

Visualising Change: Linguistic and Semiotic Landscape of Tutong Town

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Abstract

This article explores the concept of 'linguistic landscape' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and applies it to the Tutong Town Centre, which was depicted briefly in the film *Gema Dari Menara* (1968). Due to the cursory and grainy depiction on screen, a study of the present linguistic landscape of the town featured in the film is far more practical than a detailed comparison of the linguistic landscape of Tutong town then and now. In essence the film has provided a geographical scope for linguistic/ semiotic analysis presented in this paper. The study of signs 'in a given geographical location' (Ben Rafael et al, 2006: 14), using the distributive count approach, lends itself to a greater understanding of the ethnolinguistic vitality and sociolinguistic interactions of the language groups living in what can be described as a multilingual and multiracial small town. Such evidence of language use in the public sphere results from an interplay of various factors within the town's societal context, that could be related to Scollon & Scollons' (2003:2) idea of 'the social meaning of material placement of sign and discourses'. This study challenges the notion of ethnic languages' 'disappearance' from public sphere, and instead raises questions about their 'initiation' into public use. The study also concludes that the supposed multilinguality of the Tutong Town population is not represented in the linguistic landscape.

Introduction

At 1:01:21 of *Gema Dari Menara* (1968), Tutong is mentioned for the first time by Hassan, when he tells Azman (the main protagonist), that he has a set of posters to drop off at Tutong mosque on their way back from Kuala Belait to Bandar Seri Begawan. The Tutong scene does not contribute much to the plot except to showcase the Department of Religious Affairs' then-considered 'modern' assets across the country. The actual footage is only about one minute long, and is literally a drive through Tutong town centre. It therefore depicts the centre of commercial activities in Tutong district in 1968, and provides a definable space that can be investigated through the study of its linguistic and semiotic landscape. In the scarcity of original and 'live' visual text depicting Tutong in the 1960s, this footage becomes a significant record (albeit brief) of Tutong daily life. But it is precisely this brevity that allows this study to re-trace the journey of Azman and Hassan to the Tutong mosque, so that a description of the Tutong town's linguistic and semiotic landscape in the present day can give us an insight into the development it has experienced over the last 50 years.

Linguistic and Semiotic Landscape

Landry & Bourhis were the first to conceptualise 'linguistic landscape' as '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' (1997: 25). Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht's (2006: 14) interpretation of 'linguistic landscape' involves the analysis of 'any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location'. The notion of linguistic landscape, therefore, refers to the 'visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region' (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 23). Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke & Blackwood (2016: 423) view linguistic landscape as 'a highly interdisciplinary research domain, grounded in a wide range of theories

and disciplines, such as language policy, sociology, semiotics, literacy studies, anthropology, social and human geography, politics, and urban studies', whose object of research is any visible display of written language (a "sign") as well as people's interactions with these signs. However, these definitions focus on the linguistic texts, and exclude the semiotic texts (signs that contain little or no words), in the area of study. This study therefore posits both linguistic and semiotic evidence in so far as they are both used as 'signs' within the area under study. Inclusion of both linguistic and semiotic signs would strengthen the ecological approach (Haugen 1972) adopted in this study: to consider all signs in their various forms (notices, announcements, warnings etc) whether they are commercial, public or traffic-related in nature. The ecological approach is adopted from Haugen's sociolinguistic approach where all languages within the same geography are taken into account.

Studying the linguistic landscape of a multilingual and multicultural area can give us an understanding of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the language groups present in that area, as the linguistic landscape is considered 'the most salient marker of perceived in-group versus out-group vitality' (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 45). According to Van Mensel et al the conclusions made by Landry and Bourhis (1997) 'are premised on an understanding of language and society in which language use is directly and exclusively linked to certain well-defined, homogenous groups of language users, while the visibility of a particular language is taken to be indicative of the vitality of the language and its group of users'. Van Mensel et al (2016: 426) further relate linguistic landscape to an understanding of 'the societal and official status of the language(s) and their respective communities of speakers'. Van Mensel et al (2016: 430) argue that the straightforward and direct correlation between a language's visibility in public space and its vitality, between its communicative currency and an active presence, as originally put forward by Landry & Bourhis (1997), is empirically no longer tenable in the face of globalised and increasingly complex landscapes (Vandenbroucke, 2015). Instead, language use in the public sphere reflects the outcome of a complicated interplay between various factors of ethnic, political, ideological, commercial, or economic nature in a particular societal context, perhaps more relevant to 'the social meaning of the material placement of sign and discourses' as proposed by Scollon & Scollon (2003: 2).

The data in this study was generated by employing the most common approach in linguistic landscape studies, that is counting the distribution of the signs. Van Mensel et al (2016: 426) argue that 'the distributive approach in linguistic landscape analysis gives an impression of the relative power of certain language groups - their ethnolinguistic vitality—based on the presence or absence of the respective signs in the public sphere'. The distributive analysis involves signs in different linguistic codes collected in a specified area being counted, categorised, and then compared to come up with a geographic distribution and the territorial presence of linguistic tokens (and/or semiotic tokens, in this case). The results of this distributive analysis, according to Van Mensel et al (2016: 426), can provide insight into aspects of human social activity and linguistic diversity 'that typify the multilayered, superdiverse multilingual contexts of society being studied, which in turn provides us with an empirical barometer to map and interpret both short- and long-term *change* in language and society'.

Jaworski & Thurlow (2010:3) view the concept of (linguistic) landscape as 'a way of seeing' that is not confined to the mediated representations of space in art and literature, but also subsume our view and interpretation of space 'in ways that are contingent on geographical, social, economic, legal cultural and emotional circumstances, as well as our practical uses of physical environment as nature and territory, aesthetic judgments, memory and myth, for example, drawing on religious beliefs and references, historical discourses, politics of gender relations, class, ethnicity, and the imperial projects of colonization - all of which are still present today and consistently reproduced in, for example, contemporary tourist landscapes' (Van Mensel et al, 2016).

In terms of analysis of data, linguistic landscape studies have placed great importance on the idea of agency. Landry & Bourhis (1997: 26) distinguished between commercial “private” and “public government” signs, whilst Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: 10) observed that official “top-down” signs “are expected to reflect a general commitment to the dominant culture,” whereas private “bottom-up” signs “are designed much more freely according to individual strategies.” The former thus reflects overt “power,” while the latter indexes covert “solidarity” (Backhaus, 2006). But Lou (2012: 46) rightly argues, “the distinctions between ‘official’ and ‘top-down’ signs and ‘unofficial’ and ‘bottom-up’ signs are increasingly blurred, and the power of the state is often blended with the interests of the corporate.” Kallen (2010) redefines “top-down” forces as “the civic authorities. Yet a “bottom-up category” of signage is not unproblematic, as Pavlenko (2009: 250) notes: “large multinational corporations may aim to present an internationally recognized image (global signs), local commercial enterprises may need to comply with local policies, and private individuals may make their choices based on their own linguistic competencies and those of intended readers.”

In support of the ecological approach mentioned above, Van Mensel et al (2016: 442) argue that critical changes in the linguistic composition of the public space and of what Blommaert (2013: 51) refers to as ‘the complex semiotic organisation of space’ point to the transformation of ‘social order’ (2013: 51). Pavlenko & Mullen (2015: 117) argue that linguistic landscape scholars overlook diachronicity at their peril, and they recommend that a diachronic approach to LL should include “(a) the approach of ‘all signs in one place over time’ and (b) the awareness that sign interpretation takes place not just in the context of the other signs in the same environment but in the context of the signs of the same type previously seen by the viewers.”

As an analytical tool, linguistic landscape (and by extension, semiotic landscape) can become ‘a diagnostic of social, cultural and political structures inscribed in the linguistic landscape’ (Blommaert (2013: 3). ‘Signs’ and how people deal with these signs, can inform us concurrently about macro and micro dimensions, and about long- and short-term evolutions. Indeed, when looking at signs ‘in place’, they become embedded, historicised artifacts at the crossroads of materiality and action, what Scollon & Scollon (2003) have called ‘aggregates of discourse’ (Van Mensel et al 2016: 443). Looking at it this way, any single “sign” becomes almost by definition rich and dense research material that we can explore to capture the interplay between linguistic and societal processes (Van Mensel et al, 2016: 443).

Similar LL studies have been conducted in Brunei previously by Coluzzi (2012), Susilawati Japri (2016) and Surinah Nordin (2018). Coluzzi analysed signs on a main road in the capital city of Brunei and found that out of the 60% of signs that used mixed languages, 21% that used Standard Malay, and 16% that used only English, minority languages are absent from the linguistic landscape. Meanwhile, the study by Susilawati Japri (2016) analysed the language of signboards in a Bruneian shopping mall. She found that although the law (Registry of Business) requires the signboard to include the business’s name in Malay Jawi script (twice the size of the Malay Roman script), 42% of shops do not adhere to this rule. Surinah Nordin’s (2018) Master’s thesis on company names in Brunei complements earlier works as it found that more than 70% of new businesses tended to use English names. These names would eventually appear on signboards, a significant element of the previous two studies. However, a detailed linguistic and semiotic study of Tutong town has never been conducted before. This study takes the historic scenes of the drive through Tutong town in *Gema Dari Menara* as an inspiration for this analysis of present-day signs.

The Landscape in Question: Tutong Town Centre

Tutong District is the third largest district bordering the South China Sea to the north, Brunei-Muara District to its northern-east and Belait District to its southern-west. It covers an area of

approximately 1,166 sq. km. with an estimated population of 44,300 people comprising of the Malays (mainly Tutong, Dusun, Kedayan), Iban, and Chinese (Tutong District Office, 2019). Traditionally each group would speak their respective languages and dialects; but Tutong is well-known amongst Bruneians for their Tutong language, an Austronesian language of its own. It is widely assumed that the traditional languages of these groups are dialects of Malay although in strict linguistic terms they are all less than 40% cognate with Bahasa Melayu (Nothofer 1991). According to Nothofer, in fact a cognate percentage of 80% is the determinant between a language and a dialect in Brunei. Other traditional languages such as Dusun, Kedayan and Iban are still widely spoken, alongside Hokkien and Mandarin. Yet Brunei Malay is widely spoken as the vernacular language, whilst English is spoken or used commonly as well.

Most of the administration and business activities take place in Pekan Tutong or Tutong Town. Tutong district has eight mukim or collection of villages (kampung): Mukim Pekan Tutong (Kampung Panchor Dulit, Kampung Panchor Papan, Kampung Sengkarai, Kampung Kuala Tutong, Kampung Penanjong, Bukit Bendera, Kampung Kandang, Kampung Penabai, Kampung Petani, Kampung Serembangun, Kampung Tanah Burok, Paya Pekan Tutong, Tutong Kem.

The Tutong district's town centre, or the municipality area of Tutong Town, dates back to 13 November 1929 when the Sanitary Board was established and the area under its jurisdiction was declared a Sanitary Board Area. The Sanitary Board, renamed 'Lembaga Bandaran Tutong' (Tutong Municipal Board) in 1970, was in charge of the cleanliness and developing the town. Today the main responsibility of the Municipal Department is collecting revenue from taxation of building, commercial licence fees and rental of commercial lots in commercial centres owned by the Department.

The Tutong Town municipality or sub-district covers only 0.024 km² comprising parts of Kampung Petani, Bukit Bendera, and the main mosque Masjid Hassanal Bolkia along Jalan Inche Awang, which runs parallel to the Tutong River (Sungai Tutong). Kampung Petani and Bukit Bendera are village-level subdivisions, the third and lowest administrative divisions in the country, and administered under Tutong District Office, a department in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Information Department, 2013).

Albeit brief, the drive-through scene in *Gema Dari Menara*, provides an instance of rare archival material that depicts socioeconomic activity in Tutong Town. For many years, until the coastal highway was opened in the late 1980s, Tutong Town would have been a rest-stop for travellers to and from Bandar Seri Begawan and Kuala Belait going in either direction.



Figure 1: Screenshot (of the in-flow drive) from the film depicting Tutong Town in 1968.



Figure 2: Tutong Town in 2020 in a reconstruction of the (in-flow) drive through in the film.

The buildings depicted in the film are mostly still present today, 50 years on. In 1968, single-unit restaurants and shops selling daily groceries were common; and to a certain extent the businesses have remained the same. These buildings have remained relatively unchanged, until the 1990s heralded the development of new shopping complexes further inland from the riverfront, behind the shophouses shown in the film. The new blocks gave rise to 'new' experiences for the Tutong people, for example, Fast food restaurants (Express), two-storey supermarket (Teguh Raya), dedicated pedestrian zones, and even a hotel in the 2000s. In terms of population make up, Tutong Town today is certainly more cosmopolitan consisting of expatriate workers (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Filipino, Malaysian, Indonesian) employed by the various businesses in and around town. The only hotel in town has also hosted long-term European expatriates working in various sectors in Brunei. Reputation-wise, Tutong is still seen by most Bruneians as a sleepy town to be skipped over.

Analysis of Signs

The area of study is the specific stretch of road (Jalan Inche Awang) beginning from just before the first block of shops in Tutong Town until the Tutong Mosque, covering a distance of 0.94 km only. All signs within street-level view along this road, in the same direction Hassan and Azman were driving in the film, were taken note of and counted. These signs include private or unofficial signs, and government or official signs, following both Landry & Bourhis (1997) and Ben Rafael (2010), but in this study the following categories (emergent patterns) will be used:

Private: Signs put up by unofficial (non-government) or commercial parties.

- Signboards: Signs that bear the name of the unit, shop or building.
- Notices: Signs that warn the public about certain activities and behaviors. or that provide information.
- Advertisements: Signs that advertise goods and services by companies not necessarily based in the location under study.



Figure 3: Private signboard with name of the restaurant in Jawi, Malay Rumi, Chinese characters, and in English. Below it is a welcome sign in Malay and Mandarin.



Figure 4: Private notices on a glass door of a restaurant informing visitors that this was not a Halal restaurant, and smoking was not allowed indoors. It also announces a telecommunication product was sold there.



Figure 5: Private advertisements stuck on a door.

Public: Signs installed by official authority or government agencies.

- Notices: Signs that aim to announce to the general public information about the building, events and activities, or to warn against certain activities.
- Traffic: Signs that are meant to orientate or direct both drivers and pedestrians installed along the roads, on or near buildings (not including road markings).



Figure 6: Public sign showing the Brunei Government crest to mark the building.



Figure 7: Public sign with Brunei Government crest and name and info on the site in Jawi, Malay Rumi, and English.



Figure 8: Public traffic signs (icons) for motorists and pedestrians.



Figure 9: Public sign (icons) for road traffic and pedestrians.

The data analysis has been conducted in two stages, based on the perspective depicted in the film:

- **In-flow:** Analysis of signs visible from the main road in the direction featured in the film.
- **Contra-flow:** Analysis of signs found in the peripheral areas, for example, those behind the shophouse buildings or the government offices, or those visible to the eye from a direction opposite to that shot in the film.

The combination of both these perspectives will provide a rich picture of the linguistic and semiotic ecology or landscape of Tutong Town.

Findings

The signs were noted from two perspectives: In-flow (following the sequence and direction of travel as depicted in the film); and Contra-flow (viewing the periphery and travelling from the opposite direction). These are discussed separately below. The texts are analysed in terms of whether they contain words, visuals or both, and whether they are presented as English, Chinese or Malay Rumi or Malay Jawi. 'Rumi' refers to the romanised script of the Malay language; whilst 'Jawi' refers to the Arabic script traditionally used to write Malay.

In-flow View

Analysis of the signs in-flow are as follows:

		Private			Public		
		Signboard	Notice	Advertisement	Signboard	Notice	Traffic
Words	Malay Rumi	18	3	4	10	36	0
	Malay Jawi	22	0	0	13	18	0
	English	14	9	21	6	23	1
	Chinese	9	1	0	0	0	0
	Mixed code	0	1	3	0	0	1
Visual	Icon	1	7	7	7	5	20
	Picture	0	0	1	0	4	0
Mixed Visual and Words		1	4 (Eng.)	9	1	19 (Mal.)	11
			1 (Chi.)			5 (Eng.)	
			Total				299

Table 1. *In-flow signs*

The in-flow analysis involves 299 signs found in and on buildings and along the road as shown in sequence in the film.

In general, there are three types of signs found on location. Firstly, signs that contain words but in various languages: Malay, English, Chinese or a mix of any of these languages. Secondly, signs that employ visuals in the form of icons or symbols, and pictures or illustrations. Out of the 299 signs, 45 mix visuals and words, but these are not double-counted.

Among the Private signs, most of the signboards are written in Malay Jawi (22) and in Malay Rumi (18), followed by English (14) with only 9 instances of Chinese signs. The fact that Malay Jawi and Rumi are most frequently found has much to do with the fact that businesses in Brunei must now display their names written in Jawi, Rumi, and as an option, in Chinese characters. Two significant points can be inferred from this finding. Business companies seem to adhere to the requirement of including Malay Jawi and Rumi spellings of their companies, in addition to their English and/or Chinese names. On the other hand, there are only four Chinese-owned businesses in the two main commercial buildings in the town centre. Interestingly, Tong Huat Company alone has four signs in Chinese characters on display. Other businesses in the two blocks, and further up the road are owned and/or operated by Malay or Indian businessmen. In relation to this, three of the Chinese companies in the shophouses (Tong Huat, Mei Fang and Hoe Hing) have remained in the same location since their establishment, and were in fact featured briefly in the film during the drive past.

There were also 34 advertisements found in the area, but the majority of these advertisements were written in English (21) without any translations or use of other languages. Interestingly three were written by mixing both English and Malay (e.g. 'Steam rambut', 'Cuci muka' and 'Leg waxing' all on one poster, meaning 'hair steaming', 'face wash' and 'leg waxing' services being on offer). These advertisements were mainly handwritten or printed sheets offering goods like cars for sale, and services like grass-cutting and their prices. This mixing of languages is either deliberate, or a bad attempt at the use of Malay language by the advertisers who do not speak it well.

In fact, the 21 private advertisements written entirely in English seem to suggest the advertisements were made by foreigners who know English well enough, and who know their

target Bruneians too use English quite comfortably. However, the fact that there are no advertisements in Malay Jawi or in Chinese might suggest either the advertisers are not literate in Jawi or Chinese, or that they think their audience would be limited if they wrote their advertisements in Jawi or Chinese characters. A third assumption is, of course, writing in English would suffice in the knowledge that most Bruneians or those in Tutong Town would be able to read and understand the English version.

There were 14 private notices about opening hours, or warnings about the spa being for female clients only, or even the tailor meant just for male clients. Nine were in English ('No entry', 'Staff only', 'Cash only'), while three were in Malay Rumi ('Untuk Perempuan Sahaja', 'Untuk Lelaki Sahaja', 'Tutup', 'Bukan Makanan untuk Orang Islam', respectively meaning 'For women only', 'For men only', 'Closed', and 'Not Muslim food'). It is worth noting that only one sign entirely in Chinese was found in the area ('禁烟' meaning 'No smoking'). These notices have been installed by the private companies themselves within their premises. However, the warnings about male or female clientele only are repeating official warnings from the government for their businesses to segregate their clients by gender.

In addition to the textual signs, 8 private advertisements depict icons and pictures only without words. These include the 'barber's pole', the red-and-blue rolling stripes, both of which indicate hair salon or barber grooming services. The single picture advertisement found was indeed a poster picture of a trendy ladies' hairstyle.

Public signboards mainly used Malay Rumi (10) and Malay Jawi (13), as well as English (6). At the same time, the seven icons included the Brunei government's crest emblazoned on the buildings and structures.

Among the public signs, 46 notices were written in Malay Rumi, while 18 were in Malay Jawi. It is interesting that more Jawi is being used in the private signs, rather than in the official signs. But again, the legal requirement for businesses to include Jawi in their signboards is a measure that is strictly monitored and enforced. Failure to comply would result in a fine for the offending company. It would seem that government or official notices are acceptable in using Malay Rumi only, as this would be seen as sufficient in terms of upholding the official language, Malay.

In relation to this, the townscape would not be complete without the government sign in Jawi and Rumi reminding the public to 'be proud to use Malay' (Berbanggalah menggunakan Bahasa Melayu). Given the prominence of Bahasa Melayu, it therefore not difficult to see why there are no government signs in Chinese nor in mixed languages.

Likewise, it is not surprising to see public notices in English occur quite frequently (23 times), given the strong emphasis on the use of English in the national education system. Nevertheless, it is still rather surprising to see more English being used in official signs than Jawi (18 times).

11 visual signs were found in the area of study. The four picture-only signs were picture posters depicting beautiful scenes of Tutong, aimed at promoting tourism to the district.

Traffic signs, issued only by the government or official authorities, are mainly visual in nature. 20 instances of traffic icons were found in the in-flow analysis, depicting universally understood traffic symbols and warnings (e.g., zebra crossing, amber warning, give way triangle, and arrows for direction). There is one instance of a traffic sign entirely in English ('No Parking'). Interestingly, there is also a similar traffic warning that mixes English and Malay in an empty space regularly misused by undiscerning drivers to park illegally ('No Parking Arahan Polis', meaning 'No Parking by order of the police'). Given that the traffic police are a government agency, they would be expected to have been more careful in their use of the official language, but these mixed-language signs suggest otherwise.

In terms of signs that mix visuals and words, 19 of the government signs in Malay (both Rumi and Jawi) were found, in comparison to five using English. These were mainly posters promoting upcoming tourist events and/or local tourist attractions.

Contra and Peripheral View

In order to provide a fuller picture of the locale under study, it would be useful to also look at it from the other side, as it were, from the opposite direction from Hassan and Azman's route in the film. This would involve driving into Tutong Town centre from the Tutong Mosque. Using the same categories as in the in-flow analysis, the following signs have been identified:

		Private			Public		
		Signboard	Notice	Advertisement	Signboard	Notice	Traffic
Words	Malay Rumi	5	1	0	7	8	2
	Malay Jawi	5	1	0	6	3	0
	English	0	6	0	0	0	0
	Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mixed code	0	0	3	0	2	
Visual	Icon	3	1	0	2	0	16
	Picture	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed Visual and Words		1	1(Mal.)	1	1	6 (Mal.)	5
		Total					71

Table 2. *Contra-flow signs*

There are fewer signs identified coming from municipality boundary (just before the Tutong mosque) into the town centre, as most have been recorded and accounted for in the in-flow analysis. Most striking would be the gradual increase in the number of private signs - most of these would be Shell company-related signs. A total of 71 signs were identified in the contra-flow. These exclude the signs already identified within the visual line in the in-flow analysis. 25 private signs and 51 public signs were found from the mosque into town centre, and in the adjacent areas in the backroad that parallels the main road featured in the film.

Notably, there are more public signs than private signs found as the peripheral areas are municipal-controlled and mostly gazetted for government use. The main private or commercial operation in the contra-flow is a Shell fuel station in Kampung Suran, which of course adheres to high safety standards and uses a large number of signs. On the other hand, this being a high traffic and bottleneck area, most of the public signs visible are actually traffic-related. Perhaps the most recent, and the most significant, signage is the Hollywood Hills-style 'Pekan Tutong' sign on the hill that overlooks the entire town centre and river (*see* Figure. 10). This particular sign is positioned such that the contra-flow (in this study) is the best vantage point from which to view it, but would not be immediately visible to the driver in the in-flow direction in this case. The hilltop sign is in essence a 'welcome' sign for drivers coming into Tutong Town from Bandar Seri Begawan.



Figure 10: Tutong Town landmark signage in Malay Jawi and Rumi.



Figure 11: Tutong Town riverside landmark.



Figure 12: The Tutong Jetty signage. This jetty was depicted in the film, but has since been renovated.

An aggregative in-flow inspection of the linguistic and semiotic landscape of Tutong town centre as featured in the film in 1968 shows that most of the signboards in the shops were written in Malay Jawi. It has to be noted that the second shophouse building shown in the film was destroyed by fire in the early 1970s, and was rebuilt as a 3-storey concrete structure that remains in use today. The grainy film suggests 14 shop signboards were installed in the two shophouses, mostly written in Jawi, though not all can be read clearly. Comparing these to photographic evidence from elsewhere, shop names like 'Tong Huat' (Rumi, Jawi, Chinese) 'Mei Fang' (Jawi), 'Hasbolah Yusuf' (Rumi), 'Kedai Bee Seng' (Jawi), 'Choon Seng' (Jawi) can be deciphered from the screenshot, although the latter three were burnt down in the fire as well. Some international brand names and signs that are still well-known today are also visible in the film: 7-Up (drink), Shell (oil products), Lucky Strike (cigarettes), Phillips (electronics). Given the precise location of these signs, and given what we know about these brands today, we can safely conclude that all these signs were private signs. The only decipherable public visual signs are 'No Parking' (traffic), 'Give Way' (traffic), the *Panji-panji* (Government crest), and the crescent moon and star atop the mosque dome (Islamic). Apart from the rebuilding of the second shophouse after the fire, another physical change in the built environment in the film is the demolition of the row of four bungalows (government housing) and several other wooden buildings in the immediate vicinity (government office and storage) along Jalan Inche Awang, the main road. Foodstalls, two carparks and a riverside park now stand in their place. A more detailed analysis cannot be done at this stage due to the low resolution of the film. A contra-flow analysis of film excerpt is impracticable as we can only see what is depicted on film.

Discussion

The combination of both in-flow and contra-flow sets of current signs total to 370 items altogether. These only include signs that are visible to the observer from street-level, and do not include signs inside the shop units, offices, and other buildings in the area. Yet they provide sufficient data to provide a linguistic profile of the area under study in the present time. It is clear that Bahasa Melayu or Malay features prominently (in both Rumi and Jawi fashion) in both the linguistic and semiotic landscape of Tutong town centre, as evidenced by the data presented in the in-flow and contra-flow sets. This is followed closely by English signs, which was expected because of the widespread use of English throughout Brunei. But although it had been expected that Chinese would also feature frequently in the signs, the data clearly proves this is far from the case.

This brings us to the discussion of agency. Although the general division of agency is private (business owners and operators) and public (government authorities), the make-up of business owners and operators in the area can be further analysed. An assessment of the business signboards indicates that out of 15 businesses in the main retail buildings, 12 foodstalls and 1 petrol station (totalling 28) show that only 4 businesses are Chinese-owned or -run. As the municipal requires that signboards should include Jawi and Rumi versions of companies' names, the Chinese and English versions are optional. It is assumed then that it is only the Chinese owners or operators who would elect to include their Chinese names on their signs.

Given that Tutong district has an estimated population of 44,300 people comprising of the Malays (mainly Tutong, Dusun, Kedayan), Iban, and Chinese (Tutong District Office, 2019), the linguistic ecosystem would be expected to be richly endowed with various languages. Noor Azam (2005), and Noor Azam and Siti Ajeerah (2016) have identified the following languages spoken by the populace there: Tutong, Dusun, Kedayan, Brunei Malay, Iban, Chinese (Hokkien, Cantonese, Mandarin), and English. And based on this, some representation of all of these languages was to be expected amongst the signs. However, the data presented here found no evidence of any signs in Tutong, Dusun, Kedayan, Brunei Malay or Iban. Perhaps more surprisingly, the Tutong people are famously protective of their traditional

Tutong language, and yet no private or public signs have been installed in the area under study. The only reference that can be made to the Tutong language is a public notice in the riverside park that explains that the Tutong word for 'riverside' is 'tatangan'. Therefore it can be said that the linguistic and semiotic landscape in Tutong Town does not reflect its multilingual ecosystem.

Conclusion

There is no question that combining linguistic and semiotic landscape analysis is a very useful approach in synchronic and diachronic linguistic studies related to a specific location. Using archival material and existing signs from earlier times, Spalding (2013), and Blackwood (2015), according to Van Mensel et al (2016), were able to explore political, economic and artistic trends, and their impact on written language practices in society. In relation to this, Van Mensel et al (2016) argue that 'change' is innate in a diachronic approach to linguistic landscape studies. They argue that this variation is often understood as either the appearance or disappearance of languages from public writing or from public places in general, and its interpretation. It is unlikely that Tutong, Kedayan or Dusun, for example, were ever used widely in signboards, notices or traffic signs in Tutong town centre, despite their native status in the Tutong district. This owes much to the spoken, rather than written, nature of these ethnic languages, as well as the fact that Malay had been elevated to official language status. Given these facts, the issue in the context of the Tutong linguistic landscape is therefore not so much about the ethnic languages' 'disappearance' from public sphere - because they never were used in signages really - rather, it is more about their 'initiation' into the linguistic and semiotic landscape via signs. When will they begin to be used in Tutong Town signages? Will they ever be?

The brief minute Hassan and Azman drove through Tutong may appear inconsequential to the plot of *Gema Dari Menara* other than for the novel inclusion of another scenic town in Brunei in this pioneering film; yet it has provided us with a glimpse into the past, and has given us some idea about the linguistic and semiotic landscape of Tutong town back in 1968, and how and why the landscape may have evolved over time. What we can affirmatively say about the landscape today is that the traditional languages are not reflected in any of the signs in place in the Tutong town – supporting Coluzzi's (2012) assertion that traditional languages do not enjoy visibility in linguistic landscapes in Brunei. But neither is the 'cosmopolitan' make-up represented, as there is little to no evidence to show the expatriate population currently living and working in the commercial sections of the town centre. Clearly more research needs to be conducted to consider the complex roles and impacts of socio-political, socio-economics, socio-historical etc. factors can have in microcosms such as Tutong.

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