

Understanding the Dynamics of English in the Linguistic Landscapes of Guangzhou

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Abstract

Linguistic landscape is a study field covering all linguistic objects in public spaces. It provides an important perspective for investigating the dynamics of social life and language change in given territories. Guangzhou, a significant commercial center in southern China, is renowned for its globalized development. With the growth of globalization, the increasing intrusion of English and the emerging English varieties have occurred in the urban linguistic landscapes of Guangzhou City. Therefore, this descriptive qualitative study collected English usage in the public sphere by taking pictures of private signs in two commercial centers. Monolingual and bilingual public signage displayed in public spaces shows that English has been an important foreign language widely used in Guangzhou's cityscape. Meanwhile, the use of English in Guangzhou is somewhat affected by local languages, a phenomenon called glocalization. The misuse of English, code-mixing between Chinese and English, and emerging English varieties are the product of glocalization. This study can shed light on the present linguistic situation of English in Guangzhou. Additionally, it provides evidence for the development process of glocalized English and translanguaging practice in southern Chinese communities.

Keywords: *linguistic landscape, English, language change, multilingualism, glocalization, translanguaging*

Introduction

A city is a kaleidoscope to observe various social and linguistic activities, where people are surrounded by numerous linguistic artifacts, such as posters, billboards, public road signs, and shop signs. Languages displayed in public linguistic artifacts are linguistic landscape (henceforth, LL). The study on the presence, representation, meanings, and interpretation of language displayed in cities' public spaces is regarded as LL studies (Shohamy, 2012). LLs offer significant and diverse linguistic sources for studying the language in society, and manifest the underlying language policies, power relations, and identity construction in a particular area.

The omnipresent characteristic and interdisciplinary nature of LLs has attracted the increasing attention of scholars and researchers to explore. In their seminal work, Landry & Bourhis (1997) gave the first concise definition, which contributes to establishing LLs as an independent study field. With the development of LL

studies, the notion of LL is no longer confined to public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). By contrast, the scope of LL has largely expanded to any visible display of written language in the public sphere (Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke & Blackwood, 2016). To date, the interaction between people and public signs has also become a growing central topic among LL studies. LL is akin to a carnival mirror (Gorter, 2012), directly or indirectly reflecting the linguistic dynamics and social changes in a given territory.

For the past decade, the emergence of English in public spaces worldwide has become one central topic of LL studies (Alomoush, 2018; Lawrence, 2012; Li, 2015; Manan, David, Dumanig, & Channa, 2017). As the product of colonization and globalization, English plays significant roles in commercial and political activities, cross-cultural communications, and even the education system. The powerful intrusion of English in public cityspace provides abundant multilingual and visual artifacts for the research on the global spread and "glocal" development of English, and translanguaging practice.

Guangzhou, a vibrant commercial center and reputed global city in China, has witnessed the spread of English. Located in the southern part of China and Pearl River Delta's center, Guangzhou lies in a dynamic phase of the social and commercial transformation. The growing international and commercial activities render it an excellent research site to explore multilingual LLs. Therefore, this study investigates the use of English in Guangzhou's LLs, an under-researched topic in the existing literature.

By analyzing the presence, linguistic features, and patterns of English used in Guangzhou's public sphere, the study aims to shed new light on the present linguistic situation of English in Guangzhou. Additionally, it attempts to provide evidence for the global spread of English and its glocal development in southern Chinese communities. The research questions include the following: (1) How is English presented in Guangzhou's public spaces; (2) What are the features of English used in Guangzhou?

Ethnolinguistic Profile of Guangzhou

Adjacent to Hong Kong and Macao and as a central regional city in South China, Guangzhou City is China's southern gateway to the world. As one of the four largest cities in China, it is well known for its active commercial activities, massive overseas Chinese, and the high internationalized level. Guangzhou was rated as the Alpha City in 2018, according to a survey conducted by *Globalization and World Cities Research*

(GaWC), which means a superior global city that links major economic regions and states into the world economy.

Apart from its outstanding district advantage, Guangzhou has diversified linguistic resources as well. In Guangzhou, indigenous inhabitants mostly speak *Cantonese*, a prestigious dialect spoken by people in southern China and overseas Chinese (Ji, 2018). However, due to Chinese national language policy, every resident is required to speak Mandarin Chinese, a lingua franca widely used in mainland China, consequently slowly "replacing" Cantonese with Mandarin, especially in formal contexts (Han & Wu, 2020). In addition, owing to a large number of foreign permanent residents and the continuously growing international exchanges in business and education, English has become an essential foreign language in Guangzhou. According to statistics from the Guangzhou municipal government, foreign residents in Guangzhou rank third place in China, following Beijing and Shanghai in 2014. They diversify the local cultures and languages and highlight the presence of English in public space in the local community.

Literature Review

English, along with local languages, creates numerous multilingual LLs throughout the world. The visibility and salience of English in LLs have led to an increasing number of studies for the past decade, particularly in Asian societies.

In Korea, Lawrence (2012) employed a mixed method to examine the use of English in Seoul's public signage. In his study, apart from conventional LL items, graffiti was also collected as an essential source of LL data. The expanded data collection method provides strong evidence for the existence of *Konglish*, a glocal product of English affected by Korean. A similar study was conducted in Jarash, a northern Jordanian city. Alomoush (2018) investigated the use of English in shopfronts. The results show that English-Arabic multilingual signs are frequently found. The hybrid and creative linguistic forms and the use of Romanized Arabic are emerging in Jordanian commercial signs. However, Alomoush's paper adopted a predominant quantitative approach to show the visibility of English and code-mixing practices in commercial signs. No specific and detailed analysis exists on the linguistic characteristics of Romanized Arabic and the types of code-mixing patterns. Similar findings have also been found in other Asian cities, for example, Suzhou, a historical and modern city in China (Li, 2015), and Quetta, a Pakistan city close to Iran and Afghanistan (Manan et al., 2017).

These studies highlight the salience of English in the public spaces in conducting various research methods. They also provide valuable evidence for the global spread of English and its glocalization in given territories. Glocalization is a concurrent process of globalization. Initially, glocalization refers to the modification of a global product to meet local norms (Robertson, 1995). It is then gradually transplanted to describe the localization of language and the development of English varieties (Sharifian, 2010). Gorter (2006) posits that glocalization is a hybridity and interface between local and global culture and leads to new expressions of mixing in "music, food and clothing, but also in language" (p.88).

Translanguaging is also a linguistic practice explicitly or implicitly exposed in current LL studies. As an emergent term, translanguaging, to some extent, encompasses translations and code-switching practices (Jonsson, 2017). Meanwhile, it goes beyond language boundaries, because it involves multilingual, multimodal, and multi-semiotic resources in a linguistic practice (García & Li, 2014). Gorter and Cenoz (2015) argue translanguaging as an approach to the multilingual landscape. Those translingual landscape found in their study proves that "the linguistic landscape itself is a multilingual and multimodal repertoire" (ibid, p. 19). In an empirical LL study conducted in Macao, Zhang and Chan (2015) investigate the translanguaging practice in multimodal posters and reveal the specific forms and features of translanguaging. These literatures, to some extent, enrich the study of multilingualism in public space.

However, as a prominent global city, Guangzhou is a city where the language presented in public space is less examined. The presence of English in LLs of Guangzhou is scarcely investigated. Less than ten papers discuss Guangzhou's linguistic reality in terms of identity construction, language policy, language planning, and social rescaling. In the translation of tourism texts, Mo, Huang and Guan (2020) explored the significant role of LLs in cultural identity. They proposed four principles of cultural translation to improve the translation practice of *Lingnan* Culture, a local culture embedded in *Lingnan* district. Liu (2020) used a mixed method to investigate the historical and contemporary LLs of the largest urban village, with the aim to explore the identity construction of migrant workers. In her study, social dialects help enhance the migrant workers' identification. Besides, Han and Wu (2019; 2020) published two papers to study Guangzhou's LLs. They focused on language practice, language policy, and residents' perceptions to depict Guangzhou's LLs (Han & Wu, 2019). The conflicts and dissents were found in multilingual LLs, and the bidirectional relation between language planners and recipients was revealed. In 2020, they compared similarities and differences of LLs among three

commercial centers in Guangzhou and indicated the translocalization and social rescaling of languages in public space.

A majority of existing studies examine languages displayed in Guangzhou's particular location and analyze their relationship with identity construction and language policy and planning. Despite nearly all papers pointing out the existence of English in the public space, little attention has been paid to English features exposed in public cityspace. Moreover, they have not explored the competing and acculturating relationship between English and the local language. Therefore, by exploring English presented in Guangzhou's LLs, this study aims to discover the presence of English signage in public space and reveal linguistic features and patterns of English used in an overwhelmingly Chinese-dominating community.

Problem Statement

The intrusion of English in global cities worldwide has resulted in an ongoing "linguistic revolution" (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009, p.3), where new words and hybrids are invented; languages are mixed; and unconventional spellings, syntax, and linguistic rules are emerging. Similar to any other global city, Guangzhou is confronted with the challenge of this linguistic revolution.

English, as a language of globalization, is constantly competing with local languages. According to national and local language policies, English cannot be used exclusively. When displayed in the public sphere, they must be accompanied by their Chinese equivalent. However, walking along the street in Guangzhou, we can find ubiquitous monolingual English shop names, chaotic and disjointed multilingual signs, and pervasive English usage with the local characteristics. They are continuously challenging the established language policies in the public space.

An array of literature (Han & Wu, 2019, 2020; Liu, 2020; Mo et al., 2020) has examined the language use in Guangzhou, but none of them exclusively focus on English used in Guangzhou's public space. Accordingly, this study particularly investigates the use of English presented in public signs to unveil the dynamic and intricate linguistic reality of English used in Guangzhou.

Methodology

This study was conducted in two important commercial neighborhoods of Guangzhou: *Shangxiajiu* and *Beijing Lu* Pedestrian Streets. They are the most famous and vibrant commercial centers with a profound historical and cultural background in Guangzhou, which provide a myriad of multilingual public signage. These areas were deliberately selected on the basis of their high density of commercial activities, given that dense business activities result in "the high visibility of English" (Alomoush, 2018, p.2).

The data were collected in the form of photographs taken in September-October 2020. A purposive sampling method was adopted to select the photographs. A total number of 244 private signs with English or Chinese and English (henceforth, C-E) were captured using a smartphone. They were taken from non-official signage on shop fronts, shop windows, billboards, posters, notices, among others, and the English names of stores and restaurants. Private signs are regarded as the best artifacts that expose inhabitants' underlying language policy in a given territory and display their cultural identity (Huebner, 2006).

The public or official signs, such as road names, street names, and metro stations, were excluded because they are strictly government-regulated discourses. To adhere to the local language policy, signmakers will adopt bilingual official signs with simplified Chinese and standard English. Thus, those official signs cannot reflect the contemporary dynamics of English usage in Guangzhou city. Besides, renowned international brand names, such as *Adidas*, *7 Eleven*, *Starbucks*, *UNIQLO*, *McDonald's*, *Family Mart*, were excluded as they constantly keep their original names out of their brand values. Last, the trilingual or multilingual private signs were also not selected because they were exceptions for the sake of advertising.

The data were analyzed as a complete text, "taken as a visual and linguistic whole" (Sebba, 2012, p.12), including linguistic units and extralinguistic units. The collected linguistic texts were coded based on the language-spatial and language-content relationship proposed by Sebba (2013). In his analytical framework for multilingual texts, the language-spatial relationship refers to the symmetrical, asymmetrical, or mixed spatial relationship between units with a specific language or mixture of languages. Moreover, the language-content relationship includes three possibilities: the equivalent, disjoint, and mixed texts. Following the analytical framework, the data were categorized into the following types: monolingual English signs, parallel Chinese-English signs, complementary Chinese-English signs, and Chinese-English mixed signs.

Findings

As a language of globalization, English is widely employed in business interaction. It is regarded as a major driving force behind worldwide bilingualism (Shin, 2013). This statement seems to be confirmed by the commercial signage collected in Guangzhou's commercial centers. Despite the existence of other foreign languages, such as Japanese, Korean, Thai, and French, English is the most ubiquitous foreign language exposed in Guangzhou's monolingual or bilingual commercial signs.

Trends and patterns in the commercial signs

Among the 244 English-related commercial signs, C-E bilingual signs (204 cases, 83.61%) dominate Guangzhou's linguistic cityscapes, whereas 40 signs (16%) contain only English. Despite a small proportion of monolingual English signs, it is a striking finding in an overwhelmingly Chinese-dominating community, where English is not allowed to use alone by the national language law. The powerful intrusion of English into public spaces demonstrates a global effect of English on the local ecology of languages.

Meanwhile, three distinct types can be found in C-E bilingual signs. Based on the language-spatial and language-content relationship, they can be categorized into parallel C-E signs, complementary C-E signs, and C-E mixed signs. Parallel C-E signs refer to signs with mutual translation or complete transliteration between Chinese and English. They have "matched units, symmetrically arranged and containing identical content in each language" (Sebba, 2013, p.109). Parallel signs somewhat display two independent languages without language mixing. They are linguistic practices influenced by the language policy. As displayed in Figure 1, parallel C-E signs (49 cases, 20%) only occupy the least proportion of bilingual signs. The second predominant type is complementary C-E signs, where the translation is fragmentary or overlapping or partial transliteration. They (63 cases, 26%) are a significant and common type of bilingualism in Guangzhou. The contents that signmakers want to emphasize are translated into English, whereas other contents are displayed in Chinese. C-E mixed signs are the last type with the highest proportion (92 cases, 38%), where no translation or transliteration exists, and English tends to be inserted into or mixed with Chinese in a sentence or beyond sentences.

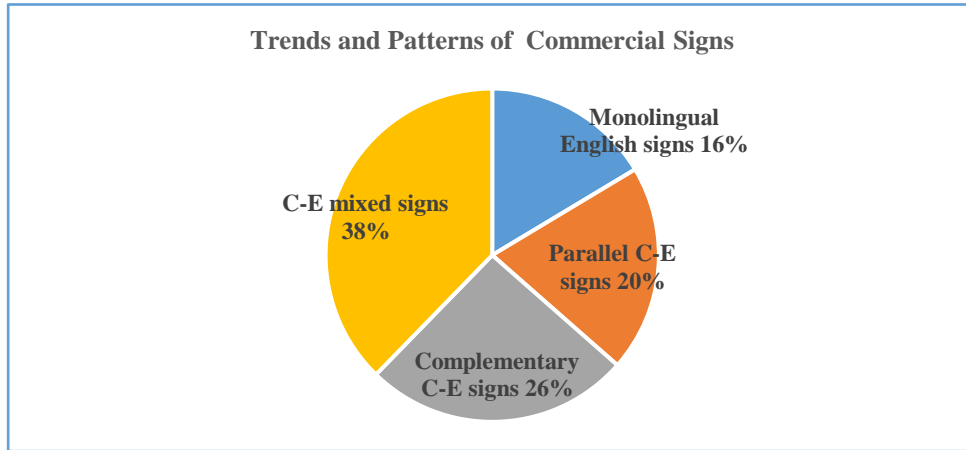


Figure 1: Trends and Patterns in the Commercial Signs

Apart from monolingual and parallel C-E signs, complementary and mixed signs reveal a salient language mixing phenomenon. As Figure 1 illustrates, the total number of complementary and mixed signs is 155, approximately 63.52% of all signs. They dominate more than half of commercial signs in the public sphere. The language mixing phenomenon found in Guangzhou's linguistic cityscapes accords with studies conducted in other cities (Huebner, 2006; Backhaus, 2007; Androutsopoulos, 2012). They visually mirror the global spread of English worldwide and its powerful influence on local languages.

Monolingual English signs

In Guangzhou, a total of 40 cases (16%) were written only in English or in a Romanized script. They were primarily found in shop names and advertising posters. As Table 1 shows, English was frequently utilized in clothing and food stores. One-quarter (25%) monolingual English cases appeared in food stores, such as cafe shops and restaurants, and nearly half (45%) of the English signs were related to clothing stores. It is worth mentioning that all these shops are local brands for local consumers.

Table 1. Shop Types with Monolingual English Signs

| Types | Clothing | Food | Beauty | Grocery | Others | Total |
|----------------|----------|------|--------|---------|--------|-------|
| Cases (N) | 18 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 40 |
| Percentage (%) | 45 | 25 | 7.5 | 10 | 12.5 | 100 |

Figures 2 and 3 are two examples of monolingual English signs. Figure 2 is a clothing shop name of a female clothing brand, *Lily*. For most middle- or high-end Chinese clothing brands, choosing an English name is a preferred strategy to showcase their fashion and style. English is a symbol of modernity and good quality. As the center of the *World's Workshop*, textile and clothing are the pillar industries in Guangzhou. Every year, numerous clothes are exported to other countries; therefore, an English name is in demand for companies. Figure 3 shows a cafe shop signboard, *Lia Café*, a local cafe shop mainly for dating, family gatherings, and friend get-together. In China, coffee is regarded as a symbol of western culture. Younger Chinese people are inclined to drink coffee, whereas most middle-aged or aged Chinese people prefer tea. Therefore, the signboard is purposefully written for those English-literate customers. Moreover, the English name creates a feeling of good quality and a modern lifestyle, while the English words *Bar* and *Restaurant* provide specific information about the shop's services. Therefore, English displayed on the signboard serves both symbolic and informative functions.

However, the omnipresence of English in public signs conflicts with the national and provincial language policy. Exclusively using English is forbidden by China's National Language Law issued in 2000. The conflict between monolingual practice and language policy shows a powerful global impact of English on Chinese society.



Figure 2: Name of a clothing store, *Lily*



Figure 3: Signboard of a café shop, *Lia Café*

Parallel Chinese-English signs

As Figure 1 displays, bilingualism is a pervasive phenomenon in commercial LLs of Guangzhou. With mutual or complete Chinese-English translation and transliteration, parallel bilingual signs share the least proportion of bilingual signs. Based on Sebba's framework, they manifest a symmetrical language-spatial relationship and an equivalent language-content relationship, as presented in Figures 4-6. They display two

independent language systems with the same content. Strictly, no language mixing happens.

Figure 4 shows the most typical type of parallel C-E signs found in commercial centers, displaying three bilingual shop signs of local clothing and bag brands, alongside *Shangxiajiu* Pedestrian Street. It unveils three distinct and commonly adopted methods when translating the brand names. *Ainuyi* is the complete transliteration of its Chinese names (艾奴伊), while both *Mexican* and *We We* are words borrowed from English with a slight difference. *Mexican* is an entirely new word, having no bearing on its Chinese names (稻草人), whereas *We We* are English words sharing a similar pronunciation with their Chinese equivalent (唯唯). We can find that transliteration, borrowing, and pronunciation-related translation are prevailing methods when creating English shop names in Guangzhou.



Figure 4. Bilingual shop signs in *Shangxiajiu Pedestrian Street*

Moreover, the hierarchical structure of languages differs even in parallel texts. Huebner (2009) argues that salience is determined on the basis of the size of languages, the sharpness of focus, the amount of information, and its visual placement. Likewise, the code preference system, proposed by Scollon & Scollon (2003), ventures that the top, the left, and the center are privileged. Take a glimpse of Figure 4. English shop names precede Chinese names and are put on the left side of signboards. Notably, English texts are visually written in a larger size than their Chinese equivalent. These mentioned cues demonstrate that English in bilingual shop signs is probably a preferred language.

However, the situation differs in announcements and billboards, as exemplified in Figure 5, an announcement attached in the grocery's window, reminding the customer to present their health status before entering this local grocery. Obviously, Chinese words are on the top and larger than their English equivalence. English plays a subordinate role there. The placements of languages suggest it is an international Chinese-dominating community where other ethnic groups and foreigners live. Moreover, this announcement is a

newly emergent product during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ubiquitous pandemic-related announcements in Guangzhou mirror that the society is suffering from a COVID-19 pandemic, unprecedentedly changing people's lifestyles. More importantly, it reveals the way local communities cope with the pandemic. Therefore, this picture proves the significance of linguistic landscapes in linguistic dynamics and social changes.



Figure 5: A grocery's announcement



Figure 6: A local restaurant's billboard

Last but not least, the poor-quality translation were pervasively found in translated C-E signs. Figure 6 is a bilingual billboard hung in *Beijing Lu*, used by a Chinese restaurant where *Hunan* cuisine is served. In this parallel bilingual billboard, all Chinese words were translated into English word for word. The word-for-word translation breaks the English grammar rules, thereby preventing the passers-by from understanding them. Instead of symbolizing modernity and good quality, the poor or awkward English expressions illustrate the sign makers' low English literacy and imply the middle-end or low-end service of the restaurant. In fact, word for word or sentence for sentence translation is a commonly employed method in Chinese-English billboards, particularly created by low-end stores and restaurants. The misuse of English exposes the low literacy level of sign makers and the seemingly unsatisfying service of stores.

In a word, the figures discussed above display three distinguished sources of parallel C-E signs found in shop names, notices, and billboards. In terms of quantity, bilingual shop names are the predominant source, with more than 57%. Besides, C-E announcements (26.53%) and billboards (16.33%) by private shops constitute the remaining parallel signs. In terms of shop types, clothing and food shops create the most parallel Chinese-English signs, similar to the results found in monolingual signs. With regard to language hierarchy, English turns out a preferred and salient language in bilingual shop names, whereas it becomes a subordinate language in announcements and billboards. In terms of language use, the poor-quality translation is evident in bilingual signs made by low-end stores. Consequently, Guangzhou's foreign affairs office has initiated a city-wide campaign to eliminate the "bad" English since 2018.

Finally, bilingual C-E commercial signs reflect the influence of language policies. Although governmental language policy mainly directly regulates official signs, it can also have an impact on the commercial signs and eventually have economic values (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009). Despite the existing problems, bilingual signs found in Guangzhou's commercial centers are linguistic practices that follow governmental regulations.

Complementary Chinese-English signs

Another asymmetrical and disjoint C-E sign was the complementary C-E sign, where fragmentary or overlapping translation, or partial transliteration appears. As Figure 1 illustrates, more than one-fourth (nearly 26%) signs were complementary and mainly dominated by one language. Among 63 complementary bilingual signs, 52 cases were overwhelmingly dominated by Chinese in as much as 83% of all cases. English was used to emphasize overlapping information and tended to be smaller and in a peripheral place, as shown in Figures 7-8.

Figure 7 is a bilingual billboard for a well-known local Cantonese restaurant, *To To Kui* (陶陶居), and Figure 8 is for a famous rice noodle shop, *Guilin Rice Noodle* (桂林米粉). In the figures, all critical information, such as the shop names, the shops' history, and served food, are written in Chinese, whereas English is located in the peripheral place and written in tiny font to provide some overlapping information. *To To Kui* is a historical restaurant renowned for its delicate Cantonese cuisine; therefore, the time-honored brand is emphasized in English. For the rice noodle shop, only the shop name is written both in Chinese and English. The language hierarchy in billboards implies that these shops' regular customers are mainly the local inhabitants, not foreign residents or foreign visitors.

Discovering a myriad of bilingual signs dominated by Chinese is expected in a Chinese-speaking community. Nevertheless, in Guangzhou, approximately 17% of complementary signs (11 out of 63 cases) were dominated by English found in billboards of cafes (Figure 9) and clothing shops (Figure 10). To some extent, the English-dominating billboards are closely related to their consumer group. According to a survey conducted by *iiMedia research* in 2018, people aged 16 to 35 are the main consumer groups of coffee and bubble tea, who are English-literate and learn English at a very early age. As the most concerned milk tea brand, *Yi He Tang* selects a billboard dominated by English to attract its potential consumers. Except for its Chinese shop name, the advertisement slogan is written in English in a larger size and put in a centered place.

In a clothing shop's promotion poster, as Figure 10 displays, English is the predominant language. The bold and capitalized English words *BIG SALE* are placed in the center and written in a larger size. English in Figures 9-10 serves as a symbol of good quality and fashion and conveys critical information.



Figure 7: A Cantonese restaurant's billboard



Figure 8: A rice noodle shop's billboard



Figure 9: A tea shop's billboard



Figure 10: A clothing store's promotion poster

Complementary C-E signs manifest an ongoing competing relationship between Chinese and English in Guangzhou. It is a fact that Chinese is the dominant language in public; however, in industries closely related to young consumers, English is the preferred language to symbolize their outstanding quality or high fashion. It serves as both a symbolic and functional role. For Chinese young people growing up in a globalized world, English is more than a foreign language. English has been rooted in their lives through the long-standing learning experience and dramatic societal transformation.

Chinese-English Mixed signs

In bilingual signs, another type of signs exists, C-E mixed signs. Distinct from parallel and complementary bilingual signs, no translation and transliteration occur in mixed signs. It is a typical language mixing or code-mixing phenomenon taking place in bilingual activities. Indeed, language mixing in its written form has been a focal point in LL studies for the past decade, found in many countries, such as Thailand,

Congo, and Singapore (Huebner, 2006; Kasanga, 2010; Tan, 2011). In Guangzhou, language mixing is also a salient phenomenon exposed to commercial LLs. Approximately 38% of all signs contain C-E mixing, where English is inserted into or mixed with Chinese.



Figure 11: An online grocery's billboard



Figure 12: A training agency's notice

Figures 11 and 12 show that insertion is the predominant type of C-E mixing displayed in Guangzhou's commercial signs. In Figure 11, the English abbreviation (*APP*) was inserted into a Chinese phrase in a billboard created by a local online grocery, which encourages their target customers to download their application and shop online. With the development of smartphones, *APP* becomes a household English word in China, even for English-illiterate people. Compared with its Chinese equivalent, the English expression is much shorter and easier for people to remember. Likewise, there are many other English words gradually replacing their Chinese equivalent. Words, such as *AI*, *APP*, *SPA*, *VIP*, *DIY*, *Vlog*, *Lolita*, and *family*, were frequently inserted into a bilingual sentence.



Figure 13: A restaurant's billboard



Figure 14: A shopping mall's notice

Code-switching is the second salient code-mixing type in bilingual signs, which commonly take place beyond sentences. A billboard created by a hotpot restaurant (Figure 13) is a bilingual example with code-switching. A greeting sentence combined Chinese and English was emplaced in the center of the billboard,

which implies the opening of a new branch store of *Xiaolongkan* Hotpot restaurant in *Beijing Lu*. The English word *HELLO* replaced its Chinese equivalent *Nihao* (你好) to draw the attention of foreigners and young customers. Moreover, the shop name was presented in English only on the left side of the signs. Other related information was written in Chinese.

Regarding the word size and their emplacement, the billboard exposes a competing relationship between English and Chinese in which deciding the preferred language is difficult. Finally, a translanguaging practice was notably exposed in this mixed sign. In the slogan, chili was deployed as a comma. Meanwhile, the chili image was associated with the hotpot. This novel and eye-catching writing style breaks the conventional writing rules and goes beyond languages and modals. It presents a transmodal translanguaging practice in multilingual writing, a new configuration of language practice deploying various linguistic and modality repertoire (Zhu, Li & Lyons, 2017).

Bilingual pun is another manifestation of language mixing in public signs. As a form of macaronic language, bilingual punning is a commonly used wordplay in commercial linguistic cityscapes (Lamarre, 2014). In Guangzhou, a bilingual pun is created by an English word phonetically similar to a Chinese word with different meanings. A striking example is *Hua Young Sheng Hui* (花 Young 盛会) in a shopping mall's notice (see Figure 14). The English word *Young*, sounding and looking similar to the Chinese word *Yang* (样), was inserted into a Chinese phrase. The phrase *Hua Yang* (花样) has multiple meanings in Chinese. Firstly, it means "all sorts of." Second, it refers to people at a young age. Therefore, the homophonic translation is employed to convey the underlying information: the shopping mall can provide all sorts of products at a better price for its young customers. The English word *Young* makes a phone-semantic matching with the Chinese word *Yang*. Similar examples, for example, *Young Cheng Yeah Shi* (Young 城 Yeah 市), were commonly found in Guangzhou's commercial signs. English utilized in bilingual puns simultaneously serves as informative, pragmatic, and symbolic functions.

Discussions

The pervasive use of English is easily found in Guangzhou's commercial signs. A wide variety of monolingual and bilingual signs depict multilayered English dynamics in a given city. The global spread and glocal development of English are visually mirrored in Guangzhou's linguistic landscapes.

The omnipresence of English is the obvious indication of globalization (Blackwood & Tufi, 2015). The

visibility and salience of English in monolingual and bilingual signs are linguistic practices against national and local language policies. Whether for the national language law or the provincial language policies, English is barred from exclusive use. When displayed in the public sphere, it must be accompanied by their Chinese equivalent. The inconsistency between linguistic practice and language policies found in Guangzhou shows a powerful impact of English as a global language on the local language ecology.

As a predominant language in commercial activities, English in Guangzhou's linguistic landscapes has a highly symbolic and economic value. Linguistic landscapes are "shaped by market forces" (Edelman & Gorter, 2010, p.105). English used in LLs is also shaped by the market. In Guangzhou, the industries closely related to young consumers create most English-related shop signs, such as the clothing and food industries. English proves to be a dominant language in clothing stores and cafes in Guangzhou.

To a great extent, English is profoundly challenging the predominant status of Chinese in these industries and even create a competing relationship with Chinese. The ubiquitous English pertains to its societal stereotype, which symbolizes a good quality, high fashion, and young identity. Eventually, these symbolic values create indirect economic values for these shops.

Meanwhile, the salient presence of language mixing in bilingual signs exposes the glocalization of English in the community of Guangzhou. The bilingual and mixed signs collected in Guangzhou offer diverse and dynamic visual evidence for the glocalization process. The ongoing glocal development of English can be observed in the misuse of English, code-mixing between Chinese and English, emerging English varieties on commercial signs. Glocalized English, mixed with local languages or characteristics, contains features of globalization and localization (Piller, 2003). On the one hand, English functions as a symbol of a modern and cosmopolitan lifestyle. On the other hand, the local characteristics showcase the local identity. Glocalized English is a language embedded in the local communities.

Last but not least, the translanguaging practice is emerging in Guangzhou's public space. The multilingual and multimodal commercial signs provide strong evidence for translanguaging. This study displays two salient translanguaging types: transmodal and intra-unit. The multimodal and multilingual slogan (Hello, 北京路) presents a typical transmodal translanguaging. Those bilingual puns found in commercial signs present another intra-unit translanguaging, similar to conventional code-switching in spoken language (Zhang & Chan, 2015). Translanguaging found in Guangzhou's linguistic landscape reveals a linguistic revolution taking place in

Chinese communities.

Conclusions

The linguistic landscape is a prism to provide a panoramic view of the intricate and dynamic linguistic situation in Guangzhou. As a powerful global language, English is widespread in a southern Chinese-dominating community. However, English mixed with local languages and cultures exposes a concurrent process of glocalization taking place in many countries. Meanwhile, the disappearance of Cantonese, a prestige local dialect, in commercial signs, is such a surprising finding because it is pervasively employed in the speech by indigenous people. The decline of the local dialects and the rise of English imply an ongoing language shift in Guangzhou. More importantly, translanguaging, a linguistic practice involving multilingual and multi-semiotic resources, is taking place in Chinese communities.

Furthermore, English is not the only foreign language in the public space. French and Thai are other salient foreign languages in Guangzhou. Trilingual signs, such as Chinese-English-French signs, Chinese-English-Thai signs, have also been found, which have been neglected in this study. These multilingual signs display the linguistic diversity of Guangzhou as a global city. The multilingual and multicultural features in Guangzhou need further exploration.

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