an area could imply that it has an inferior status in society. Similarly, the language or languages most displayed in the linguistic landscape of an area are the most dominant languages in society (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Thus, as languages other than English, Chinese and Vietnamese seem rare or missing from Springvale's linguistic landscape, it could be argued that the Vietnamese and Chinese communities may have a superior or more dominant status over the other local speech communities within Springvale.

6.1.3 Domains of Signs
Having given a general image of the linguistic landscape of private businesses in Springvale, the following section will show the domains of these businesses and the choice of language they display on their signs to show how a certain linguistic choice is related to a particular business type (see Table 2).

As the most diverse range of language choices on signs and accounting for the highest number of signs for a single domain, restaurants showed substantial visibility of Vietnamese, English, and Chinese, as well as justifying our second research question. The dominant presence of these languages corresponds adequately with the population that uses them in Springvale.

Domain	Percentage	Language choice
Restaurants (29)	20.3%	E-V (9), E (8), E-C (6), V-C (2), E-U-C (1), E-V-C (1), E-B (1), V (1)
Grocery (12)	8.4%	E-C (7), E-V (2), E-C-B (1), E-V-C-K (1), Sign in 8 languages (1)
Beauty & haircut (12)	8.4%	E (5), E-V (4), E-V-C (1), E-C (1), E-K (1)
Clothing (10)	7.0%	E (4), E-V-C (2), E-V-C-K (2), E-C (1), E-B (1)
Jewellery (10)	7.0%	E-C (2), E-V-C (2), E-K (2), E (1), V (1), C-V (1), E-V-C-K (1)
Electronics (8)	5.6%	E-C (4), E (1), E-V (1), C-V-K (1), E-V-C-K (1)
Money agency (8)	5.6%	V (3), E-C (2), E-V (1), E-V-K (1), E-V-C-K (1)
Advertisement (8)	5.6%	E-V-C (3), E-V (2), E (1), C (1), E-C (1)
Homeware (7)	4.9%	E-V-C (2), E-V (2), E-C (2), E (1)
Shipping & travel agency (7)	4.9%	V (1), C (1), E-V (1), E-K (1), E-V-C (1), C-V-K (1), E-V-C-K (1)
Legal agency (7)	4.9%	E-V-C (3), E-V (2), E (1), E-V-C-K (1)
Real Estate agency (6)	4.2%	E (6)
Medical care (5)	3.5%	E-V-C (5)
Gifts (3)	2.1%	C-E (2), V-E (1)
Other (10)	7.0%	E-V-C (4), E-V (3), E-C (3)

Table 2. Domain of signs. E=English, V=Vietnamese, C=Chinese, K=Khmer, B=Burmese, U=Uyghur

This also could be linked to the power-relation principle, showing the superiority of these speech communities over the other minority speech communities in the area. Furthermore, Burmese, Uyghur, and Khmer were marginally present among the other languages used on restaurant signs. The use of these languages could be best understood by the collective-identity principle, where sign designers appeal to potential customers by putting up signs that show their belongingness or likeness to those speech communities (Ben-Rafael, 2009). However, the motives and reasons for restaurants' sign language choice and formulation will be discussed further and in detail in the social semiotic analysis section.

Apart from English, most grocery stores' signs showed a substantial presence of Chinese on most signs (10 out of 12 signs). Similar to the grocery stores, Chinese seems to be the second most present language, after English, on the retail stores' signs (e.g., clothing, jewellery, electronics), with a presence on 33 out 50 of their signs. The strong visibility of Chinese in the linguistic landscape of retail and grocery stores aligns with Yao and Gruba's (2020) findings in their study of the linguistic landscape of Box Hill, another Victorian suburb. They found that Chinese were more present in retail stores than in other businesses, and they argued that stores could "target customers from Mainland China who seek to purchase Australian-made dietary supplements" (Yao & Gruba, 2020,

p. 312). This could explain the situation in Springvale, where grocery and retail stores might attempt to gain the attention of Chinese consumers by displaying signs in their languages, as in Box Hill.

Interestingly, there was one unique sign with eight languages, double the number of the next most linguistically diverse signs (see Figure 2). The presentation-of-self orientation could explain such diverse use of linguistic items on only one sign. This supermarket's sign makers may desire to project a unique and globalised identity that differentiates the shop from other competing grocery stores. Also, displaying this number of languages on the sign could appeal to imagined clients and viewers who can read any of the eight languages (Ben-Rafael, 2009).

Figure 2. Nan Yang Supermarket

In contrast to grocery and retail stores, Vietnamese appear to be more visible than Chinese in the linguistic landscape of stores that provide services such as beauty and haircuts as well as money and legal agencies. Specifically, it was displayed on 27 out of 45 signs, while Chinese was present on only 18 signs. The good-reason perspective could be the most suitable to explain such a phenomenon (Ben-Rafael, 2009). It seems that shops that provide services attempt to appeal to the largest speech community in Springvale, Vietnamese, by putting up signs in their own language to draw their attention and serve their needs.

Despite this, one service domain, namely real estate agencies, revealed a distinct pattern from the other business types. All the signs that the real estate agencies put up were monolingual and in English (see Figure 3 for an example). With an emphasis on the presentation-of-self principle, the preference of displaying English on the real estate agencies' signs could be to show a professional and distinctive identity to their customers through the use of the same linguistic landscape items (e.g., language choice and colours) on the signs of their other branches (Yao & Gruba, 2020; Ben-Rafael, 2009). In other words, sign designers, by using constant linguistic items, aspire to keep and project the same authentic image of their business to their potential customers.

Figure 3. OZ Capital

In similar ways, all the signs of the medical care businesses were in trilingual English-Vietnamese-Chinese (See Figure 4 for example). Such an interesting pattern for this type of business seems to be best explained by the good-reasons principle. According to Ben-Rafael (2009), unlike the presentation-of-self principle, the good-reasons principle often targets local customers, which suggests that sign owners could be motivated to display the most used languages in the surrounding community in order to gain the attention of local customers and appeal to them to use their services.

Figure 4. Federation Of Chinese Medicine Centre

Unlike the last two domains, the domain of shipping and travel agencies showed various linguistic items on its signs, where each sign displayed a distinctive language choice. The motive of this diverse use of language and languages in the linguistic landscape of these stores could be ascribed to the good-reasons principle. As noted above, the good-reasons principle seems to be the most appropriate when the target audience is the local customer. It seems that shipping and travel agencies put up signs that contained the prominent language or languages in Springvale in an attempt to gain the attention of those coming from the associated ethnicities in order to be appealing (Ben-Rafael, 2009).

In the advertisement category, five out of the eight advertisement signs promoted shops located on the street we chose, meaning that these shops put up signs that were included in our data. When compared, the languages on the advertisement signs were the same as those on the shop signs they promoted. It is worth mentioning that the last category, 'Other', comprised various store types, namely florist, massage, butcher, signage, laundry, memorials, fishing, and sewing shops.

6.2 Social semiotic analysis
The qualitative approach allowed us to have a general image of the linguistic landscape of Springvale and examine how the domain of business can be related to a specific language choice. However, to better understand the motives and reasons for sign designers to formulate them in a particular form, we decided to adopt a social semiotic analysis for the linguistic landscape of the restaurants in Springvale. Scollon and Scollon (2003) propose a code preference system to interpret the meaning and purpose of code positions on signs. They argue that when vertically aligned, the important information is placed on top, and when horizontally aligned, the preferred items are positioned on the left, while the secondary or less significant information is located on the right. Furthermore, the significant code is often positioned in the centre, while the peripheral items are located on the margin (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

Language choice on signs "can either index the community within which it is being used, or it can symbolize something about the product or business which has nothing to do with the place in which it is located" (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 119). Despite this, language is usually displayed in the linguistic landscape along with other visual means of communication (e.g., pictures, icons, logos), and they are often symbolic (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Likewise, Scollon and Scollon (2013) suggest signs can employ font, code, and colour to make meaning and function as an index or symbol.

6.2.1 Vietnamese and Chinese signs
Sign designers could use various visual semiotic recourses on their signs to project their identities. A typical example is a Vietnamese restaurant that displays Vietnamese and English, as shown in Figure 5. The position of Vietnamese in a more prominent position and in larger and better-quality font than English implies that it is the favoured language choice. Also, since English is written in small font and located on the margin, it appears that it is used to show the type of the business and its activity to non-Vietnamese-speaking passers-by. Colours could be used to index several ideas and items. According to Kress (2006), they can be employed to refer to individuals and places as well as their status. For instance, a flag's colours can indicate a country (Kress, 2006). Considering this, we could see the prominent Vietnamese characters written in red, which could denote a Vietnamese identity as it is the colour of their flag.

Figure 5. Bún Bò Huế restaurant

However, Vietnam's current (communist) official flag is mostly red with a yellow star in the centre, while the former flag of (south) Vietnam is yellow with three red stripes. Consequently, the amount of red or yellow in the Vietnamese signs may reflect political ideologies and stances. There is a drawing of what seems to be a female wearing attire outlined in red and a hat, which symbolises an ancient and traditional costume used in Vietnam. Besides reinforcing a Vietnamese identity, such employment of this image could be used as attention-grabbing for customers passing by the shop. The use of these language items, inscriptions, colours, and drawings on the restaurant's sign could be from the perspective of collective identity (Ben-Rafael, 2009).

As shown in Figures 6 and 7, the second example shows two different shopfronts of a Chinese and Vietnamese restaurant (VIP Kitchen), one in Vietnamese and the other in Chinese. As can be seen in both pictures, the restaurant's name is written in large gold letters in English, Vietnamese, and Chinese. However, the use of English can be used to present the name of the restaurant and its opening hours as well as to welcome those who cannot read Chinese and Vietnamese. Furthermore, it seems that the extensive use of Chinese and Vietnamese is to introduce the meals, alongside their pictures, that the restaurant offers. The background of the menu or the Chinese and Vietnamese texts is in red, which, as discussed above, could reflect a Vietnamese identity and, as Yao and Gruba (2020) argue, display a Chinese identity as well. The use of Chinese and Vietnamese menus on the restaurant storefront could convey an authentic image for the passer-by, but they also can inform those who can read them about the food they serve (Leeman & Modan, 2010). Therefore, the storefronts of this restaurant could deliver two different messages depending on who sees them.

Figure 6. VIP Kitchens (Vietnamese)   **Figure 7.** VIP Kitchens (Chinese)

The Vietnamese text on the restaurant sign is accompanied by a large image of a crab, likely signifying a seafood restaurant and giving potential customers a visual cue about the type of cuisine served. Additionally, the image of the smiling chef with a direct gaze can be used to establish a connection with viewers (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), conveying the restaurant's friendliness and welcoming atmosphere. In sum, the sign designer appears to be motivated by the "good-reasons principle," aiming to construct an authentic Chinese and Vietnamese identity by strategically using various visual elements.

Figure 8 depicts a restaurant sign that exclusively features Chinese and Vietnamese languages, excluding English, the national language. This language choice may seem unusual given the prevalence of English on signs throughout the suburb. However, it suggests that the restaurant caters explicitly to Chinese- and Vietnamese-speaking customers. The presence of a food image on the sign makes it accessible to non-speakers of these languages. Additionally, the sign's layout, with Chinese on top and in a larger

font than Vietnamese, implies that the restaurant primarily targets Chinese customers, with Vietnamese customers as a secondary target.

Figure 8. Chinese restaurant

The use of food images on the sign could help express the nature of the business and the sort of food it offers to non-speakers of these two languages. As with Figures 6 and 7, we can see that the sign's background is red and has some yellow, which is consistent with the official flags of both countries and may express a Chinese and/or Vietnamese identity to the public. It seems that the sign's designer used a combination of visual semiotics to create an explicitly Chinese identity for the good-reasons principle to appeal to Chinese customers and invite them to visit the business.

6.2.2 Halal signs and indexing Islamic identity.
In this section, we explore how certain local restaurants in Springvale convey an Islamic identity through the use of halal signs. Figure 9 features a Vietnamese restaurant sign, which is included here despite being in English and Vietnamese due to its Islamic cues. Notably, Vietnamese is positioned at the centre of the sign and displayed in a larger font than the English text above it. Drawing from Scollon and Scollon (2003), central text typically provides basic information, while margins offer more specific details. Therefore, it is suggested that the restaurant primarily targeted Vietnamese customers, with English serving as a secondary language. Additionally, the use of the red colour may signify a Vietnamese ethnicity, and the yellow background could be associated with the flag of South Vietnam, potentially indicating a connection with it and reflecting the owner's political stance.

Figure 9. Vietnamese Noodle House

However, we can also see that "HALAL" is written in a noticeably larger font than the Vietnamese text and in a different colour, green. Halal means in Arabic "lawful and permissible" (Abas, 2019, p. 65) and acts as a signifier of Islam which may serve as an Islamic appeal (Izadi & Parvaresh, 2016). For instance, Abas (2019) found in her study that a customer was assured by the word "Halal" on an Indian restaurant's sign to show the availability of their desired food and, therefore, might be a factor in visiting the place. We claim that such use could be used to index an Islamic identity, and that is reinforced by the use of green, which is often associated with Islam and used in several Muslim countries' flags (e.g., Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Algeria). This is supported by Baranova and Fedorova's (2019) claim that the colour green signifies an Islamic identity on a restaurant's sign in their study. This use of language, font and colours could be attributed to the collective-identity principle, where the restaurant's owner desires to associate with the Vietnamese and Muslim communities and catch the eye of passers-by from these communities.

Figure 10 shows a sign that contains English and Burmese. English significantly accounts for more space on the sign and in a larger font than Burmese, indicating that it is undoubtedly the restaurant's owner's preferred code. The use of Burmese here could be merely for indexicality motives, indexing a Burmese-speaking community (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Due to the presence of "Halal" on the sign and the choice of the business name "Madinah", which indexes an Islamic identity, the language choice here could be used to project an Islamic Burmese identity that the restaurant owner wants to be identified with.

Figure 10. Madinah Kebab House

In Figure 8, the circle containing "Halal" and its Arabic version is considered an icon symbolizing or indexing an Islamic identity and food rather than a separate text in Arabic. This circular form is commonly used on various products, signs, and posters. The sign's owner appears to project an Islamic and distinct Burmese identity, appealing to potential customers through various visual elements in line with the presentation-of-self principle. In Figure 11, Ana Yurt Dolan Uyghur restaurant's sign incorporates three languages (i.e., English, Uyghur, Chinese), an image of a natural landscape, and two copies of the same icon. The blue background may signify an Uyghur identity, reminiscent of the East Turkestan flag's colour. English is positioned at the top and occupies more space, suggesting a preference by the sign owner. However, the placement of Uyghur and Chinese on either side of the image, considering the Uyghur writing direction from right to left and the Chinese's flexibility in direction, implies equal preference for these languages by the sign owner.

Figure 11. Ana Yurt Dolan Uyghur restaurant

The presence of the Uyghur language on the restaurant's sign, despite its limited usage in Springvale and Victoria, likely serves symbolic and authentic purposes. It may signify that the restaurant specializes in Uyghur cuisine, symbolizing a unique culinary offering. This choice aligns with the idea that language can convey ethnic and national identities and represent specific ethnolinguistic groups, as stated by Cenoz and Gorter (2008). Additionally, the inclusion of a natural landscape image may aim to depict Xinjiang, the homeland of the Uyghur community in Northwest China, creating a sense of familiarity and belongingness to their homeland and adding an element of authenticity and exotic appeal to attract passers-by. The prominent use of "Halal" suggests that the restaurant serves halal food and emphasizes its connection to the Muslim Uyghur community. The restaurant's sign appears to employ various visual semiotic elements to appeal to customers through the presentation-of-self principle, projecting a distinct foreign Uyghur identity that sets it apart from other restaurants in Springvale.

7. Conclusion

This paper, guided by Ben-Rafael's (2009) four principles to analyse the linguistic landscape and, through adopting quantitative and social semiotic approaches, examined how the linguistic landscape of Springvale, with an explicit focus on restaurants' signs, reflects the local Asian speech communities in the area. A sample of 143 signs on a commercial street was examined; 107 of these were found to be multilingual and displaying different languages (i.e., English, Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer, Burmese, and Uyghur), while the 36 signs that were monolingual were only in three languages, namely English, Vietnamese, and Chinese, which were also the most displayed languages on multilingual signs. The strong presence of the Chinese and Vietnamese languages and the infrequent or absent display of other languages used in Springvale indicated unequal power relations and the dominance of the Chinese and Vietnamese communities within the suburb. Moreover, the signs were categorised by business domain, and results showed that the type of business could impact the language choice on its linguistic landscape. In addition, signwriters, to attract potential customers to purchase their goods and services, presented unique and authentic identities to the public through their signing. Finally, we found that restaurants' owners constructed various distinctive identities and revealed certain ideologies (e.g., religious, political) in order to appeal to potential customers through different modalities and language choices on signs.

The findings of this study, however, have to be seen in light of some limitations. The data for this research were collected on a commercial street in a busy suburb, which might make some signs invisible because of passers-by, cars, or other distractions. Additionally, some signs were not clearly visible in the pictures; therefore, they were not counted. Another limitation is that the data were collected in 2019, which may not accurately reflect the current local Asian speech communities in Springvale. Similarly, a recent census has been conducted in Australia, which may provide up-to-date information for the ethnographic distribution of the local Asian speech communities. Thus, recent documentation of the linguistic landscape in Springvale combined with the recent census data may represent a more reliable reflection of the current local Asian speech communities in the suburb. This paper is of importance as it brings insights into the sociolinguistic situation of Springvale as well as into the increasingly important field of the linguistic landscape. It showed how the linguistic landscape of an area could reflect its sociolinguistic situation and contribute to the study of multilingualism.

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