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Examining the Linguistic Identity of Asia's Latin City: A Content Analysis of Multilingualism of a Nonmetropolitan Cityscape

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ABSTRACT

This investigation offers an extensive analysis and examination of the linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan cityscape, focusing on the linguistic identity and multiple languages used throughout the city. This study fundamentally analyzes the multilingual nature and characteristics of the central district of Zamboanga City. Furthermore, the investigation incorporated analytical categories, adapted from previous studies, which constituted the systematic foundation for gathering and selecting essential data from multiple sources throughout the city proper. The investigation revealed significant results and indicated that the cityscape contains six (6) languages that comprise its linguistic identity, specifically, English (51.25%), Filipino (23.36%), Chavacano (19.59%), Tausug (2.99%), Chinese (1.74%) and Bisaya (1.07%). To ensure the accuracy of the collected data, the photographs were analyzed through content analysis to examine the linguistic signage of the nonmetropolitan cityscape. Moreover, the study revealed that the cityscape employs monolingual (80.79%), bilingual (18.82%), and multilingual (0.39%) signages, highlighting the city's commitment to providing universally accessible information and preserving cultural/linguistic heritage. The investigation also revealed that English is the dominant language found within the signage, proving its significance in promoting global development, internationalization and economic growth in the city. However, despite its prominence, both local (Chavacano) and national (Filipino) languages are also evident in the cityscape, which underscores the city's mission to preserve its cultural and linguistic identity, indicating that the languages are linguistically represented. In addition, the cityscape employs both official and nonofficial signage, which underscores its importance in information dissemination and advertising local services and products to international clients.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape; Monolingual; Bilingual; Multilingual; Official signage; Nonofficial signage

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1. Introduction

As countries aim for a globalized environment, signage employing various languages has become the norm to accommodate those who come from other nationalities and linguistic backgrounds, which also allows studies pertaining to linguistic landscapes (LLs) to receive significant attention and prominence in the field of research within the hallmarks of sociolinguistics. Furthermore, signage functions to provide information, raise awareness, display instructions, and present the cultural identity and diversity of a certain group. Moreover, signage is mostly used to disseminate information, provide directions, provide instructions, and promote and raise awareness. Signages play a vital role in conveying and transmitting information, which is one of the most important aspects of daily life (Gorter, 2006).

To ascertain notable indications concerning the presence of different and number of languages that are evident in populated locations is the primary goal of the linguistic landscape, which emphasizes that investigations regarding the linguistic landscape serve as an effective way for communication and trade. This is included in the main features of linguistic representation among a given population. Moreover, the linguistic landscape effectively supplements language learning and enhances language awareness to understand multilingualism.

Through the existence of prior studies in the field of research, one of the earliest researchers explained the linguistic landscape as the noteworthy presence of signage in public places utilizing various languages. In particular, these signs are evident in billboards, posters, street names, and shop signage, including signs located on government-owned buildings. Moreover, the abovementioned signs, when combined, create the linguistic landscape of a defined state, location, or metropolitan area (Landry and Bourhis, 1997).

As individuals converge into a specified location, there is a convergence of culture and languages that inhibits crucial representation and communication, which reflects the distinctive charm of the local

culture and practices. With the rapid development of internationalization and urban construction, as well as the increase in trade in industry, studies on urban landscapes have become a source of great interest among scholars and researchers. The constant urbanization of cityscapes significantly improves the sustainability and tourist attraction of urban settings (Kong, 2023). Moreover, as cities continually host a large multitude of individuals, professionals and citizens from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, this investigation will shed light on the dominant language, languages present and linguistic identity of an urban cityscape (Cortês and Lenzholzer, 2022).

The focus of the study is geared toward how the linguistic landscape in a nonmetropolitan city promotes diversity, cultural representation, and goals toward the preservation of local languages while promoting internationalization, which caters to both foreign and local populations (Bonczak and Kontokosta, 2019). The findings of the study will contribute to the pool of knowledge concerning the linguistic identity of a nonmetropolitan cityscape set in a culturally diverse context. The results will provide data for future researchers, whose aim is to further examine the linguistic landscape of urban locations.

Urban landscapes, such as cities, are home to individuals and citizens from diverse and various cultural backgrounds. The examination of languages employed in signage acknowledges the diversity of professionals and workers seeking to effectively communicate using their respective languages (Lucas et al., 2023). Furthermore, linguistic landscape studies highlight cultural diversity and the preservation of local heritage. By integrating these signs, the cityscape respects and promotes the diversity of the city (Leimgruber and Dagenais, 2020).

This investigation highlights the significance of preserving the city's cultural and linguistic heritage. The local languages, which are spoken by multiple individuals from diverse backgrounds, should be more prevalent and utilized, not just continually

employing English as the preferred language (Gorter et al., 2021). Representation of the local identity of speakers promotes inclusivity, which not only caters to locals but also appeals to international and foreign clientele.

In essence, the concept of linguistic landscape studies offers scholars the opportunity to delve into the intricacies of language itself (Iye et al., 2023). This study underscores the significance of investigating the linguistic landscape, as it unveils the dynamics of multiple languages within a defined sociolinguistic context. Moreover, it acknowledges that the languages in use directly influence speakers' perspectives regarding the prominence and vitality of various linguistic forms (Cenoz, 2013). Signages employing multiple languages not only encompass communication but also pave the way for the effective preservation and representation of local languages in sociocultural settings (Clorion et al., 2024).

In the context of education, this study promotes the investigation of linguistic landscapes in various settings. Prospective researchers should emphasize the need to study the linguistic landscapes of multilingual cities and urban areas. This provides extensive information on the increasing prominence of English, suggesting that local languages should also be portrayed in multilingual signage (Plautz et al., 2021).

This investigation aims to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What is the dominant language employed in a nonmetropolitan cityscape?
- (2) What languages illustrate the presence of multilingualism in Zamboanga's cityscapes?
- (3) What is the linguistic identity of Zamboanga City as constructed through the city's public signs?

2. Literature review

2.1 Zamboanga City as context

Investigations have shown that the linguistic landscape plays a vital role and is driven by the intensity of globalization and diverse culture, Zamboanga City being a salad bowl of culture—

rich in both language and culture (Clorion et al., 2024). The current study posits the significance of analyzing a setting, which pertains to the linguistic and cultural background of Zamboanga City. Zamboanga City is situated at the eastern tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula, where individuals coming from diverse linguistic meet to form the linguistic identity of the cityscape. This convergence of sociocultural backgrounds creates the melting-pot of the nonmetropolitan cityscape—shaping its characteristics into a multilingual and multicultural linguistic landscape (Eijansantos et al., 2021). Once colonized by Spain in the 16th century, its influence permeated and gave birth to a creole called 'Chavacano', the last living Spanish-based creole in Asia (Barrios, 2006).

Research in the field of linguistic landscapes seeks to identify the wide-ranging presence of multilingual characteristics in signs, both in private and public spaces. Linguistic landscapes allow suitable use of signs and make them visible for public use through the utilization of language and characters on outdoor signage; therefore, the use of multiple languages on signs promotes not only diversity but also the culture and true identity of a certain community (Benu et al., 2023).

In light of the nonmetropolitan city's context, research shows that Zamboanga City is located in an urban area and is considered as a nonmetropolitan city as it located in a part of a country or region's main capital cities. This nonmetropolitan city draws tourists from around the world and serves as a gathering place for people from various sociocultural backgrounds and diverse languages. It is regarded as a pluralistic society because different cultures are recognized and valued as essential components of the local way of life, even in the face of the dominant culture. Hence, Human mobility and globalization drive people to constantly seek out housing, employment opportunities, and education, which pushes populations in large cities (Väisänen et al., 2022).

In a similar vein, Barrios (2006) said that Zamboanga City is the location of the urban cityscape and a unique melting pot of countries, cultures, and customs. Understanding this cultural heterogeneity

is crucial to understanding the language landscape of a remote area. Since Zamboanga is located outside of both the capital city and the metropolitan area, it is expected that other languages will be used as a medium of communication and information sharing in an effort to foster peace and unity in a region where cultures are convergent. As a result, the city has a very diverse environment and it suggests representation and diversity in language.

The breadth of languages spoken in Zamboanga City, including English, Filipino, Tausug, Chavacano, and Cebuano, is indicative of the city's linguistic diversity (Barrios, 2006). Moreover, the usage of Chavacano as a language of communication sets Zamboanga City, Cavite, and Ternate apart in the Philippines (Taylor, 1957). This city is also known as "Asia's Latin City", and Chavacano is a Creole with Spanish roots that originated in the city after the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. (Eijansantos et al., 2023).

With Chavacano as the most common first language and English as the second language of this city depending on one's family history, it functions as a linguistic hub. Chavacano is the primary language spoken in the city. In Asia, it is the only remaining Creole language (Eijansantos et al., 2023). Furthermore, it is the sole Creole speaker left in Asia. With the largest speaker population, this creole is believed to be flourishing and changing (Lipski, 2001).

Studies on linguistic landscapes are significant, as they are indispensable investigations that are essential for the lives of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This study provides pertinent information on the strengths and advantages of utilizing languages. Moreover, observing and reading signs promote awareness of the multilingual diversity that we possess while influencing individuals on how we value and perceive language (Gorter and Cenoz, 2017).

2.2 Cityscapes and linguistic landscape

Cityscapes incorporating multilingual signage improve communication and accessibility within a specified location. It provides instructions to individuals who are not proficient in the dominant

language(s) present within the area. These signs support better navigation, understanding of directions and rules, and overall daily activities that involve instructions for all members of the area. Establishing signage using language has symbolic functions that are associated with social status, hospitality and attraction (Song et al., 2022).

English has been established as the preferred international language in the global community. Through globalization and the interconnectedness of individuals, English has been imposed as the medium of instruction (Grishaeva, 2015). Hence, the investigation revealed that English translates to globalization, currency, significance, internationalization, learning, success and prominence; it is only expected that English remains the principal language used in any given setting. Speakers of the language presumed that it has the capability to help them broaden their horizons and opportunities, which in turn would favor the success of businesses and ensure that various individuals from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds are catered to (al-Qenaie and Naser, 2023).

Studies on the use of English in local signage have been the focus of investigations, with English being prominent in monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signage, in combination with the local languages in urban cityscapes (Byrne and Marcet, 2022). This integration of languages represents the vibrant cultural heritage of the city while increasing the level of economic status and prestige of commerce. Moreover, foreign languages are crucial for supporting local tourism in Bali, Indonesia (Artawa et al., 2023).

The continuous development and optimization of an urban landscape enhance tourism, trade, cultural representation and visual attractiveness, which promotes a positive working environment where individuals are able to communicate, disseminate information and provide directions using the languages present in the locale (Carta et al., 2022). The significance of investigating LL in the context of an urban cityscape lies in its ability to determine the dominant and present languages in a multilingual

context. As major cities worldwide continue to aim for internationalization, both in the global market, the use of the English language has increased (Hu, 2022). Therefore, it is utilized in signage to ensure the universality of language for communication and instruction (Gorter and Cenoz, 2017, Gorter, 2007).

Despite gaining much prominence, studies concerning the linguistic landscape of cityscapes are still relatively under researched and in need of further investigation (Lu et al., 2020). A study revealed that English serves as the dominant multilingual language within a resort, with Indonesian and Manggarai following suit. Moreover, the notable prevalence of diverse languages on multilingual signage has significantly increased, which underscores the economic advantages associated with using English to attract tourists and foreign nationals that foster regional stability and economic growth (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023).

English dominates the linguistic landscape of two major train stations in the Philippines. Although the country is multilingual in nature, English is the preferred code for use within the public areas of stations. The significant impact of American colonization in the past paved the way for the lasting dominance of the foreign language in the country, which proved that Filipinos value English more than the local language (Reyes, 2015).

Similarly, the use of foreign languages such as English plays an essential role in the linguistic landscapes of regional areas. Language provides advantages and benefits that have significant impacts on the cultural, economic and political status of multilingual settings (Motschenbacher, 2020). The use of English continues to gain prominence, as it increases tourist attendance and the number of foreign investors, which provides economic sustainability. However, it provides related information on the preservation of local languages and the culture of the community (Sudarmanto et al., 2023).

A study conducted in Taipei revealed that foreign students often lack awareness of bilingual signs but noted the continued prominence of English alongside local languages (Kroon, 2021). With

the increased urbanization of cities and regions worldwide, urban areas are rich in multilingual and multimodal signage, which promotes diversity and links cityscapes to internationalized regions (Chern and Dooley, 2014).

Thorough studies in urban cities show that the languages that can be found on signs are not representations of the linguistic collections in a particular area but rather are characteristic of the ability of one person or group to influence and the standing of that language in a setting with the association of sociolinguistic reality (Artawa et al., 2020). With the presence and absence of linguistic landscapes in a particular area, the manner in which languages are used and words on multilingual signage simply indicate which language is dominant or non-dominant. As might be expected, linguistic landscapes not only reflect the power relations and standing of languages but are also accompanied by other social elements (Nambu, 2022).

2.3 Significance of multilingualism

Within the hallmarks of education, multilingualism has proposed that there is always a diversity of languages in a given space, whether in academic institutions or cityscapes. A recent study revealed that students have an overall positive attitude toward the languages present within the vicinity while regarding themselves as multilingual. Moreover, the students reported that languages are ways to elaborate and explore the underlying relationship between the importance of linguistic identity and the effective use of language (Pakarinen and Björklund, 2018).

Similarly, the linguistic landscape in the Spanish context revealed the rise of superdiversity that emerged in response to the confluence and convergence of culture and sociolinguistic backgrounds and technological advancements in the New South. The changes highlighted the significant classification of immigrants based on their respective ethnicity and background in a specified region, the capacity to strengthen ties with the existing community and the lack of mastery of the dominant

language in the local setting (Milani and Levon, 2016). The results presented the essential goal of connecting the understanding of language choice and attitudes toward public signage that drive language diversity (Roeder and Walden, 2016).

Recognizing that multilingualism plays a significant role, particularly in the broader spheres of culture and politics, is one of the main components of understanding some intrinsic aspects of human society that are vital for social composition (Aronin and Singleton, 2008).

In parallel, multilingual pedagogies contribute to the production and development of harmonious bilingualism. The emergence of authentic learning environments such as this contributes to the enhancement of bilingual students (Leimgruber et al., 2022). Multilingualism genuinely improves the linguistic awareness of students, which allows them to value their second language. Students' linguistic identities and language repertoires are expanded by the integration of multilingual pedagogies (Carbonara, 2023).

With the increasing prominence of English as a global language, communication practices should not only rely on a single language but also promote diversity and multilingualism in the norm of global communication. English continues to function as the universal lingua franca that is used among individuals from lingua-cultural backgrounds and that effectively adds language to their multilingual repertoire (Rose et al., 2020). Moreover, multilingualism continues to dynamically evolve amidst social phenomena (Tiv, 2020). For diversity and representation to flourish, studies on multilingualism and emotions need to be conducted to specifically highlight its multidimensional background (Sevinc and Mirvahedi, 2022).

Moreover, the language attitudes of teachers toward English have become increasingly important from the perspective of multilingualism. A study showed that when teachers are allowed to communicate and use other languages, beliefs about the effectiveness of multilingualism in teaching significantly change (Gorter and Arocena, 2020).

In the same context, multilingualism is not solely concerned with the languages spoken; rather, it involves diverse cultural, political and social practices (Zhunussova, 2021).

Studies on multilingualism have revealed that individuals are more creative and have more enhanced cognitive functions. In addition, evidence shows that multilingualism and bilingualism are associated with enhanced creativity. Multilingual individuals are generally proven to have richer and more significant multicultural experiences than monolingual speakers (Fürst and Grin, 2023).

2.4 Dimensions of linguistic landscape

The investigation concerning the nature of linguistic landscape encompasses two (2) significant components, specifically: informational function and symbolic function (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). The primary function of signage is to provide and convey information, pertaining to posted and printed words in a linguistic setting. Moreover, the symbolic function generally refers to the linguistic and cultural background of a signage, that can be utilized for representation and preservation of cultural heritage.

Within the confinement of the linguistic landscape, language use is a multifaceted concept. Moreover, analytical categories were developed and supported by the LL model to effectively pinpoint and characterize the nine analytical categories on their multilingual characteristics (Reh, 2004). These categories were used to classify the nature of LL, which includes the following: "*languages contained, language combinations, official and nonofficial signs, geographic distribution, availability of translation or transliteration, code preference, visibility of a sign's multilingual nature, idiosyncrasies, and layering*" (Backhaus, 2007).

The first category identifies what languages are contained within the signage; these signs could be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual in nature. Language combinations are present in signages, which pertain to the various languages that are present and utilized in a single poster, billboard or

canvas. Moreover, signage is then categorized into two (2) separate entities: official and nonofficial signs. Official signs are signs that are produced and owned by the government, whereas nonofficial signs are constructed and distributed by private sectors, such as companies, conglomerates, and business corporations.

The geographic distribution is also considered, as it is the scope of the data gathering procedure and the location of the investigation. Furthermore, the availability of translation generally refers to the presence of an equal definition of a language. The code preference establishes the most frequently utilized language in signage; it can be a local or an international language.

Correspondingly, the visibility of a sign's multilingual nature demonstrates whether a sign is duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping or complementary in linguistic characteristics. Idiosyncrasies refer to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of signage, employing creative and pragmatic appeal to readers. In addition, layering is defined as the presence of languages in signage where they have no apparent connection to each other (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023).

The multilingual nature of signs is utilized as an effective marketing tool to attract more foreign customers and clients. It also symbolizes the prestige and influence held by a language in that locale while also portraying the cultural identity and diversity of its speakers in a multilingual community (Aristova, 2016). Linguistic landscapes have been easily understood as the junction of sociolinguistics, sociology, social psychology, geography, and media studies. (Takhtarova et al., 2015). Sociolinguistics is employed to investigate how languages are perceptibly utilized in multilingual societies. The idea has grown in sociolinguistic studies from the typical focus on groups of speakers to a focus on physical spaces (Stranberg, 2019).

As elucidated by Backhaus (2006), data can be systematically collected within academic premises by examining various types of signage, including billboards, printed canvases, streamers,

advertisements, placards, sheets, and signboards. The presence of languages is significantly determined by certain conditions of various languages that are involved in public spaces (Lado, 2011). The linguistic landscape of nonmetropolitan areas is constantly in the midst of contest for representation, involving local, national, and international languages. These contestations of languages create a diverse cultural and linguistic setting, where efforts to maintain the survival of the language are observed (Beeh et al., 2023).

A study introduced a classification scheme that distinguishes the study of LL into two significant categories: the top-down category and the bottom-up category. The top-down category encompasses official signs employed within public spaces, including those used by government organizations, academic institutions, official announcements, street names, and advertisements related to public services. Conversely, the bottom-up category encompasses the private and commercialized landscape, including signs used by private stalls, shops, resorts, hostels, accessory stores, and commercial advertisements (Li, 2015).

3. Data and method

3.1 Research design

The investigation utilized a descriptive qualitative cross-sectional research design to systematically analyze the prominence of language usage and linguistic identity of signage within an urban cityscape, which are photographs, specifically gathered using a mobile device during the course of the study. The descriptive design is specifically selected for its ability to systematically describe phenomena or communities (Alieto et al., 2024). In this case, it is used to describe and analyze the linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan urban cityscape (Kothari, 2004).

Data collection involves a one-shot procedure using photography, making it cross-sectional (Creswell, 2014). The investigation emphasized systematic and in-depth observation and documentation (Lucas et al., 2023). The collection

of data, analysis of content through texts and photos, and presentation of information using figures and graphs were performed (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). A qualitative research design is the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and the data analysis of a social human problem. In this case, it entails the exploration and analysis of the linguistic landscape and languages present in a nonmetropolitan urban

cityscape (Creswell, 2007).

3.2 Research locale

The study of linguistic landscape investigation is conducted in the city proper of Zamboanga City, Philippines, within a 8-kilometer radius of the urban area. The data were collected to determine the linguistic diversity of a nonmetropolitan cityscape (see **Figure 1**).

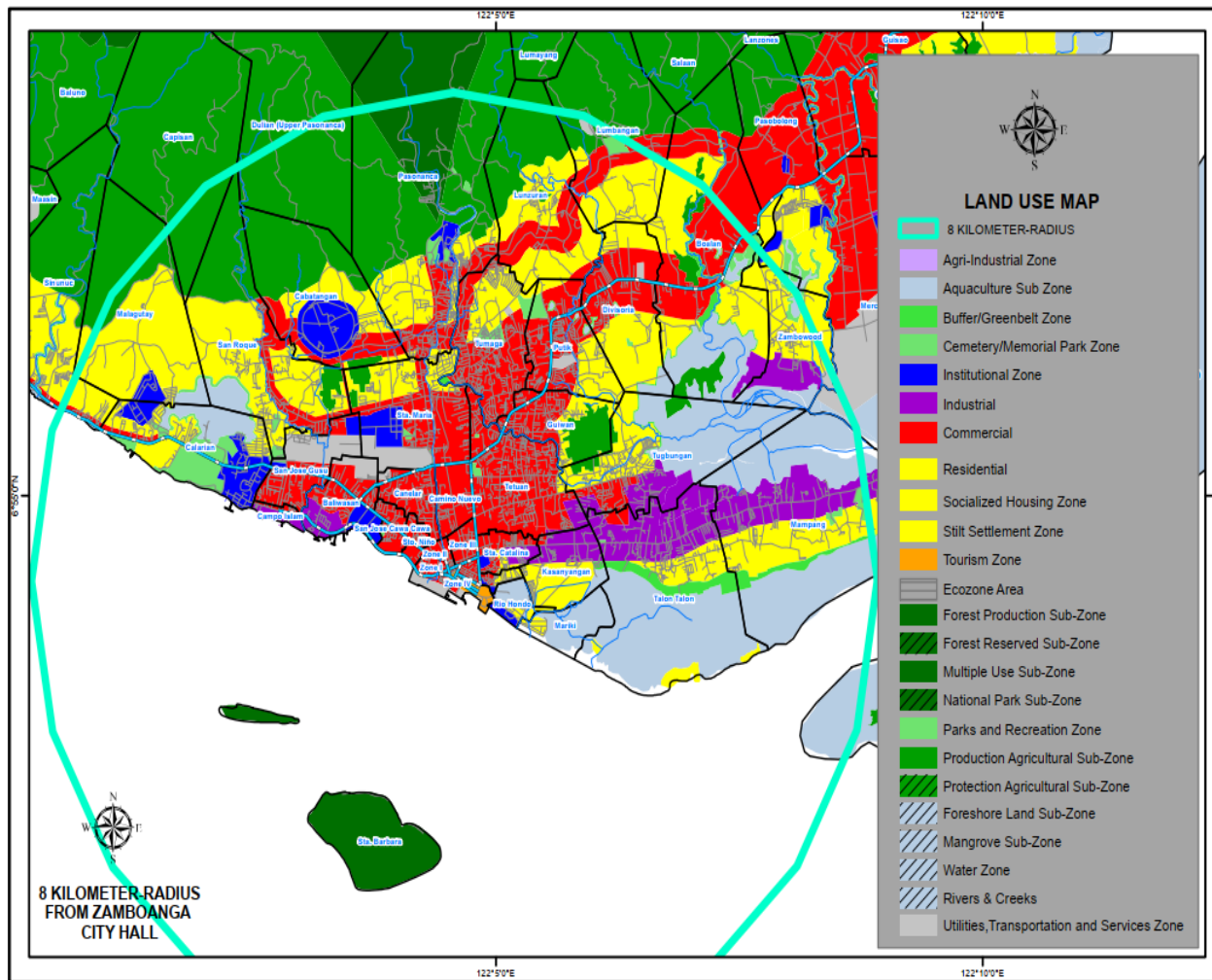


Figure 1. Map of Zamboanga City, Philippines.

Source: Illustrated by the City Planning and Development Coordinator and Courtesy of City Government of Zamboanga.

Zamboanga City, which is situated in an urban location, is the primary focus of this study. Hence, the city's nonmetropolitan status was the main focus of this study. Areas outside of a nation or region's major capital cities are known as nonmetropolitan cities.

Despite being a nonmetropolitan city, this place still attracts foreign customers and international clients, as well as a hub for diverse sociocultural backgrounds, and is considered a pluralistic society, as other cultures are accepted and acknowledged as integral parts

of the local culture despite the dominating culture. Populations in large centers are pushed by human mobility and globalization, through which individuals consistently seek work opportunities, education and housing (Väisänen et al., 2022).

The city is an immensely diverse setting as it is situated outside of both the capital city and the metropolitan area. As a result, it is inevitable that other languages will be spoken in this city and used for communication and information sharing in an effort to promote peace and unity in a region where cultures are convergent. In light of language diversity and representation, it is important to investigate the linguistic identity of cityscapes (Väisänen et al., 2022).

Zamboanga City is a distinctive melting pot of cultures, customs, and nationalities and is home to the urban cityscape. It is essential to recognize this cultural diversity to comprehend the linguistic terrain of a nonmetropolitan location. Language diversity in Zamboanga City is seen in the range of languages spoken, including English, Filipino, Tausug, Chavacano, and Cebuano (Barrios, 2006). The diverse linguistic background of a nonmetropolitan cityscape, which was deliberately chosen for this purpose, is reflected in the large range of languages spoken in this community.

Referred to as “Asia’s Latin City” (Eijansantos et al., 2023) which is well known for its original tongue, Chavacano, a creole with Spanish roots that arose following the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. In the Philippines, Zamboanga City, Cavite, and Ternate are all distinguished by their use of Chavacano as a language of communication (Taylor, 1957).

The city serves as a linguistic hub, with Chavacano as the dominant first language among locals and English as a second language, depending on one’s family background. The dominant language used in the city is Chavacano. It is the sole Creole language left in Asia (Eijansantos et al., 2023) and the only surviving Creole in Asia. This creole has the greatest speaker population and is thought to be thriving and evolving (Lipski, 2001).

This location was chosen on purpose since, in the 20th century, the majority language spoken in

the city was Chavacano. Hence, a lack of linguistic proficiency made it difficult for nonnative speakers to communicate. To accommodate students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including academic institutions, English was not embraced as a universal lingua franca until the early 2000s. Throughout history, English emerged as the standard language for cityscapes (Valles-Akil, 2000).

The majority of the population in Zamboanga City is bilingual (Valles-Akil, 2000). With an estimated population of 977,000, Zamboanga City ranks third among urban regions/cities with the largest land area in the country and fifth among the most densely populated areas in the Philippines. The city is praised for its rich cultural history and varied ethnic population, particularly because residents speak Chavacano, a Spanish-creole language. (Philippine Statistics, 2020). In addition, the city draws workers and students looking for jobs and educational opportunities, which causes a convergence of social, racial, and cultural backgrounds as well as the blending of different languages.

As there is a dearth of information in the literature on this topic, it is necessary to look into and assess the linguistic landscape in urban cityscapes as a multilingual and nonnative English-speaking area. Despite the predominance of English, the goal of this study is to determine whether the local language is linguistically represented in such a culturally diverse and globalized environment.

3.3 Data gathering procedure

To arrive at a logical conclusion of the results, the gathered data were organized and compiled directly from the photographs taken. The collection of data was performed through the process of taking photographs according to the inclusion criteria of 1036 photos taken from the central district of Zamboanga City, which will serve as the research corpus of this study (Kallen, 2009). The researcher utilized a mobile device (cellphone) to capture and gather photographs of public signage, displaying the incorporation of multiple languages.

The gathering of data incorporated analytical

categories for coding reference to determine terms and conditions to consider signage as a potential source of essential data, specifically: “1) *languages contained*; 2) *language combinations*; 3) *official and nonofficial signs*; 4) *geographic distribution*; 5) *availability of translation or transliteration*; 6) *code preference*; 7) *visibility of a sign’s multilingual nature*; 8) *idiosyncrasies*; 9) *layering*.” (Backhaus, 2007).

Similarly, this study applied the following categories excluding the 4th, 8th and 9th variables. The exclusion of this category is grounded on the basis that it does not present any relevance in determining the LL of a nonmetropolitan cityscape, specifically for the following reasons: 1) The exclusion of the geographic distribution variable distinctively asserts from the fundamental objectives and aims of the investigation (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023). Primarily with our study’s nature, which is crucially focused on exploring the linguistic identity within Zamboanga City. The inclusion of this variable, which accounts for numerous factors and variations across multiple settings may provide complexities that might potentially hinder and negatively impact the clarity of the results (Nijman and Wei, 2020).

Furthermore, the collection of the data is directly confined to a single defined area, which is in the city proper of Zamboanga City. Through this exclusion, we are able to provide a consistent and comprehensive investigation that is tightly aligned with the specific context under investigation; 2) idiosyncrasy is a different field of study that focuses on the uniqueness and distinctiveness of signage. Incorporating this variable might pose a challenge for the researcher and could significantly affect the objectives of the investigation. 3) Layering is not the main objective of the study but rather determines the linguistic landscape of a specified scope; hence, it is not applicable to the study.

3.4 Data analysis procedure

The collected data underwent rigorous and systematic analysis, employing the content analysis method to reveal and observe the underlying patterns

and characteristics of languages featured on the various signage scattered throughout the cityscape of Zamboanga City (Neuendorf, 2017). Moreover, content analysis is considered one of the most essential research techniques because it analyses images, texts, and expressions that contribute to meaning and context (Krippendorff, 1989).

Systematically-structured 3D graphs have been created to allow accurate results in analyzing the data that has been collected. The analysis of the multilingual characteristics found in the linguistic landscape items under investigation for this study is presented using multiple graphs as tools. In addition, it includes a variety of other elements, such as the total number of multilingual characteristics found, signage traits, linguistic landscape items, percentage representation, and cumulative total (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023). This methodology guarantees a methodical and thorough examination of the linguistic terrain in the varied atmosphere of the city, enhancing our understanding of language use in this nonmetropolitan community.

4. Results

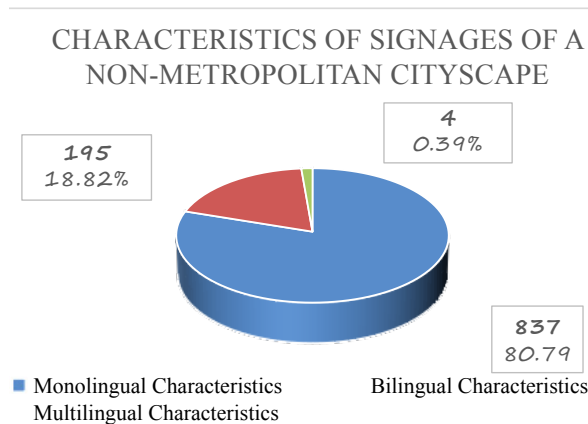
The main objective of this study is to examine the linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan cityscape in a diverse setting. To guarantee a precise and comprehensive examination of the gathered information, the inquiry is based on an inclusion criterion (Kallen, 2009; Backhaus, 2007). The applied criteria served as an essential foundation for preventing mistakes during the data collection procedure. Moreover, the principal data source for the study is based on signs in several languages that are located around the city’s central district. This inquiry will emphasize the representation of local languages and multilingual traits in the nonmetropolitan cityscape.

This investigation incorporated content analysis, adapted from Krippendorff (1989), as the primary method for analyzing the data. Content analysis involves the systematic examination and observation of content that is utilized for various forms of communication. In this regard, the detailed analysis

and interpretation of languages employed within signage. The process aims to explore the underlying themes, nuances, and patterns that are presented within multilingual signage, providing a crucial perception of the language present and dominant language present within an urban setting.

4.1 Contained languages

Graph 1 below presents the linguistic characteristics and nature of signages in a nonmetropolitan cityscape.



Graph 1. Characteristics of the signages of a non-metropolitan cityscape.

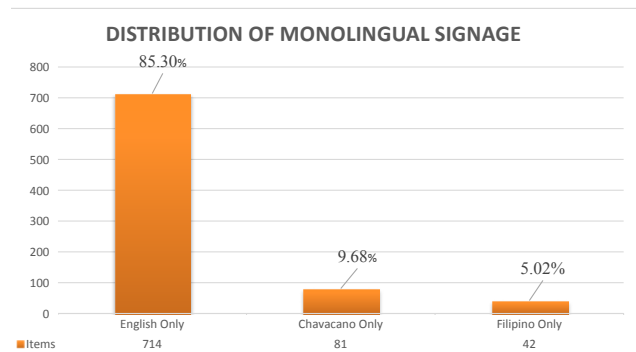
The distribution of languages employed within signage in Zamboanga City, as presented in **Graph 1**, provides significant insights into the linguistic landscape of the nonmetropolitan cityscape. This breakdown reveals a dominant presence of monolingual signage, followed by bilingual signage, and a notably smaller amount of multilingual signage. The results highlight the need to utilize English as the dominant language in signage to attract both international and local consumers/clients, provide instructions that can be understood by the majority, and convey information on a daily basis.

What is genuinely notable is the existence of bilingual signage, which signifies the city's bilingual nature. These bilingual characteristics serve as a reflection of linguistic diversity and cultural complexity within the urban setting. They acknowledge and cater to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of workers, professionals, and students, demonstrating a commitment to

essential representation, inclusivity and effective communication (Clorion et al., 2022)

However, despite the city's advantageous position in a culturally diverse setting and its role as an economic zone and commercial district from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, the utilization of multilingual signage remains limited. There is a notable disparity and inequality of multilingual signage within the cityscape, suggesting that as the city continues to strive for a more globalized and internationalized approach to attract international clientele and boost the economic market, local languages, specifically Chavacano, become decreasingly prevalent among the signage that resulted in the local language not being linguistically and culturally represented within the urban context. Hence, this investigation prompts a significant examination of the extent to which linguistic diversity is adequately represented and incorporated within a cityscape's overall linguistic landscape.

The results suggest the potential for further exploration of cultural and linguistic approaches for enhancing multilingual communication and representation to promote a linguistically diverse environment within the cityscape. The results correspond to the study of Djonda and Madrunio (2023), where most signages employ the use of one language to specifically cater to the needs of international customers and convey significant information and instruction but are limited to the use of multilingual signages in the urban setting. The detailed distributions of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signage are presented in **Graphs 2, 3, and 4**, utilizing images as illustrations.



Graph 2. Distribution of the monolingual signage.

Graph 2 serves as an invaluable source of insight into the linguistic characteristics of monolingual signage situated within the defined research context, specifically nonmetropolitan cityscape. These signs have been methodically categorized into discrete language groups, including English only, Chavacano only, and Filipino only. This categorization is based on their alignment with the predominant languages spoken and employed within signage in Zamboanga City.

The empirical findings derived from the analysis presented in **Graph 2** underscore a remarkable phenomenon—the evident dominance of the English language in the realm of monolingual signage across the entire cityscape. This prevalence highlights, that as cities strive for development and sustainability, it is imperative that international consumers' interests be catered to and met; thus, utilizing the universal lingua franca is inherently observed. Moreover, the results are not only apparent but also substantial, with English occupying the foremost position. Following English in descending order of prominence are the languages Chavacano and Filipino.

These findings convey a compelling narrative: English has asserted itself as the favored and dominant language of choice for monolingual signage within the cityscape's milieu. This observation is consistent with the significant need to utilize signage employing the English language to promote economic growth and attract both tourists and foreign clients, where there is a strategic and deliberate emphasis on the incorporation of English as the medium for communication and means of providing rules and regulations in a specified locale. The increasing prominence of English in cityscape provides a glimpse toward the goal of globalizing and internationalizing the local market (Gorter and Cenoz, 2017).

In essence, the outcomes gleaned from **Graph 2** illuminate a linguistic landscape within the nonmetropolitan cityscape where English not only retains its prominence but also has emerged as the unequivocal dominant language in monolingual signages. This prevalence reflects the city's commitment to the globalization and

internationalization of its economic and market sphere, acknowledging English as a global lingua franca. Furthermore, the descending order of prominence of other languages highlights the intricate linguistic and cultural diversity that pervades the urban setting, with each language playing a unique role in the broader context of representation, economic stability and identity (Aristova, 2016).

The presence of the Chavacano language as the next most preferred language among monolingual signages underscores its significance as the local language in the city. Hence, it is expected that signage employing the Chavacano language should be observed and expected. This presence suggests that despite the dominance of English, the city places great significance and a premium on preserving the use of the local language and its cultural heritage.

The highlights of the city's dedication in acknowledging and conserving the rich linguistic tapestry within Zamboanga and its neighboring regions have to do with the impact of the inclusion of the Filipino language in monolingual signage. This commitment emphasizes the role of providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for citizens and professionals of various language backgrounds. It is also expected that the national language would have a significant presence within the nonmetropolitan cityscape.

The amount of signage employing the local language Chavacano is prevalent, which notably underscores that the local language Chavacano is visually represented within the defined research scope. Although efforts to internationalize a city are highly important for achieving economic sustainability, the importance of cultural and linguistic preservation of its local heritage and language should not be considered (Clorion et al., 2024).

The continued prominence of the English language in signage usage raises concerns about its possible impact on the utilization of local languages within the cityscape. While English serves as a channel for international and local clientele, which makes partnerships with global investors

and companies possible, it also poses challenges regarding the preservation of local languages in the city. A prior study by Djonda and Madrunio (2023) revealed that English remains the dominant language used in cityscape, as it not only provides economic growth but also promotes attraction to tourists.

The presence of many languages in signage highlights the cityscape's support of multilingualism and fosters an inclusive atmosphere that serves residents, employees, professionals, and students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Figures 2 and 3 present the illustrations of English-only signage.



Figure 2. English-only signs



Figure 3. English-only signs.

The research data include two figures, **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**, which offer valuable insights into the monolingual characteristics of signage within the nonmetropolitan cityscape.

Figure 2 presents signage featuring direct instructions to wear the ID properly and explains that it is strategically located within the city proper,

as multiple academic institutions are also situated within the same scope. The primary purpose of this signage is to provide clear instructions to wear IDs within school grounds, and failure to follow this rule will result in denial of entry to the institution. In essence, this sign functions as an educational reminder, encouraging responsible behavior among students. Moreover, by employing the English language exclusively, students and educators alike are sufficiently informed by the message of the signage, which is universally understood by students coming from diverse cultural backgrounds (Beeh et al., 2023).

Figure 3 showcases another English-only signage positioned within the public area of the city in the city's walkways. This sign plays a crucial role in providing information for individuals and businessmen who are looking for apartments or accommodations within the city. The use of English in signage signifies the importance of providing information and instruction to individuals, as it is universally understood among the majority of the population. Furthermore, the use of English, as an international language, provides attraction to not only local citizens but also foreign clients.

The prevalence of English in signage situated in Zamboanga City highlights its significance in the national and global markets. First, the use of English provides understanding regardless of linguistic background. This approach to the use of a foreign language aligns with the city's goal of internationalization.

The second is the language of instruction because the prominence of the English language of instruction and communication in the cityscape is emphasized by the frequent use of the language by signs. Hence, it represents the city's position on the value of English as a teaching language, not only for academic content but also for sustainability and economic growth.

Moreover, effective communication is also one of the implications that explains that signage that is only in English can eliminate any possibility of linguistic difficulties and allow for the efficient and effective

dissemination of important instructions and information. This is particularly important for communicating important safety, rules, and recommendations to the community (Artawa et al., 2023).

Second to the latter is the global perspective, as the English utilized in these signs aligns with the particular goal in global cities, where English is fundamentally used as a medium for internationalization and globalization. The city is a significant component of the international community and market.

Finally, despite the cultural implications of English as a language of unification, it can also give rise to concerns and address questions regarding the preservation of mother tongues or local language and cultural variety within the parameters of the definition. Thus, there should be a balance between the widespread use of English and initiatives to support, value, and respect local languages and cultures. Furthermore, the integration of English in most signages adheres to the aim of attracting international tourists, which is beneficial to local tourism and the economy.

Figure 4 and **Figure 5** provide insights into the prevalence of the Chavacano language within the cityscape, each of which is significant for representing the local language, while providing information and directions.



Figure 4. Chavacano-only sign.



Figure 5. Chavacano-only sign.

Figure 4 presents a Chavacano-only sign containing the word “Hombre”, which means “Male”, in the English translation. This signage is located in Fort Pilar, Zamboanga City, as a means to direct individuals to their distinction of the comfort room. By nature, the Chavacano language provides an essential view of linguistic preservation, as it is associated with cultural aspects. The signage not only represents the local language amidst the prominence of English but is also crucial in highlighting and disseminating directions for local citizens (Grishaeva, 2015).

Figure 5 shows another piece of signage containing the Chavacano language. The symbol portrays the word “Entrada”, which in specific translation is “Entrance”. This signage is located at the entry point of the central district, where it offers parking spaces for motorists and drivers since idle parking on roads and sidewalks is prohibited by the city government (Grishaeva, 2015). This demonstrates a clear direction for individuals who are planning to enter the city and find suitable areas for parking. Furthermore, the signage presents how the local language is utilized to provide essential information while preserving Chavacano through its usage.

These two figures of monolingual signage have key implications: (1) Local Instruction: The choice of language provides local residents and workers with significant information on the sense of direction. (2) Cultural Preservation: The presence of Chavacano in

signage reflects the city's commitment to preserving and promoting culture and languages within the diverse community. (3) Information Dissemination: The main objective of information dissemination is to provide crucial instructions and directions to individuals and local residents within the city proper.

Figure 6 presents a piece of Filipino-only signage located on a street within the city. The sign contains the sentence “Bawal Itapon Basura Dito, Bawal Ihi”, which translates to “Do not throw garbage here. Do not urinate here”. This sign is a direct instruction for individuals and bystanders that throwing garbage, as well as littering and illegal dumping of waste, is strictly prohibited, according to the city ordinance (Grishaeva, 2015). This choice of language is not only logical but also relevant, as Filipino is the national language used in the country, and employing signage containing Filipino ensures that the majority of individuals can comprehend the nature of instruction and notice posts.



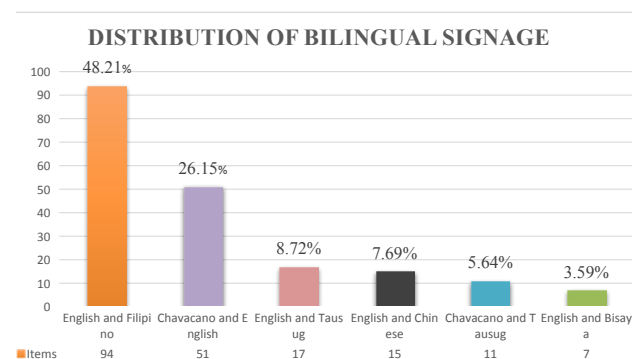
Figure 6. Filipino-only signs.

The use of Filipino signifies the diversity of the linguistic background of a nonmetropolitan cityscape. Although the city houses multiple languages from various sociocultural groups, the representation of the national language is still prevalent and prominent within the urban setting (Artawa et al., 2023).

The sign highlights significant implications: (1) Contextual Relevance: The choice of language to give crucial instructions and notice to the public is contextually appropriate and necessary to ensure a

respectable and immaculate space for all individuals. (2) Inclusivity: By employing the Filipino language in this sign, the city showcases its commitment to inclusivity and acknowledges the linguistic diversity of the community and the notion that, in the presence of Filipinos, individuals who are not familiar with the local languages could still comprehend the basic directions and rules of the city.

Graph 3 presents the distribution of bilingual signage.



Graph 3. Distribution of bilingual signage.

Graph 3 offers crucial insights into the prevalence of bilingual signage use within the cityscape of Zamboanga City. One striking piece of evidence is the substantial prominence of bilingual signages that feature the combination of English and Filipino, accounting for a sufficient number (48.21%) of the total number of signages. This dominance of English and Filipino underscores the significance of both the national and international languages in shaping the economic growth of the cityscape. Moreover, it is noteworthy, especially when the Philippines is a nonnative English-speaking country, that is associated with cultural and linguistic diversity (Clorion et al., 2024).

The second most common combination of language that is observed in the data is Chavacano and English, accounting for 26.15% of the overall bilingual signage. The incorporation of both languages highlights the significance of Chavacano as the local context and cultural identity of the city in facilitating bilingual communication and dissemination of information. It genuinely reflects the cityscape's acknowledgment of the importance

of preserving the local language and its critical implications for the multilingual community.

The employment of bilingual signage in public spaces serves crucial purposes. English and Filipino Signages primarily aim to provide essential information, directions, awareness, and reminders about the multilingual characteristics of residents, including students, workers, and professionals. Simultaneously, the use of the Filipino language in bilingual signage provides an avenue for individuals who are not directly familiar or knowledgeable in utilizing English as a medium of instruction and communication but can comprehend Filipino, which is essential for providing directions and highlighting the rules and regulations that govern an area (Reyes, 2015). The integration of bilingual signage ensures that information is made available and accessible to cater to the needs of individuals regardless of their linguistic competence and background, promoting inclusivity and effective communication.

One noteworthy observation is the presence of various bilingual characteristics in the city's linguistic landscape, such as Chavacano and Filipino, English and Tausug, English and Bisaya, and English and Chinese. The presence of partnerships between local and international languages suggests the linguistic diversity and rich cultural heritage of Zamboanga City in terms of presenting information and directions by employing local languages and acknowledging the linguistic inclusivity and multilingual nature of the urban community (Sudarmanto et al., 2023). The results contradict the previous investigation of Clorion et al. (2024), where there is an absence of bilingual language combinations in the research scope.

Figure 7 presents English and Filipino signage, highlighting the bilingual characteristics of stores and businesses within the nonmetropolitan cityscape. The signage is located outside an outlet of the Palawan Pawnshop. The signage conveys information that this establishment provides service in transferring finances through recipients. The phrase “Pera Padala” serves as a direct notice to individuals, such as students and professionals who

are planning to send or receive finances from/to their respective senders and/or recipients.

The presence of bilingual signage, as presented in **Figure 7**, highlights an important aspect of communication within the cityscape. Both the English and Filipino languages provide specific instructions and relative information, allowing for effective communication with diverse populations (Sudarmanto et al., 2023). In this context, English serves as the primary medium of instruction for general comprehension and communication, while Filipino, as the national language of the country, ensures inclusivity and accessibility for local residents.

Figure 8 presents a Chavacano and English signage portraying the representation of the local language, while employing the assistance of English for added emphasis on the message and notice for individuals. The signage contains the direct instruction “Pabor Numa Buta Basura Aqui”, which is translated to “Do not throw your garbage here”, highlighting the efforts of the city government to maintain the cleanliness and orderliness of the city.



Figure 7. English and Filipino signage.



Figure 8. Chavacano and English signage.

Signages concerning the preservation of beauty and tidiness are common in public spaces, as individuals are regularly reminded that littering is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, since the majority of the population in the city is local residents, the utilization of Chavacano in signage is relevant and provides a universally accepted and understood means of conveying significant instruction.

Despite the growing prominence of English in various aspects, including signage, within the cityscape, the continued use of Filipino and Chavacano is significant. It not only reflects a city's commitment to linguistic diversity and inclusivity but also acknowledges the importance of preserving and promoting the national and local languages (Chern and Dooley, 2014). This dual-language approach caters to a broad spectrum of individuals, accommodating both those who are proficient in English and those who rely on Filipino and Chavacano for comprehension.

Figure 9 shows an English and Tausug signage. This combination highlights the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of the cityscape, with the fusion of culinary and cultural influences in the region. The signage portrays the word "Satti", which is a local delicacy of the Muslim community, and it typically consists of skewered meat, predominantly chicken, that is marinated and grilled to perfection. The word "Satti" on signage underscores the significance of the representation of cultural cuisines and linguistic diversity, promoting and preserving cultural heritage in the urban community.

The use of the English and Tausug languages employed within these bilingual signs is of particular significance. It reinforces the cultural identity of the city and serves as a reminder that despite the increasing use of English within the cityscape, the local culture and heritage remain represented, promoted and preserved. This linguistic diversity within signage not only fosters effective communication but also celebrates the richness of local culture and language (Nambu, 2022).

Figure 10 shows unique bilingual signage, employing the English and Chinese languages.

The signage offers a distinct bilingual nature, as Zamboanga City is not directly related to Chinese culture. The origin of signage utilizing Chinese as a means of instruction is located near the vicinity of the Zamboanga Chong Hua High School, which is a private, nonsecretariat secondary school established in 1919 by Chinese immigrants.



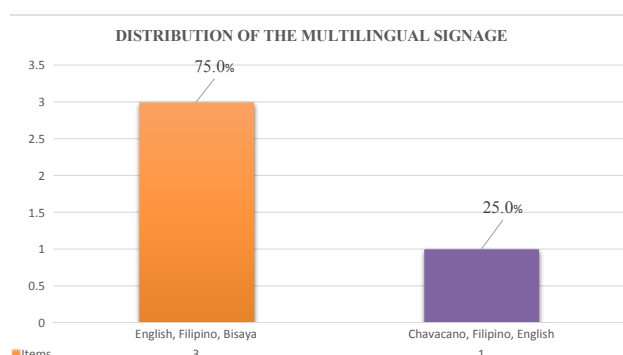
Figure 9. English and Tausug.



Figure 10. English and Chinese signage.

The use of English and Chinese in these bilingual languages underscores the significance of preserving and promoting not only local languages but also foreign cultures that have been established within the city to provide quality and exemplary education to learners and students for decades (Al-Athwary, 2017). Although Zamboanga City evidently does not house native Chinese speakers, its willingness to represent linguistic and cultural diversity celebrates the abundance of local heritage and the opulence of

languages within the cityscape.



Graph 4. Distribution of the multilingual signage.

Graph 4 offers a comprehensive view of the distribution of multilingual signage within the nonmetropolitan cityscape, featuring a combination of English, Filipino, Chavacano, and Bisaya languages. What stands out in this graph is the consistent prominence of English across these multilingual signs, reinforcing its role as a widely understood and recognized language within the diverse linguistic and cultural community.

This investigation highlights the prevailing significance of English as the distinguishing factor among individuals who speak different languages with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, acting as a language gateway for effective communication and information dissemination (Pakarinen and Björklund, 2018). Moreover, English continues to dominate the linguistic landscape of the city, as the language is aligned with the goal of the city government toward internationalization and globalization.

Results indicate the lack of incorporation of multilingual signage within the central district, with the majority of the signage integrating only the use of monolingual and bilingual signage, highlighting a significant disparity in the representation of multilingualism in the urban community. Correspondingly, the results are in parallel with those of a previous investigation, as multilingual signage is not sufficiently represented and established within the cityscape compared to both monolingual and bilingual signage (Clorion et al., 2024).

The data also imply that a significant portion, if

not the majority, of cityscape residents are familiar with and knowledgeable about the English language. This familiarity reflects the internationalized characteristic of English as the universal lingua franca and its prevalence in economic and commercial contexts, aligning with the city's objective of globalization and increased influence in international markets. Moreover, the presence of local languages, specifically Chavacano, Filipino, and Bisaya, in this multilingual setting highlights the city's commitment to linguistic and cultural sensitivity. It prioritizes the access of information to a broad range of individuals, both in local and global contexts.

Multilingual signage, as portrayed in **Graph 4**, underscores its significance in facilitating effective communication and delivery of instructions within the parameters of the nonmetropolitan district. The signage is primarily incorporated within the city to provide clear and comprehensive instructions that cater to diverse citizens from various linguistic backgrounds. Correspondingly, the inclusion of local languages in these signs acknowledges and respects the cultural and linguistic diversity that is evident in the cityscape (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023). This highlights the dedication of the city government to upholding inclusiveness while providing a haven of multilingual diversity.

Figure 11 shows multilingual signage utilizing English, Filipino and Bisaya, highlighting that the sign aims to be universally comprehensible and understood by customers and clients from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The signage typically employs direct translations of English to the Filipino and Bisaya languages to ensure inclusivity and effective communication for individuals who are not familiar with the use of English (Roeder and Walden, 2016). Furthermore, the signage is located outside of pawnshops and establishments where transactions relating to jewelry and finances are regularly conducted.

The word "Tubo" is a Filipino language, and "Lukat" is Bisaya. The signage employs a crucial linguistic fusion between international and

local languages, highlighting the importance of conveying instructions and delivering information. The multiple-language approach caters to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of cityscape, promoting effective communication and universal comprehension.

Figure 12 presents Chavacano, Filipino, and English signage, which offers a distinct focus on the use of both local and international languages, accounting for an overwhelming 75.0% of the total number of signage. This presents the multilingual nature of signage in a diverse multilingual community. The symbol represents the word “Bienvenidos, Barangay De Baliwasan”.



Figure 11. English, Filipino and Bisaya signs.



Figure 12. Chavacano, Filipino and English signs.

The word “Bienvenidos” is a Chavacano word that means “Welcome” in English, highlighting the hospitality and delight of having tourists and visitors enter the nonmetropolitan city. Furthermore, the word “Barangay” is a Filipino word that translates to “District” or “Village”, the use of both the Chavacano and Filipino languages for local residents

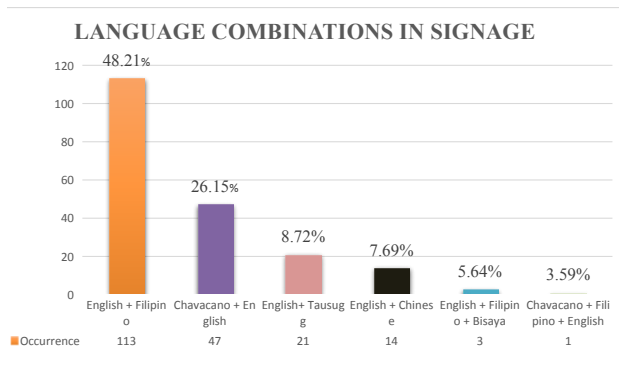
and individuals within the diverse community (Aronin and Singleton, 2008). The English phrase found in the signage is a commercial invitation and marketing strategy to download the application of a mobile network, highlighting the use of English as a means to promote business ventures within the cityscape.

It highlights inclusivity and a sense of acceptance for both visitors and residents. The strategic locations of signage appeal to the linguistic needs of individuals who depend solely on crucial information and directions in daily living (Leimgruber et al., 2022). The combination of multiple languages not only presents an excellent approach and representation of linguistic diversity but also highlights the rich cultural heritage of local languages within the central district.

4.2 Language combinations

As presented in the bilingual distribution of signage, English and Filipino remain the dominant bi or multilingual languages used within signage, while Chavacano is the second most prevalent language employed with bi/multilingual signage. **Graph 5** presents 199 signage items that have language combinations, with English and Filipino having the highest percentage (56.78%) and Chavacano and English having the highest percentage (23.62%).

This illustrates that the authorities, which come from both government organizations and private establishments, are mostly familiar with the languages employed. Furthermore, if the language is mentioned first in the graph, the specific language dominates and is most prominent in the signage, with most of the words found in the signage using that specific language.



Graph 5. Language combinations in signage.

Graph 5 offers crucial insights into the utilization of language in a multilingual context in both bi/multilingual signage within the cityscape area. One of the significant discoveries highlighted in the graph is the evident dominance of both the English and Chavacano languages, signifying the essential representation of local and international languages. Furthermore, regardless of whether the signage employed is bi/multilingual in nature, English consistently outnumbers other languages and emerges as the preferred code used (Landry and Bourhis, 1997).

This observation underscores the significant role of not only the English language but also the prominence of the local (Chavacano) and national (Filipino) languages, which is paramount in the cityscape's strategy for effective communication. English serves as the fundamental medium for conveying information and delivering instructions, ensuring that messages are universally understood across diverse communities of workers, professionals, and local residents. This reflects the global prominence of English as a lingua franca and its importance in fostering economic growth and commercial stability (Shohamy and Gorter, 2009).

Correspondingly, as presented in **Graph 5**, there is an interplay between the languages employed within signage. Multiple forms of signage utilizing various languages often do so in conjunction with the English language. Direct translations can be observed from English signage that accompanies local languages to ensure general comprehension and universal clarity (Leimgruber et al., 2022). Other instances portray languages that simultaneously carry crucial information to deliver more precise

meaning and nuanced instruction. The continued use of bi/multilingual approaches addresses the diverse linguistic needs of a city's multilingual nature while adhering to its goal of providing pertinent information and inclusivity. Furthermore, the prominence of English is directly related to the tendency of language use by individuals and citizens in everyday life within the nonmetropolitan cityscape. This incorporation supports the notion that English is the universal lingua franca, which asserts that English remains to be understood by the majority of the local population; hence, it is expected to be utilized in multilingual signages.

The graph provides crucial insights into the languages that are categorically precedent in bilingual and multilingual signage. The dominant languages English and Filipino consistently stand out as the preferred code for language combinations, with Chavacano and English trailing as the second most prevalent language combination (Leimgruber et al., 2022). Investigations reveal that this aligns with the objective of the city to achieve a globalized and internationalized market for economic growth and sustainability while partnering with the national language to reflect the city's recognition of the integral elements of the nonmetropolitan cityscape.

Figures 13 and 14 present compelling examples of signage employing languages in a bilingual context, combining the significance of the English and Filipino languages. These signs serve as efficient and effective methods for conveying crucial information with regard to government regulations and environmental safety and awareness.



Figure 13. English and Filipino combinations.



Figure 14. Chavacano and English combinations.

Figure 13 shows the combinations of bilingual signage employed in English and Filipino, highlighting the significance of government policies concerning the government's immediate action and response to mitigate graft and corruption within public offices and improve the delivery of services to the general public (Gabriel, 2018). Furthermore, the signage underscores the unconstitutional requirements for documents, forms and unjust delivery of public service.

The use of English-language signage is intended to abolish red tape, which is prevalent in Philippine society, especially in government agencies and departments. The sign's fundamental aim is to raise awareness of the importance of knowing individual rights and the deterrence of unethical and unprofessional services. Employing both English and Filipino languages safeguards the interest in informing broader audiences, including those who may not be proficient in English, and who can still grasp the information (Carbonara, 2023).

Figure 14, on the other hand, utilizes a combination of the Chavacano and English languages to advocate the importance of environmental safety and awareness. The signage contains the message "Agua Limpio—Rio Vivo", which means "Clean Water—Living River", signifying the goal of the city government to maintain and maintain the river in a pristine and immaculate state. Furthermore, the signage also contains another instruction, "No Buta Basura Na Rio", which directly translates to "Do not throw your waste and garbage in the river",

highlighting the mission of the city to preserve the biodiversity of the river.

The use of bilingual signage emphasizes the significance of conveying information that is accessible and comprehensible to individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds to ensure that all citizens are well informed and aware of the situation at hand, as well as to educate the public on city ordinances and corresponding rules (Rose et al., 2020). By employing both the Chavacano and English languages, signage is more effective at increasing awareness and delivering information, which is widely accessible to a broad range of readers.

Figure 15 prominently shows bilingual signage consisting of English and Tausug combinations that are effectively focused on catering to the needs of local residents and foreign customers who are followers of the Islamic faith. The store employed the use of Tausug Language, displaying the word "Hijab", which is a cultural head garment and covering conventionally worn by Muslim women that reflects their modesty and faith. The signage plays a crucial role in catering to the needs of potential buyers that provide economic sustainability while promoting and representing their cultural heritage and beliefs.

The use of both English and Tausug in bilingual signage underscores the significance of cultural and linguistic representation in diverse multilingual contexts. The sign ensures that individuals are accommodated and comfortable using both languages as a means of information dissemination and local marketing (Sevinc and Mirvahedi, 2022). Additionally, the inclusion of Tausug demonstrates the commitment to cultural sensitivity and respect in the diverse linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan cityscape.

Figure 16 shows a bilingual sign outside the premises of the Zamboanga Chong Hua High School that effectively combines both the English and Chinese languages. This sign serves a critical public advisory role, delivering pertinent information and guidance to motorists and drivers. Its main objective

is to convey specific rules and regulations concerning information regarding vehicle parking. By clearly marking areas where parking is prohibited, the sign provides significant assistance in minimizing and preventing potential road obstructions and traffic congestion caused by illegal parking, which can potentially lead to traffic disruptions for both pedestrians and drivers.



Figure 15. English and Tausug combinations.



Figure 16. English and Chinese combinations.

The choice of employing both English and Chinese in this bilingual sign is significant on several fronts. First, it ensures accessibility to a diverse multilingual audience, as English is universally understood and comprehensible by most individuals. Second, it underscores the representation of a foreign culture and heritage that has been established for decades, acknowledging its significance as a local academic institution in Zamboanga City, despite its international origin.

The inclusion of Chinese people in signage demonstrates cultural sensitivity and respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity of the urban community (Pletnyova, 2020). Finally, the bilingual approach enhances the overall effectiveness of the sign by reducing the risk of misinterpretation. The clarity of the conveyed information contributes to road safety and the efficient management of traffic flow at the premises of the school, ensuring order and security.

4.3 Official and nonofficial signs

The investigation highlighted the distinct classification of signage into two separate categories: the top-down category and the bottom-up category. The following classifications are crucial for universal comprehension of the linguistic landscape within the nonmetropolitan cityscape and the corresponding inferences of purpose and ownership (Li, 2015).

The top-down category encompasses government-owned and official signage, which are occasionally located in specific establishments and locations. In the context of nonmetropolitan cityscapes, signage is frequently associated with the implementation of rules and regulations, security policies, and official announcements. Furthermore, top-down signage is characterized by its institutional and authoritative nature, primarily serving as a means to convey information and provide directives to the multilingual and urban community. These signs are informative and narrative in context and specifically cater to professionals, students and local workers.

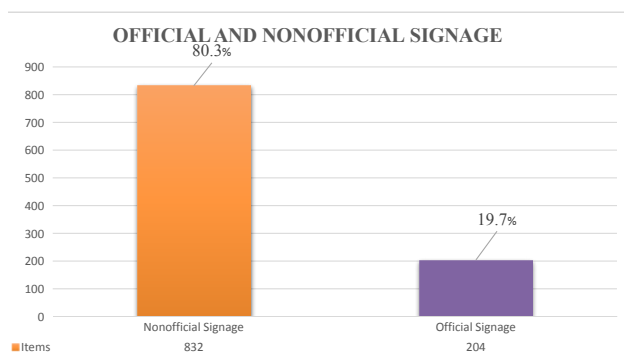
The bottom-up category pertains to signage that is manufactured, produced and owned by private sectors and business corporations. These signals are commercially employed to promote the market sales and economic growth of establishments. The signage is specifically crafted for advertising, promotion, and branding of products and merchandise that are available for purchase and franchise. Bottom-up signage is typically owned by nongovernmental organizations and conglomerates, highlighting the need for economic sustainability.

The findings revealed that cityscape signage is

systematically distributed between the two distinct classifications. Approximately 80.3% of the signage constitutes the bottom-up category, as the majority of the establishments, buildings and infrastructures within the vicinity of the central district are privately owned by companies, corporations and conglomerates operating within the business venture (Fürst and Grin, 2023). This signifies its economic and commercial nature. These signs play an essential role in the promotion of local businesses that support economic growth and stability, as well as the proliferation of the tourism industry in the city.

In contrast, approximately 19.7% of the signage belongs to the top-down category, highlighting their authoritative, informative and official nature. This information is pivotal for information dissemination, the delivery of instructions and rules and regulations. These results contradict those of previous studies in which official signage is more prevalent and prominent within public spaces, contributing to the majority of the overall number of signage (Clorion et al., 2024; Djonda and Madrunio, 2023).

Graph 6 provides a comprehensive analysis of the purpose and ownership of signage within the nonmetropolitan cityscape, classifying between the two categories of official (government-owned) and nonofficial (privately owned) signage. The present results offer insights into the prevalence and dominance of the distinguished nature of signage in the multilingual community. The findings of the investigation are in parallel with the study of Djonda and Madrunio (2023), where the majority of the signage is nonofficial signage, which is significantly more common than its categorical counterpart.



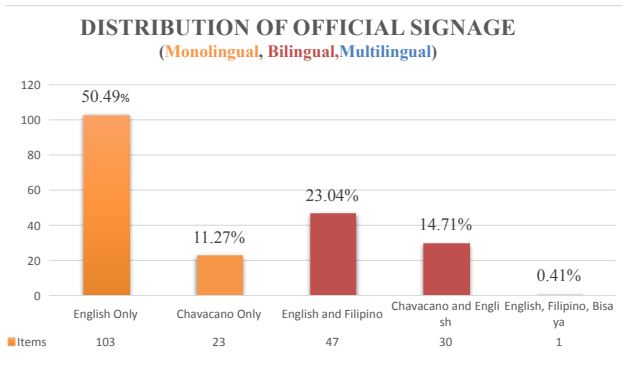
Graph 6. Official and nonofficial signage.

The graph highlights the evident prevalence and dominance of nonofficial and privately owned signage, which constitute a significant portion of the dataset. The findings after thorough analysis are expected, given that the cityscape primarily houses multiple business and shopping centers, which operate within a range of economic, commercial and financial contexts (Byrne and Marcet, 2022). These nonofficial signs are pivotal in supporting local businesses and the economic growth of the city. Both local and national products and services should be promoted to the diverse residents of a nonmetropolitan city.

Official and government-owned signage includes a plethora of advantages within the cityscape. It provides crucial information, directives and instructions. These include institutional regulations, security policies, directional signage and official announcements (Lu et al., 2020). The utilization and incorporation of official signage are indispensable for maintaining peace and order, ensuring security, and conveying essential information to the general public.

The distinguished applications of these two classifications of signage are indispensable and essential. Official and government-owned signs contribute to the effective distribution of guidelines and directives, facilitating information dissemination, ensuring public security, and maintaining an immaculate and pristine environment. Privately owned signs, a separate note, serve the economic interests and endeavors of businesses and commercial enterprises, providing a platform where advertising for both products and services is highlighted and promoted within the cityscape.

Graph 7 displays the distribution of official signage within the scope of the nonmetropolitan city. The signages exhibit monolingual, bilingual and multilingual characteristics. There are significantly fewer official signages than nonofficial signages since the majority of cityscapes are composed of private and business establishments. Monolingual signage is prevalent and utilizes English, which is the most dominant language among official signage.



Graph 7. Distribution of official signage.

The graph also presents a considerable amount of bilingual signage; however, multilingual signage is almost nonexistent in the context of official signage. Despite being less prominent in the cityscape, both bilingual and multilingual signage play essential roles in providing additional support for communication and information dissemination, which is accessible to a broad range of audiences (Benu et al., 2023).

English continues to be the dominant language employed in signage; however, one notable finding is that Chavacano has also been utilized to convey instructions and deliver information within the locale. The results demonstrate the cityscape's preference for promoting diversity and inclusivity by using both international and local languages as the primary medium of instruction in official contexts (Artawa et al., 2020). Being the second language of the country, the use of English provides a universally accepted and understood language that conveys information regardless of an individual's linguistic background.

This highlights that most information, directions and regulations imposed in the central district are conveyed through the use of official signage, utilizing English, Chavacano and Filipino languages, predominantly. This underscores the significance of its design being comprehensible and accessible to the general public, which is a commitment toward effective and clear communication. The decision to select multiple languages to utilize in signage plays a vital role in raising awareness among international and local citizens alike.

Figure 17 shows the official signage located on the sidewalks of the cityscape. The signage utilizes the English language, which provides universal accessibility to information. This signage serves two purposes: it acts as a precautionary sign for motorists and drivers to slow down and minimize speed while driving, especially in the bustling and crowded streets of the central district. The primary objective of this sign is to ensure that safety and security are imposed and well observed by following the rules and regulations implemented by the city government (Benu et al., 2023).

The signage provides safety for bystanders and pedestrians, the majority of whom are students and workers who are crossing the streets. The signage illustrates the need to abide by such rules to maintain and ensure order within the city. This is particularly significant in places where the setting is densely populated. Moreover, by employing this signage, the likelihood and chances of accidents will significantly decrease, which might result in casualties and destruction of property if not properly observed.

Figure 18 displays official Chavacano signage located within the city, which serves as a means to direct flight passengers to the local airport station. The signage is represented by the phrase "Bienvenidos Na Aeropuerto International De Zamboanga", which translates to "Welcome to the International Airport of Zamboanga City". Moreover, the city government decided to utilize the local language Chavacano to preserve and promote the rich cultural and linguistic background of the city.



Figure 17. Official English only sign.



Figure 18. Official Chavacano only sign.

Figure 19 is an official signage, employing both English and Filipino to deliver significant messages and information that can cater to the diverse linguistic needs of readers. This signage is located near a hospital and is posted to raise awareness among couples and families on the health advantages and benefits of family planning, which is advocated by the Department of Health (DOH).

The integration of bilingual official signage provides emphasis and clear information about the importance of undergoing counseling and consultations with respect to family planning. The main objective of signage is to ensure that families are well informed in the manner of building a family and controlling the number of children within a household (Iye et al., 2023). This creates responsible parents who are aware of the consequences and repercussions of unwanted pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, this ensures that the children will grow through proper care, nourishment and education in the hands of capable and mature parents.

Figure 20 illustrates official Chavacano and English signage, providing a constant reminder to keep the environment and vicinity clean at all times. The signage contains the phrase “Limpio Comunidad Lejos na Impermedad”, which directly means “A Clean Environment is a Disease-free Environment”. The signage delivers a crucial message in constantly maintaining the immaculateness and orderliness of the cityscape, as a clean environment promotes a significantly better way of living, especially in a city where the location is densely populated (Mulyawan

et al., 2022). Moreover, the spread of communicable diseases can be minimized and reduced by simply throwing garbage through proper waste disposal.

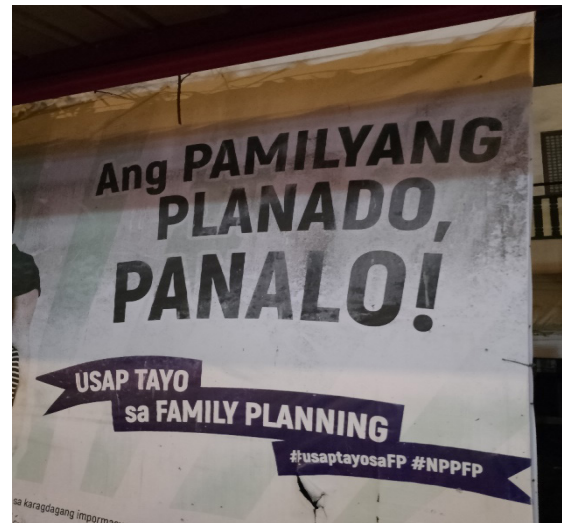


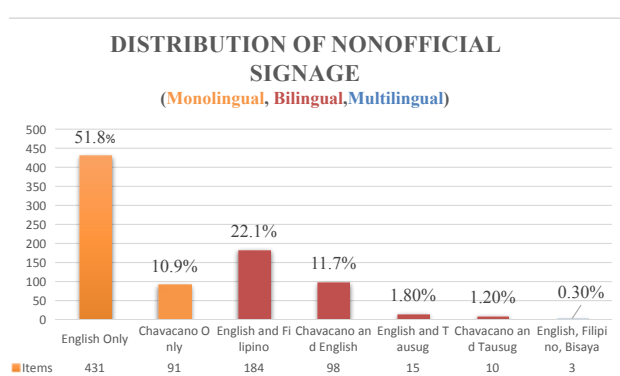
Figure 19. Official English and Filipino signs.



Figure 20. Official Chavacano and English signs.

The inclusion of local languages in official signage highlights the goal of the city government to ensure that the general public is well informed and aware of the programs offered, including family planning and the constant reminder to keep the environment clean at all times (Mulyawan et al., 2022). It recognizes the significance of providing information and instructions that are accessible and comprehensible to those who are not proficient in the use of the English language as the medium for communication.

Graph 8 presents a crucial breakdown of nonofficial signage within the multilingual cityscape, classifying it based on the linguistic nature of its monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual characteristics. The analysis of the data revealed the languages employed in nonofficial signage, which constitutes 80.3% of the total amount of signage in the nonmetropolitan area. The dominance and prevalence of the English language were highlighted, followed by Filipino and Chavacano in this category, reflecting the results and findings shown in the graph.



Graph 8. Distribution of nonofficial signage.

First, the graph underscores the significance of nonofficial signage and reveals that its corresponding characteristics directly belong to the nonofficial category. These nonofficial signs are owned by private sectors, such as business establishments and commercial organizations, or other economic entities operating within the city. These signals play an essential role in advertising and promoting the endorsement of products and services and are also employed for information dissemination (Aristova, 2016).

Correspondingly, nonofficial signages carry multiple languages as opposed to their official counterparts. This provides an implication that the majority of nonofficial signages are constructed and manufactured by local residents and citizens, which primarily aim to advertise and promote their services and products to their fellow local residents. The integration of multiple languages in nonofficial signages underscores that despite its goal to attract international and foreign tourists, its fundamental target consumers are local residents, who are

consistently present throughout the cityscape.

A significant implication of this observation that nonofficial signage is more prevalent and prominent than its counterpart is that the cityscape houses various commercial and private establishments that primarily focus on advertising and endorsing individual products and services to the general public. Moreover, this venture aids in supporting the economic growth and sustainability of the city, potentially attracting both local and international clientele. English is employed because it is a global lingua franca capable of addressing the needs of customers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Beeh et al., 2023).

In **Figure 21**, the signage illustrates nonofficial signage placed within the city proper, primarily intended to advertise and promote their lucrative business of selling appliances, electronic devices and household furniture. Promoting the brand and the commercial establishment itself, including the services offered when purchasing a product. The signage employs English as the language of choice for endorsements, as businesses seek to cater not only to local customers but also to diverse clients from both national and international linguistic backgrounds (Reyes, 2015).

The nonofficial signage highlights the word “sale” to encourage potential buyers to purchase and acquire their products at a discounted price. This offers appealing insight to both local and international customers who are planning to procure excellent products, such as appliances, mobile gadgets and household equipment. Furthermore, within the business domain, signage opts to utilize English, as it provides a strategic approach for attracting both local and international clients. It also provides an essential medium for communication and is capable of reaching diverse clientele (Artawa et al., 2023).

Figure 22 also demonstrates nonofficial signage employing the English language. The signage specifically presents what type of service it offers to its customers; an inn caters to the needs of travelers and tourists who are in need of accommodations

and lodging during their individual stay in the city. Primarily, the inn's major clients and source of annual income are foreign and international personalities who want to experience the city while having no evident issues with shelter (Reyes, 2015). As local residents do not rely on temporary settlements, as they own permanent houses within the city.



Figure 21. Nonofficial English-only sign.



Figure 22. Nonofficial English-only sign.

Figure 23 illustrates nonofficial signage, employing English and Filipino languages, which is installed at the left wing of the South Way Mall situated within the city proper. The primary objective of this signage is to advertise and promote a national food franchise called “Mang Inasal”, a food chain that offers high-quality roasted chicken partnered with unli rice. The signage also portrays the services offered, such as timely delivery of goods, when individuals choose to order the menu via online apps.

The term “nonofficial signage” highlights the phrase “Mang Inasal”, which pertains to a local person and delicacies that are grilled and roasted.

Typically, chicken, beef and pork, while “Sarap ng Bagong Ihaw”, is directly translated to “Deliciously fresh grilled food”. This encourages local residents to continue patronizing and supporting local cuisines, which greatly increases the economic growth and stability of the nonmetropolitan area (Al-Athwary, 2017). Furthermore, the incorporation of the English language signifies its goal to also cater to the needs of international tourists and nationals, who are looking for high-quality meals at reasonable prices (Chern and Dooley, 2014).

In Figure 24, nonofficial signage employs the Chavacano and Tausug languages to promote local business and attract local residents of the city. The signage displays the phrase “Cocina de Lillyana”, which directly translates to “Kitchen of Lillyana”, implying that the business itself is named after either the owner of the establishment or a family member. Moreover, the signage also displays the word “Halal”, which means food that is prepared that is prescribed and accustomed to Muslim beliefs and traditions.



Figure 23. Nonofficial English and Filipino signs.



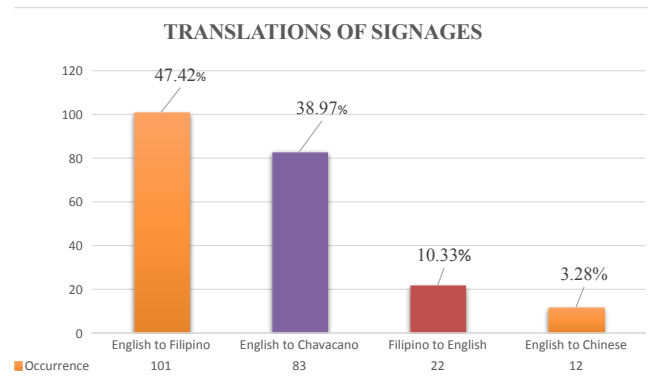
Figure 24. Nonofficial Chavacano and Tausug signs.

The diversity of the signage not only distinguishes its role in catering to the needs of its clientele and consumers but also provides a sense of inclusivity and respect for individuals from various sociolinguistic backgrounds. The employment of the language certifies that the interests and needs of consumers are respected and protected (Sudarmanto et al., 2023).

4.4 Translations

The signage employed within the cityscape contains various translations ranging from local to national languages and international to national languages, and vice versa. This highlights the linguistic diversity of the nonmetropolitan district. Furthermore, English consistently remains the most dominant language. A considerable amount of signage with available translations can be observed in the city, which contradicts the study of Clorion et al. (2024), which revealed insufficiencies in translations of signage. These translations are crucial for international tourists and guests who have no linguistic background in the local or national language of the cityscape, providing inclusivity and access to general information and directions (Lu et al., 2020).

Graph 9 presents significant translations that are observed within the cityscape. English to Filipino translation was revealed to be the most frequent word-to-phrase translation observed in the city (47.42%), followed by English to Chavacano (38.97%), which highlights the importance of the local language when translated to cater to the linguistic needs of diverse individuals. Furthermore, Filipino, followed by English (10.33%), showcased the consistency of the national language in signage and English with Chinese (3.28%). Although Zamboanga City is not inherently known for its Chinese speakers, the integration of these signs underscores the rich linguistic diversity of the city, which is observed not only in business establishments but also in academic institutions.



Graph 9. Translations of signages.

The prevalence of translations is significant in official signage scattered across the cityscape, with the majority employing both English and Chavacano, and vice versa. This highlights the need for international and local translations to promote information dissemination and directions for the general public and foreign tourists. Bilingual signage serves as a means to convey messages and raise awareness to individuals, which are universally comprehensible and understood by individuals, regardless of their linguistic background or language proficiency (Clorion et al., 2024).

Figure 25 highlights a clear example of a bilingual translation utilizing both the English and Filipino languages. The signage conveys the direct instructions of a local gas station on the exclusivity of its parking space, as it is available and accessible only for customers and not for the general public. This approach provides a clear distinction between the benefits of a client and bystanders, ensuring that all customers are well accommodated.

The signage emphasizes the significance of providing translations to provide information and instructions that are accessible to the general public. The use of English continues to dominate the realm of signage and translation, as it is universally understood, and the use of the Filipino language underscores the importance of local languages for citizens who are not familiar with or proficient in the use of English as a medium for communication (Roeder and Walden, 2016).

Figure 26 shows a translation from English to Chavacano, which is employed near the port in

the vicinity of the cityscape. The use of translation represents the unrelenting efforts of the city government to ensure the cleanliness and orderliness of the city by providing clear instructions on proper waste disposal and maintaining an environment free of garbage. By translating the signage from English to Chavacano, local residents are consistently reminded of their duties and responsibilities of maintaining the immaculate state of the nonmetropolitan area while providing environmental awareness for foreign nationals and tourists who are visiting the city (Sudarmanto et al., 2023).



Figure 25. English-to-Filipino translation.



Figure 26. Chavacano-to-English translation.

In **Figure 27**, the signage portrays a bilingual translation from English to Chinese. The instructions on the signage are clear and pertain to the appropriate site for the loading and unloading of passengers within a stipulated timeframe. This is to ensure that the traffic flow is unhindered and therefore causes less traffic congestion around the vicinity of the school premises. Furthermore, the signage is also

translated to provide information that parking within the area is strictly prohibited, which is the leading cause of traffic congestion within cityscapes.



Figure 27. English-to-Chinese translation.

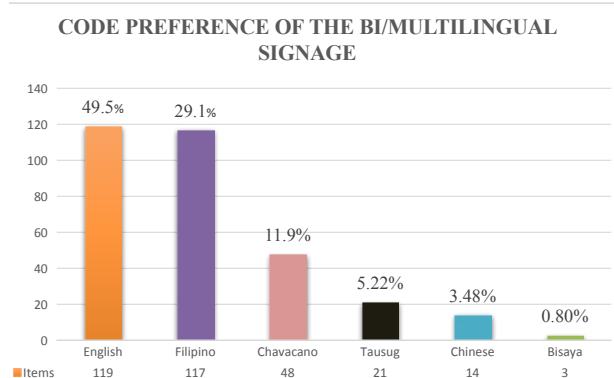
The figures exemplify the city government's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity of information, regardless of cultural and linguistic background. Moreover, the figures exhibit the linguistic diversity present within the nonmetropolitan cityscape, and by providing crucial translations, these figures promote and preserve the rich cultural and historical identity of the city, specifically the significance of the local and national languages.

4.5 Code preference

The code preference category pertains to the number of times and frequency of the languages that occurred and were employed on multiple signage placed across the nonmetropolitan cityscape. The items listed do not accurately reflect the overall quantity of bilingual or multilingual signage, but they measure the number of languages that are repeated and used in a single signage (Sudarmanto et al., 2023).

Graph 10 offers crucial insights regarding the preferred languages within the cityscape of Zamboanga City. The results actively demonstrate the prevailing dominance of the English language as the most preferred code in bi/multilingual signage. The overwhelming prominence of English holds substantial

evidence for the city's goal of globalization, economic sustainability and universal access to information. Moreover, local languages such as Filipino and Chavacano have also gained significant traction in the preferred code of the city, highlighting the importance of preserving the local and linguistic heritage of the cityscape (Pletnyova, 2020).



Graph 10. Code preference of the bi/multilingual signage.

Graph 10 presents the bilingual and multilingual characteristics of code preferences within the nonmetropolitan cityscape. In the study corpus, English remains the most dominant and preferred code in all signages posted within the city proper, followed by the national language Filipino and the local language Chavacano. Furthermore, English is the most prominent language (49.5%), followed by Filipino (29.1%), Chavacano (11.9%), and Tausug (5.22%), followed by Chinese (3.28%) and Bisaya (0.80%). The results and findings reveal that the cityscape highlights the significance of English, Filipino and Chavacano as the fundamental media for communication and is utilized for information dissemination, message delivery and instruction provision. The results are in parallel with the study of Clorion et al. (2024), wherein the code preference follows the same pattern of frequency.

Similarly, while the prominence of English is evident, it is crucial to acknowledge that the presence of other local and national languages, namely, Chavacano, Filipino, Tausug and Bisaya, highlights the cityscape's fundamental goal to uphold inclusivity and linguistic diversity (Lu et al., 2020). The languages reflect the rich and vibrant

sociocultural heritage of cities, which in their respective presence illustrates the ability of speakers to accommodate their linguistic needs. In addition, it is apparent that English is the preferred code in the city, which reflects that the majority of residents and citizens are relatively proficient in the English language. This is portrayed in signage posted across the city for clear instructions and delivery of messages (Li, 2015).

Figure 28 showcases a sign written entirely in the English language, highlighting the preference for English as the universal lingua franca. This signage is located near the emergency room of a hospital, and the choice of words directly reflects that medical instructions and directions are employed in the English language (Grishaeva, 2015). Furthermore, the signage conveys information that this area is for patients who need medical attention and is separate from other patients to avoid the spread of communicable diseases.

Figure 29 provides crucial insights into other signage employing English as the preferred code. It presents a precautionary sign for motorists, drivers and bystanders to keep the lane clear at all times. This is to ensure that when emergencies arise, the route will not be hindered or congested in this manner, providing convenient and efficient access to areas that need immediate response from authorities (Grishaeva, 2015).



Figure 28. English code preference.



Figure 29. English code preference.

The consistent and frequent use of the English language has crucial implications and practical approaches, asserting that the majority of the population of the city is knowledgeable and familiar with the instructions and directions provided. These figures highlight the mission of nonmetropolitan cities to achieve global competence and economic growth through the use of English, where success and sustainability are often associated (Chern and Dooley, 2014).

5. Discussion

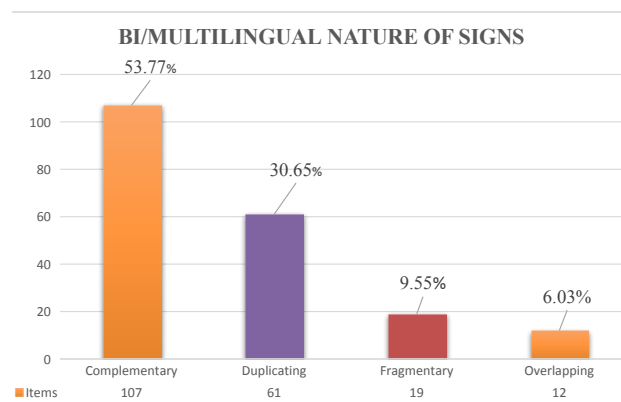
Thorough analysis and observation of the data gathered from the cityscape of Zamboanga City's linguistic landscape offers critical insights into the language present, language combination and multilingual nature of the nonmetropolitan cityscape. Furthermore, the cityscape employs both official and nonofficial signage throughout the cityscape, with the majority of the signage belonging to the bottom-up category, which is privately owned by business establishments. Official signage is also observed throughout the central district, as utilized by government organizations and academic institutions. The findings directly correspond to the strategic location of the city, where commerce and the local market converge to promote economic growth and stability.

Visibility of signs bi/multilingual nature

The signs situated within the cityscape are further classified into two categories, namely, bi/multilingual

characteristics and nature, which are classified into (4) distinct categories, namely, duplicating, complementary, overlapping and fragmentary, as proposed by Backhaus (2007). Furthermore, this classification of the signage highlights the multiple languages that integrate varied information and structures, which are accessible to the general public. This is crucial in further examining the nature of signage in its bi/multilingual form (Reh, 2004).

Graph 11 highlights the prominent bi/multilingual classifications of signage across the nonmetropolitan cityscape, with results indicating that complementary nature is the most prevalent and dominant among the nature of signage. The findings of this study directly oppose the results of Djonda and Madrunio (2023), wherein duplicating signages were the most numerous in the context of bi/multilingual signages.



Graph 11. Bi/multilingual nature of signs.

The complementary nature of signage, according to Backhaus (2007), is the use of various languages to present and deliver information effectively. Furthermore, the results show that complements constitute a substantial 53.77% of the overall bi/multilingual signage, which indicates that the city properly acknowledges the significance of providing information that is accessible and comprehensible to the general public, irrespective of cultural and linguistic background. This is attributed to the fundamental goal of the city government in catering to the needs of not only local residents but also international tourists and guests.

This multilingual approach significantly

aligns with the city's commitment to effective communication and inclusivity, addressing the linguistic needs of individuals who have varying levels of proficiency across multiple languages. Moreover, the prevalence of numerous complementary signs, along with duplicate, fragmentary and overlapping signs, indicates that Zamboanga City acknowledges the linguistic and cultural diversity of its constituents and its corresponding scope. This mission effectively targets accommodating the needs of residents, professionals and guests, who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Chern and Dooley, 2014).

By employing bi/multilingual signage, cityscape envisions bridging the underlying language barriers that are currently present, which facilitates a seamless flow of communication and information dissemination. In addition, complementary signage highlights the need for direct translations and representations of both national and local languages, which creates a welcoming environment that promotes the accessibility of information.

Figure 30 provides an illustration of bilingual complementary signage characterized by the presence of two different languages, Filipino and English. This complementary signage is specifically designed to provide information and messages (Backhaus, 2007).



Figure 30. Complementary signs.

The signage utilizes the Filipino language to advertise and promote the services of ‘TNT’, which is a national telecommunications provider. The language highlights the advantages of purchasing the product. The presence of the Filipino language significantly highlights the importance of local customers, the general comprehension of information

and the preservation of the national language of the Philippines. Moreover, complementary signage is frequently utilized in business and private establishments, ensuring the proficient spread of information regarding their services and products and aiming to establish a stable market through customers and clients.

The line “Simulan Ang Saya” directly translates to “The Fun Begins”, indicating the amount of satisfaction and convenience that it may provide to potential customers and consumers. Moreover, the use of the English language in the signage provides crucial information on the product and underscores the benefits of purchasing a TNT SIM card, namely, 3 GB for online surfing, 3 GB of data access to TikTok and unlimited texts to all networks. The use of English directly corresponds to the aim of catering to the needs of international and foreign clients while promoting the goal of internationalization in the local market.

Figure 31 highlights an example of bilingual duplicating signage, which is distinguished by the direct repetition and definition of a message using different languages, English and Filipino. The signage clearly provides instructions to deter bystanders from loitering in front of a government building. This is to ensure that official transactions and duties are not hindered due to congestion of space and entry. The use of the local language Filipino highlights the need to use a language that is generally understood by the public to provide instructions and raise awareness for individuals and tourists alike.



Figure 31. Duplicating signs.

The duplicating characteristic of signage ensures that individuals can comprehend and access information without any linguistic restrictions or barriers. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of conveying messages and instructions that can easily be understood and eliminate the risks of miscommunication when delivering crucial information is needed (Clorion et al., 2024).

The signage underscores the commitment and respect for diversity by the city government to ensure that all signage is universally accessible and comprehensible. This bilingual approach guarantees that all individuals, whether clients or pedestrians, are informed of the rules and regulations imposed by management. The prominence of signage containing the Filipino language is evident and exemplifies the significance of maintaining and preserving the use of the national language while aiming for globalization and internationalization of the local market.

Figure 32 illustrates an example of bilingual fragmentary signage characterized by the dominance and prominence of a language (Chavacano) and the partial inclusion of information using another language (English). This demonstrates the significance of the message and information in the dominant language used, while the other language provides additional details and specifications (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023).



Figure 32. Fragmentary signs.

The signage predominantly contains the local language Chavacano as its primary content, reflecting the primary employment of the language.

The three-lined phrase in Chavacano translates to “Please notify promptly if there is an Oro jackpot outlet, where the prize of the previous winner has not yet been paid, as the prize is legitimate for claim!” in English. Moreover, the use of Chavacano as the primary language of signage indicates that the majority of its customers and clients are local residents of the city; hence, it is expected that information should be directly disseminated in a language where it is comprehensible and easily understood (Sudarmanto et al., 2023).

The English language is used to portray the names of the organizations, to present the contact numbers listed and to advertise and promote their services. This fragmentary nature of bilingual signage is frequently utilized to highlight and emphasize specific information, concepts and terminologies that are inherently more significant and essential in a specified language. Moreover, the inclusion of English words in signage reflects the need to integrate comprehensible language, regardless of linguistic background (Grishaeva, 2015).

Fragmentary signage offers crucial insights into its innate ability to convey significant and strong messages, ensuring that the primary language is acknowledged and understood. This clearly underscores the importance of conveying directions and messages, especially in the context of finance, where a large sum of money is expected to be released when a winner is rightfully determined. This finding reinforces the need for accessible information that caters to a broader audience.

Figure 33 illustrates multilingual overlapping signage characterized by its ability to employ multiple languages and present different information. The typology and presence of international, national and local languages (English, Filipino and Chavacano) are evident in the same signage, highlighting linguistic diversity but not showcasing the same message, context or meaning (Backhaus, 2007). Moreover, the integration of overlapping signage directly implies that while multiple languages are present, they do not share meaning and context but are connected to form the whole message

of the signage (Clorion et al., 2024).



Figure 33. Overlapping signs.

The signage employed a multilingual approach, with Filipino being the most dominant language present in the signage. Furthermore, this provides an accurate and clear presentation of information and messages that cater to diverse linguistic backgrounds of residents, professionals and tourists alike, which are accessible to the general public. The signage portrays the phrase “Chikiting Ligtas”, which translates to “Safe Children”, indicating the importance of having your child vaccinated against the detrimental effects of Polio and Measles. This incorporation of the national language significantly highlights the need to inform individuals, especially parents, to seek medical care for their children to potentially avoid the effects of the Polio and measles virus.

In this multilingual signage, the English language provides support to the content by displaying the organizations and agencies that support the ventures toward a polio- and measles-free world. The adequate and timely vaccination of children should be encouraged, as it provides added immunity and health benefits that are crucial to the overall development and growth of children. Furthermore, it emphasizes the notion that this mission is not only observed in the country but also a global and internationalized endeavor, ensuring health and safety among all individuals.

The statements in Chavacano also present the

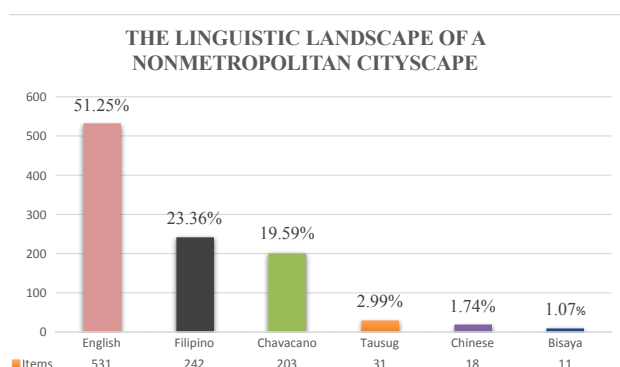
phrase “Progreso y Desarrollo, Servicio Sincero”, which translates to “Progress and Development, Sincere Service”, highlighting the city government’s commitment not only to economic growth and stability but also to providing proficient service in the promotion of health and well-being (Grishaeva, 2015).

The overlapping nature of multilingual signage provides specific advantages in conveying information that caters to a broad range of audiences, irrespective of cultural and linguistic background and language proficiency (Artawa et al., 2023). The results and findings acknowledge the linguistic and cultural diversity of the cityscape through the use of signage that provides instructions and promotes information dissemination, which is not useful for people who are not fluent in the use of the international language (English). Moreover, it is crucial to highlight that Zamboanga City and the city government have ensured that information is made accessible to the general public and that linguistic representation and inclusivity are inherently observed.

The results and findings of the investigation revealed the linguistic diversity of the nonmetropolitan cityscape, where local languages are employed and observed in signage. The local languages are also prevalent and dominant throughout the city proper, with Filipino constituting 23.35%, highlighting its significance as the national language of the country. Closely followed by Chavacano with 19.59%, indicating that despite the dominance of English and Filipino, the local language is adequately represented and observed within the hallmarks of Zamboanga City. Similarly, small amounts of signage were recorded for Tausug (2.99%), Chinese (1.74%), and Bisaya (1.07%).

Graph 12 presents the linguistic diversity of a multilingual nonmetropolitan cityscape, employing a total of six (6) languages across the research scope: English, Filipino, Chavacano, Tausug, Chinese and Bisaya. Moreover, the English language dominates the cityscape’s linguistic landscape, which is evident in the majority of the signage (51.25%). This

prominence highlights the significance of the English in promoting economic growth and stability of the area while attracting foreign clientele and visitors. This is noteworthy, considering that Zamboanga City is a nonnative English-speaking locale. Despite the city's diverse multilingual background, English has emerged as the primary code for communication and information dissemination (Clorion et al., 2024).



Graph 12. The linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan cityscape.

The data highlight the consistent dominance of English, which directly aligns with previous and existing studies, regarding the code preference of English as a medium for communication and instruction, which is observed even in nonnative English-speaking countries (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023; Li, 2015). This prominence of the English language contributes to the city government's goal of catering to the needs of not only its local constituents but also international clientele and guests.

Despite the increasing prevalence of English throughout the city, both local (Chavacano) and national (Filipino) languages are culturally and linguistically represented in signage. With a combined 425 (42.95%) signs scattered within the cityscape, this indicates the city government's commitment to the preservation and promotion of its cultural heritage while continuing its aim toward the internationalization and globalization of its local market. This finding identifies the significance of linguistic representation, which underscores the importance of a language that is generally understood by individuals, regardless of linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The bi/multilingual status of signage within Zamboanga City reveals its commitment to inclusivity and accessibility to general information and directions. The investigation revealed that the city proper is not inherently dominated by monolingual signage but rather employs a considerable amount of bi/multilingual signage in different languages. This ensures that multilingualism is observed and that respect for both cultural and linguistic diversity is evident within the nonmetropolitan cityscape.

Moreover, the results revealed a significant difference between the frequency of the university and the cityscape of Zamboanga City. These findings contradict those of a previous study by Clorion et al. (2024), wherein the majority of the signage was monolingual in nature and utilized the English language as the primary medium for instruction. In addition, there is an evident disparity and inequality in the languages employed within universities compared to cityscape languages. Notably, neither the local (Chavacano) nor the national (Filipino) are linguistically or culturally represented.

The findings of the investigation indicate that English is the most dominant language (95.51%) used in signage at a nonmetropolitan university, with minimal linguistic representation of both local and national languages (Clorion et al., 2024). This underscores the goal of higher education institutions to aim for global excellence and the internationalization of learning, where the trend is to employ language that is universally comprehensible (Rose et al., 2020). Furthermore, by employing only one language to represent the majority of the signage, there is language decay within the university, as no linguistic representation or preservation of either local or national languages is observed.

However, in the case of the nonmetropolitan cityscape, the presence of languages is more common, especially in the local (Filipino) and national (Filipino) languages. Furthermore, English remains the most prominent language but does not represent the entirety of the languages employed within signage, highlighting the significance of

other languages for the delivery of information and preservation of cultural heritage (Sudarmanto et al., 2023). In addition, compared with that of universities, the linguistic landscape of cityscape is not constrained in utilizing monolingual signages but rather employs a considerable amount of bilingual and multilingual signages. This delineates the commitment of the city government, which is separate from the goals of the university, to provide quality and accessible information while genuinely preserving its linguistic and cultural identity.

6. Conclusions

Crucial findings have been revealed in the examination of the linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan cityscape. The number of bi/multilingual signs is evident and prominent throughout the city proper, which stands out as the determining factor of a locale that respects linguistic representation and preservation of its cultural heritage. Moreover, the focus of the city government on internationalization and economic growth is apparent, with English being the most dominant language and employed as the medium for communication (Devanadera and Cortez, 2023). The investigation revealed that the cityscape recognizes the value and significance of multilingual signage, as it underscores the rich culture that is present within Zamboanga City.

The linguistic landscape of the cityscape in Zamboanga highlights its diverse linguistic and cultural background, where multiple languages are adequately utilized and spoken by speakers, both local and international individuals. Furthermore, this investigation aims to analyze and delineate the underlying connection between signage and language within nonmetropolitan cityscapes. Emphasizing its role in providing crucial directions, information dissemination and conveying messages that are universally comprehensible to the general public, regardless of linguistic background.

Furthermore, as the city continues to expand and cater to the international and global market, the continued dominance of English is inherently

observed, with the majority of the signage employing the language to attract foreign clients and visitors. This is specifically observed since cities continually aim to cater to the needs of individuals, not only locals but also foreign and international clientele (Clorion et al., 2024). The use of the English language highlights the city government's commitment to globalization and internationalization (Rose et al., 2020). Moreover, by utilizing the universal lingua franca, information and messages can be conveniently delivered to a broad range of audiences.

Despite the prominence of English in the central district, both the Filipino and Chavacano languages are also observed. This underscores the importance of providing essential information that can be accessed by local residents who are not directly proficient in the use of international languages (Djonda and Madrunio, 2023). This presence of multiple languages throughout the cityscape provides indispensable information on cultural inclusivity and linguistic diversity. In addition, this study sheds light on a city's mission to protect and preserve its cultural heritage (Williams and Lewis, 2021). The number of individuals with monolingual, bilingual and multilingual characteristics, such as Chavacano and Filipino, is high, indicating that local residents continue to value their linguistic and cultural identity.

Other local languages are also observed within the urban setting, which provides a crucial indication that linguistic and cultural diversity is preserved and multiplying in Zamboanga City. However, both Tausug and Bisaya have the least amount of signage, considering that these languages are not inherently dominant and that speakers constitute the minority of the overall population and residents of the nonmetropolitan cityscape. Furthermore, the presence of these languages plays a pivotal role in the representation of individuals who are not entirely familiar with the dominant languages found within the city, thereby promoting the inclusivity of linguistic identity (Clorion et al., 2024). The continued integration of signages containing

local languages contributed to the overall cultural and linguistic development of the city, with the prevalence of English, the local language Chavacano remained linguistically represented.

One important aspect to acknowledge is the presence of the Chinese language in the cityscape, which has English translations and is located in a local academic institution. This is a significant discovery that offers crucial insights into the history and culture of the urban setting, considering that Zamboanga City is not home to Chinese speakers and that less than 2% of the signage is present. Furthermore, the presence of the Chinese language with translations on signage highlights that despite being situated in an area that is evidently dominated by national and local languages, significant signage can still be observed and utilized in the area. Providing additional support on the delivery of information.

Furthermore, the investigation revealed that signages containing multiple languages are well-established within the nonmetropolitan cityscape. This crucial integration of linguistic representation can be attributed to effective language policies that govern the urban landscape of Zamboanga City. Existing language policies ranging from local to the national levels directly influence linguistic representation, language use and the overall prominence of multiple languages in public spaces within the urban setting (Zhang and Shi, 2023). Moreover, the implementation of well-defined language policies will effectively promote both local (Chavacano) and international (English) languages, effectively acknowledging their linguistic influence in the cityscape (Pütz, 2020).

The characteristics of Zamboanga City as a diverse hub of culture and tradition revealed that linguistic identity and cultural representation can directly coexist despite differences. The different languages employed within signage highlight the rich background of the nonmetropolitan city. The goal is not only to promote internationalization and economic growth and stability but also to leave a lasting impression on the importance of maintaining

the local heritage of the city (Gorter and Marten, 2020). The signages employed throughout the cityscape not only provide linguistic representation of the local languages but also a strategic and effective effort toward the preservation of the local languages (Díaz and Switkes, 2021). Despite the dominance of English in Zamboanga City, these efforts remain effective in ensuring a lasting culture and heritage that future speakers will experience.

The results of the investigation provide a clear significance on language policies and efforts toward language preservation. As languages worldwide continue to experience decline, this study offers crucial insights that linguistic representation and preservation can be made possible and effective by strategic employment of signages in public spaces. The study of the linguistic landscape of a nonmetropolitan cityscape will provide crucial and significant data to the literature and studies concerning linguistic diversity and multilingualism within a specific area. Moreover, the results and findings of the investigation will provide future researchers with indispensable data to ensure that studies on linguistic landscapes receive recognition and acknowledgment in the field of sociolinguistics (Blommaert et al., 2020). Furthermore, future studies on LL should consider analyzing and examining prominent tourist destinations and food markets that are evidently diverse in both cultural and linguistic identity.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, FDDC; methodology, FDDC and CLF; software, FDDC and CLF; validation, AD, and EA; investigation, FDDC and CLF; resources, EFDC and EA; data curation, AD; writing—original draft preparation, FDDC; writing—review and editing, FDDC, EA, and AD; visualization, CLF, and AD; supervision, FDDC; project administration, FDDC, EFDC, and CLF; funding acquisition, FDDC, AD, EA, and EFDC. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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