

Linguistic Schoolscape as Public Communication: A Study of Announcements and Signages in De La Salle University – Dasmariñas

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ABSTRACT

Linguistic landscape (LL) is the study of public signages in a distinct place. The study of linguistic landscape aims to promote a useful method to understand the evolution of an urban space. The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government building combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or agglomeration (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The present study intends to contribute to this development in educational institution. The aim of this study is to show and analyze the linguistic schoolscape of De La Salle University - Dasmariñas. This was done by analyzing the data collected from the school's public written signages such as announcements, posters, tarpaulins etc. Moreover, the researcher used quantitative approach to research to see if there is a significant difference on the language preferences of the seven (7) colleges of the institution.

I. Introduction

The study of linguistic landscape is considered in its infancy in socio-linguistic research (Monje, 2017). When we walk through an institution, it is common to encounter linguistic tokens in different locations. Announcements and signages are two of the most important things with regard to information dissemination in an institution. These things helped in aid to making students informed of everything that is important to know. These are as important as billboards and other big printed advertisements that we usually see in cities, factories etc. To make this effective, school signage should be integrated into the planning and design process, and should encompass brand reinforcement, way finding and regulatory, as well as specialty sign (David, 2011). These public signs are a type of a semiotic sign in that they too stand for other than themselves.

Recent studies have shown that with the use of linguistic visual and spatial texts in the public, language awareness can be developed to the students and other learners engaged with the use of language. (Dagenais, 2009; Bolton, 2013; Dressler 2015).

Frequently, some experts have gone through research in order to know the effect of reading advertisements such as announcements, posters, signage, symbols and etc. to language learning. A considerable amount of research had been carried out but little research focused on its effect to linguistic competence; specifically, how the written announcements and signages affect the reading comprehension of students.

This study is related with the analysis of linguistic landscape. Landry and Bourhis (1997) define linguistic landscape as the visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region. To be more specific, the notion refers to:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration (p.25)

In Hong Kong, a case study of shop signs and linguistic competence was made by Wolf (2012). The purpose of the study is to examine relations between the linguistic landscapes of two ethnically and socially diverse research areas and the linguistic competence of their inhabitants. It was shown that English is visibly present in most of the signage and other advertising materials of Hong Kong. More than that, employees of property agencies were in most cases fluent in English whilst workers at traditional shops such as butcheries and grocery stores were found to most likely lack conversational skills. As a whole, it was shown that in HK the preconditions for a high proficiency of English in a large majority of the population are given.

Moreover, another related study was conducted in Gaborone, Botswana by Akindele (2011) which aims to show that linguistic landscape can provide valuable insight into the linguistic situation of the place, including common patterns of language usage, official language policies, prevalent language attitudes, and the long-term consequences of language contact, among others. It was found out that the city is moving towards multilingualism in English, Setswana and Chinese. On the other hand, it is in high tendency that the English language was

used as sign of prestige which also tells that the participants are proficient with the language.

To contextualize it, here in the Philippines, there have been studies aligned with LL conducted which determined the place and position of English in both rural and urban areas. Current studies focused on how English language functions in different spaces of the school whether it is in “top-down” or “bottom-up” (Astillero, 2018; Magno, 2017; Delos Reyes 2015).

A linguistic landscape study in Cebu City Higher Education offering communication programs (Magno, 2016) concluded that HEI’s linguistic landscape represents current news and information in a formal tone and context as it caters to mature audience. Moreover, he also found out that choosing English language over other languages proves the remarkable influence of English as well as the prestige it currently carries in HEIs. Afar from that, bilingual and other multilingual signages are very minimal.

Similarly, Astillero (2016) used quantitative and qualitative to investigate languages in Irosin Secondary Schools. She found out that local languages in their province have very limited space in formal education especially in secondary level. Thus, the preferential use of English in the school LL, on one side, underscores the power, prestige of the language over the national and local languages and other, it may be contingent on the context where the dominant language is used (Astillero, 2011, p12).

Lastly, in the study presented by Reyes (2015), he concluded that the English language dominated the linguistic landscape of the two stations and very likely in many parts of the Philippines, evidently there is no “active competition” between English and Filipino in the linguistic landscape of the country. Hence, instead of being bilingual, it seems rather apt to call the LL as essentially “unilingual”.

For the previous studies conducted about linguistic landscape, it may appear that the experts just focused on how the public signages shaped the acquisition and use of the English language and perhaps did not present if groups in a community have varieties of language preferences or just unified with the others. There were a few studies such that of Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre,

and Armand (2009) which has proven that particularly educational sectors may benefit if children’s identity is developed through contact and exposure with various linguistic landscape.

With the abovementioned study (Dagenais et al., 2009), consequently the purpose of this study is to identify the place of English in the linguistic schoolscape of DLSU- D. Moreover, this study will serve as a proof that the field of expertise or the department/college in an institution has a relation with the use of language such as monolingualism and bilingualism.

Statement of the problem

This study tried to answer the following questions:

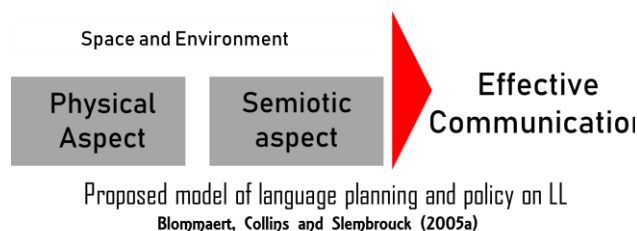
1. What are the language preferences in the linguistic schoolscape of De La Salle University- Dasmariñas?
2. What are the common situational variables in the displays present in DLSUD?
3. What is the significant difference between college/s and language preferences on linguistic schoolscape?

Theoretical Framework

The theory that the researcher used in this study is the linguistic landscape theory. The concept of LL (linguistic landscape) was first drawn by Landry and Bourhis (1997) in their seminal work on ethnolinguistic vitality and signage in Canada as visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a given territory. Moreover, the researcher also took advantage of the method in schoolscape research focusing on categorization of establishment (based on Cenoz and Gorter 2006).

The notion of linguistic landscape as defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) is the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, places names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. According to Gorter (2006), the study on LL is concerned with ‘the use of language in its written form in public sphere’.

Moreover, the researcher also used the proposed model of language planning and policy on linguistic landscape by Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck (2005a). In here, it was seen that linguistic landscape is dependent on the space and environment, most significantly, to its physical aspect and semiotic aspect. Once it is already understood, it will take an impact on more effective communication. This simply means, that the languages posted in our environment, whatever setting it is, could shape the linguistic norms in a community.



Lastly, this study aims to support or reject the hypothesis that each college have equally utilized both monolingualism and bilingualism as their language preferences in linguistic schoolscape.

II. Methodology

Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive, qualitative method and quantitative analysis of data research since it aims to present a study on the announcement and signages in English to DLSU-D. In this study, the researcher has used qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the real world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In here, it studies things in their natural spaces, taking into account the current usage of language in different buildings where varieties of field of expertise are offered. Basically, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how people makes sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009). Quantitative research, on the other hand, are research methods dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable in a systematic way of investigation of phenomena and their relationships. It is used to answer questions on relationships within measurable variables with an intention to

explain, predict and control phenomena (Leedy, 1993, p.87). The statistical data presented in this study was treated and interpreted quantitatively using the chi-square. The Chi-square test is intended to test how likely it is that an observed distribution is due to chance. It is also called a "goodness of fit" statistic, because it measures how well the observed distribution of data fits with the distribution that is expected if the variables are independent.

A Chi-square test is designed to analyze categorical data. That means that the data has been counted and divided into categories. It will not work with parametric or continuous data (such as height in inches). In this study, it was used to reject or support the null hypothesis.

Research Locale, Population and Sampling Technique

The venues that the researcher used for this study is De La Salle University – Dasmariñas. The said institution is one of the 17 La Salle schools which is considered as most competitive tertiary schools in the South and known as “Cavite’s Premier University”. In this school, the researcher looked for different colleges and departments were varieties of signages about announcements are posted such as at their bulletin boards, announcements posted on doors, and some other materials prepared by the administration of each college building.

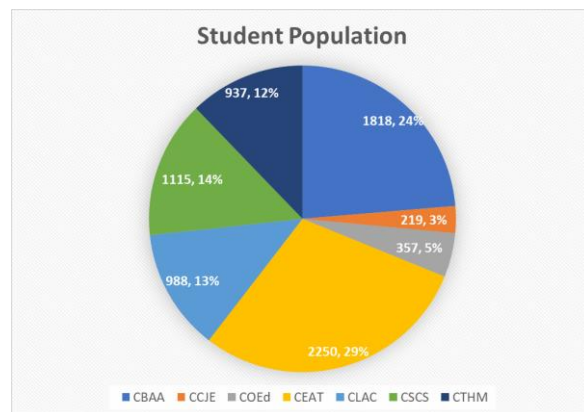


Figure 1. A pie graph of the total student population per college in DLSU-D during the 2nd semester of A.Y. 2017-2018

Moreover, there is a consideration on the diversity of the nationalities in the said institution as it

affects the language preferences which is also a focus of this study.

NATIONALITY	NO. OF STUDENTS	
	1 st sem	2 nd sem
Korean	54	50
Timorese	14	13
Chinese	10	24
American	2	1
Nigerian	1	1
Papua New Guinean	2	2
Indian	4	2
Spanish	2	2
Vietnamese	1	1
Japanese	1	1
Fijian	1	1
Nepalese	1	1
Cambodian	1	1
Pakistani	1	0
Ugandan	1	1
Taiwanese	1	1
TOTAL	97	102

Table 1 Nationalities of foreign students and their population in DLSUD for the 1st and 2nd semester

Table 1.1 presents the total population of foreign students in DLSUD for the 1st and 2nd semester including their nationalities which varies also and may give relevant effects to the linguistic schoolscape. This would also serve as a tool to determine the language preference of a school.

Data Gathering Procedure

The corpus of this study includes a complete inventory of the linguistic landscape of different departments in the institutions, based on the example of the study on the use of English in Keren Kayemet Street in Jerusalem, Israel (Rosenbaum et al., 1977). The analysis in LL study relies on photography and visual analysis in which the core

data gathering method is to engage in photography that thoroughly document defined spaces in the institutions' buildings (Akindelle, 2011, p.5). Specifically, the researcher went to different buildings where different colleges can be located. To make it more organized, the researcher used a coding scheme that included variables (based on Ben-Rafael *et al*; Cenoz & Gorter 2006). The researcher collected all the texts displayed publicly. The researcher used extensive empirical dataset. Every public signs displaying linguistic text visible with the naked eye from street level was captured by means of android cellphone camera. (Loth 2016, Akindelle 2011, Reyes 2015, Astillero 2011, Magno 2017). Moreover, he had organized the gathered data further through tabulation to find its mean, median and mode. Then, the number of posters that used English only, Tagalog only, and other varieties of language as well as those with monolingualism and bilingualism were counted. In contrast to the study by Rosenbaum et al. (1977), the approach of the researcher involved taking digital pictures of all texts on each department building. For the statistical treatment of data, to prove that each college equally utilized both bilingualism and monolingualism as their language preferences in linguistic schoolscape, the researcher used the chi-square test.

Results

This chapter presents the results of the statistics of the signages and announcements with their common language preferences respectively and its relation to the research locale and population.

Language preferences in linguistic schoolscape of DLSU-D

- **Languages Displayed**

This portion represents the languages displayed in DLSU-D using Ben-Rafael et. al (2006), Astillero (2011) and Cenoz & Gorter's (2009) categorization of language preferences. Based on the 406 signs gathered in May 2018, the results in table 1 show that 321 (79%) of all signs are produced in monolingual English in which only one is in monolingual Filipino. Majority of the bilingual signs are in both Filipino and English are 77 (19%), and other bilingual like Latin and English (7), Japanese and English (3) Malaysian and English (1) only gathered 12 (.03%) overall.

COLLEGE	Monolingual		Bilingual	
	ENGLISH	FILIPINO	Filipino & English	Other language & English
CSCS	56		23	(Latin & Eng) 7
CLAC	34	1	14	
CTHM	36		12	
COEd	32		4	(Japanese, Thai, Latin) 3
CCJE	11		4	(Latin & Eng) 1
CEAT	72		4	(Malaysian) 1
CBAA	79		12	
TOTAL	321	1	77	12
TOTAL NUMBER OF SIGNAGES/ANNOUNCEMENTS EXAMINED				406

Table 2
Language preferences on the signages of each college

- **Producer of signs and situational variables**

Producer of signs

Most of the signs examined were in bottom-up 221 (55%), which illustrates that majority of the signs examined were made by the faculty, students and parents combined. Only 185 (45%) were made by the administrators and administrative staff.



Figure 2. A bar graph of the total student population per college in DLSU-D during the 2nd semester of A.Y. 2017-2018

Figure 1.1 gives us the idea as to which college belongs the higher numbers of signages made the teachers, students and parents as well as which college has a higher number of signages made by the administration and administrative staff. Majority, it is the teachers, students and parents

turned to be the main makers of the signages in the place. The bottom-up signs are basically limited to the signages in trash-bins as well as some announcements regarding the upcoming graduation and some other policies that are in need to be followed even the school year has almost ending.

Field refers to what language is used to talk about; the *tenor* refers to the role relationships between the interactants; and *mode* indicates the role language is playing in the intersection (Magno, 2017). The field covers a wide range of texts and content in varied formats and styles, that provides announcements about contests, competitions, scholarships, forum, summit, conferences, preparations in case of calamities and emergencies, policies that must be followed, job-opportunities, recognition of exemplary students and faculty, program offerings and guidelines in which each college have set depending on the culture and norms they practice. In terms of mode, the signages posted are purely written with creative designs and format followed.

- **Statistical treatment of data**

Using chi-square test

A Chi-square test is designed to analyze categorical data. That means that the data has been counted and divided into categories. It will not work with parametric or continuous data (such as height in inches).

	MONOLINGUAL	BILINGUAL	TOTAL
CSCS	56	30	86
CLAC	35	14	49
CTHM	36	12	48
COEd	32	7	39
CCJE	11	5	16
CEAT	72	5	77
CBAA	79	12	91
TOTAL	321	85	N= 406

Table 3. Shows step 1:Rearranging the data in the form of 7x2 table containing the observed frequencies for each cell.

CELL	f_o	f_e	$f_o - f_e$	$(f_o - f_e)^2$	$\frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$
Upper Left 1	56	68	-12	144	2.12
Upper Left 2	35	38.74	-3.75	14.06	0.36
Upper Left 3	36	37.95	-1.95	3.80	0.10
Upper Right 1	30	18	12	144	8
Upper Right 2	14	10.26	3.74	13.99	1.36
Upper Right 3	12	10.05	1.95	3.80	0.38
Middle Left	32	31.22	0.78	0.61	0.01
Middle Right	7	8.17	-1.17	1.37	0.18
Lower Left 1	11	12.65	-1.65	2.72	0.22
Lower Left 2	72	60.88	-11.12	123.65	2.03
Lower Left 3	79	71.95	7.05	49.70	0.69
Lower Right 1	5	3.35	1.65	2.72	0.81
Lower Right 2	5	16.12	-11.12	123.65	7.67
Lower Right 3	12	19.05	-7.05	49.70	2.61
<i>Table 5. Summary computation table</i>					$\chi^2 = 26.55$

Table 4. Shows step 3: Obtaining the chi-square value

Table 5 shows the tabulated results to get the chi-square value. To get this, it is needed to obtain the expected frequency for each cell then construct a summary table in which, for each cell, you report the observed and expected frequencies, subtract the expected from the observed frequency, square this difference, divide by the expected frequency, and sum these quotients to obtain the chi-square value.

As indicated in Step 5, to reject the null hypothesis at the 0.5 significance level with 1 degree of freedom, our calculated chi-square value would have to be larger than 12.59. Because we obtained a chi-square value of 26.55, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis. Our results suggest that there is significant difference in each colleges' language preferences on linguistic schoolscape.

III. Discussion

The announcements and signages posted in the seven colleges of DLSUD were majorly in monolingual English. Only a few percentage were seen with bilingual language preference. This simply tells us that as an institution in an urban area, especially those located in Southern Tagalog Region near NCR, commonly uses both English and Filipino languages. The results will tell us that

DLSUD is far from being multilingual in line with the community's language preference. Agreeably, English was also used as a sign of prestige as students, faculty and administrators preferred to use this for information dissemination. Administrative staff used bilingualism just for a very minimal chance (i.e. trash bins, SWC). Hence, it supports Reyes' claim that it seems rather apt to call the linguistic schoolscape as essentially "unilingual" or "monolingual". There was not any poster that showcases other dialects unlike with the study conducted by Astillero (2011) in a rural area in Sorsogon. In contrast with Reyes' (2015) claim that train stations in urban areas neglected the bilingual policy in the Philippines, the institution of this recent study was not in scope of that. The DepEd order Order No. 52, s. 1987 scopes all levels in the K-12 program which means, college or university level are not obliged to follow. Commission on Higher Education evenly supported this but not as critical as what presented in the former but it supports the norms in the linguistic schoolscape of the institution due to its independence. The policy just focused on the implementation of both English and Filipino languages in pedagogy which is not anymore, a scope of this study. Each college does not have equal or similar language preference. They may have diversity in their professional endeavors, language use, and cultural background but it does not reveal that it has an impact on their language preferences.

Announcements are the most important post identified due to its numbers posted in every college. In fact, most of the signages are addressed to and for the students. Based on the interview conducted, the posting processes takes long procedure before its approval. The results also show that English used to address the students straightforward and formal while Filipino is more informal and usually appeal to the emotions. Some other languages in the study like Latin, Japanese and Thai were just used to promote organizations, to post results of student-exchange and to tell historical background of the buildings and hallways. These results suggest that despite the promotion of bilingual and multilingual policy in education, the school stakeholders have clearly shown high preference to the English language.

These results are similar with the findings of Astillero (2011), Magno (2015) and Reyes (2015) stating that English dominated the linguistic landscape of the two stations and very likely in many parts of the Philippines, evidently there is no “active competition” between English and Filipino in the linguistic landscape of the country. Hence, instead of being bilingual, it seems rather apt to call the LL as essentially “unilingual”.

The null hypothesis investigated in the study was to see if each college have equally utilized both bilingualism and monolingualism as their language preferences in linguistic schoolscape. As per the result, to reject the null hypothesis at the 0.5 significance level with 1 degree of freedom, our calculated chi-square value would have to be larger than 12.59. Because we obtained a chi-square value of 26.55, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis. Our results suggest that there is significant difference in each colleges’ language preferences on linguistic schoolscape.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

English dominated the linguistic schoolscape in DLSUD. Evidently, there is no competition between English and Filipino which has also been shown in previous studies. The situation is not only a mockery of the multilingual reality but also an aberration of the country’s bilingual policy in a much broader sense (Reyes, 2015).

Though it may appear that the signages posted are “fairly” distributed for there are few spaces for bilingual languages in the linguistic schoolscape, still, the findings show that the general provision of the institution was called to use English as language of the majority, whether coming from the administration, administrative staff and other stakeholders. Moreover, each college have shown their language preferences independently without taking into account what languages were used in the bulletin boards of the other colleges.

It was also unfortunate to see some bulletin boards especially in CEAT without any content and just left alone plainly. The chance of disseminating information was not maximized and utilized. It may be better if all the administrative staff of each college will monitor how this bulletin boards were used.

Lastly, it was shown in the previous studies that considering the presence of bilingual and multilingual policy in education, still, English was mostly preferred. How can we protect the local languages which mirror the local identity of Filipinos if even the higher education institutions are not duly presenting it?

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