

Linguistic landscape of hotel signage in three Ethiopian linguistic ecologies: choice of language, factors for language choice, and genres of the communicative acts of texts

Dr. Cherie Mesfin Gessesse*

Bahir Dar University, PO Box 79, Ethiopia.

*Corresponding Author: a2080cherie@gmail.com. Ph: +251910985153

Abstract

The present study examined the choice of language, factors for the choice of language and genres of the communicative acts of the texts of hotel signage. Consequently, a corpus of 86 working private hotel billboards was collected from the high streets of three Ethiopian towns. In-depth interviews were also held with 10 hotel owners in Bahir Dar town. The billboards were read, re-read, and categorised either as monolingual, or as bilingual, or as multilingual. Chirstoffersen's (2013) Dynamic Model of Language Choice was used to conceptualise the research constructs. The hotel signage in Bahir Dar town were classified either as Amharic-English or as English-Amharic bilingual billboards which all together accounted for approximately 70.4% of the hotel signposting activities. With few exceptions, the signage in Bahir Dar and Mekele towns was limited to either monolingual or bilingual texts. Some linguistic (number of guests, identity of guests, number of languages, order of languages, and types of languages) and sociolinguistic factors (prestige of languages, instrumental functions of languages, simplicity of communication and quality and quantity of the sales of the services) were found out to underpin the choice of language of the texts of the hotel signage. Finally, many of the texts were found out to be informative and regulatory ones. To achieve the intended communication goals of hotel signage, the use of signs of all forms of texts should overlap with the communication needs of the regions, potential guests as well as the hotel industry.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Public Space, Billboards, Signage and Texts.

Introduction

In contemporary Ethiopia, in many of the urban and semi-urban areas it has become common to observe plenty of hotel billboard texts that are written in varied languages. These signage practices might converge with or diverge from the most commonly spoken languages in a defined linguistic context. Hotel billboards may mean many things to both the business owners and their clients who may or may not share the same public space. The guests could come from elsewhere to buy the services that are being communicated via the textual populations of the hotel signs.

Research has shown that signs: texts have many purposes which might range from mere identification of a physical presence of a business organisation to the advertisement of services, goods (products). For instance, Yahong and Rungruang (2013) contend that these textual populations in the public space have informational, symbolic, mythological, and commercial functions. Yahong and Rungruang (2013) and further argued that the first two functions should be the main priorities of scholars who wanted to study the choice and use of language use in the public arena. As to Yahong and Rungruang (2013), the languages of the signage are keys to communicate the services hotels render to their clients and guests.

In spite of the fact that research has been conducted abroad on shop signs of different kinds (Al-Athwary, 2014; Galgoczi-Deutsch, 2012; Yahong and Rungruang, 2013; Hussein et al, 2015, and Shibiliev, 2014), issues of signposting, especially hotel signposting practices in Ethiopia have not been studied. Local literature is also non-existent on the choice and frequency of languages, genres of the texts, factors for choice of languages and symbolic representations of hotel signage beyond naming. So, the linguistic and sociolinguistic implications of hotel signposting are worth studying. This study, thus, aims to fill the existing knowledge gaps.

The research was carried out to answer the following specific research questions.

- What languages are used to write the texts of the hotel signage?
- How variations could be accounted for the choices and frequencies of the languages that the hotel signs/hotel billboards are written across the three linguistic ecologies?
- What are the factors for the choice of languages of the hotel signage?
- What do the genres of short and long texts of hotel billboards look like?
- What do the hotel names represent beyond naming?

Methods

The present study is hoped to have many-fold advantages to all the stakeholders in the hotel signage. Firstly, the hotel owners will get research insights about the appropriate applications of hotel signposting. Moreover, the hotel owners would become aware of the fact that what they write on the signposts should focus on the quality and quantity of the hotel services. Secondly, it would be of important to hotel guests to get relevant information about the hotel services as being communicated by the signs in use. Thirdly, the hotel managers would be aware about the applications of hotel signposts and could ask themselves how workable signposts are. The study is also anticipated to inspire the office of trade and industry to look for better ways of billboard making. Finally, the study is hoped to arouse attention among interested researchers to conduct further research on the issue.

Having received an ethical approval clearance from the Office of the Research and Community Services of the Humanities Faculty of Bahir Dar University, the researcher photographed and digitalised all the contents of the hotel names and texts of the working billboards of the hotels across the three linguistically varied towns. This study focused on the hotel signage and did not include other signs such as shop signs, street signs and traffic signs which were in plenty in the same public arena. Those hotel billboards which were erected on the major highways and entrance gateways were photographed keeping two major assumptions in mind.

Firstly, the researcher believed that hotel signage was on the increase following the major streets and highways of the towns. Secondly, it was also common to experience an increasing number of billboards of different hotels in the two major gateways of towns: entrance gateways and exist gateways. The billboards of the hotels which were not found in the main streets of each town and that probably erected on the backstreets and side streets of each town were not included. Basically, the billboards in the major streets of each town were targeted. The billboards of the hotels which were found outside the high streets could be small and the signposting practices would not be different from those plenty of billboards that were collected from the high streets. Moreover, one or two of these billboards which might have probably erected on the backstreets and side streets were also thought to be found in the major streets.

The textual population of the hotel billboards collected from the three public spaces did not include any of the hotel billboards that were erected after March 30, 2015. Hotel billboard texts that bore the names of the hotels as well as some of the services each hotel discharged to its guests were collected. After each digitalised text of the billboard was carefully read and re-read several times, it was classified as per the frequencies of the languages each hotel billboard was written. Consequently, each text of a billboard, sign, was classified either as monolingual, or bilingual, or multilingual, or one or more of these ones, and analogues percentages were computed.

The researcher also held in-depth interviews with ten hotel owners and managers to unpack the factors which caused the variations in the choice of languages of the billboards. All the interviews were conducted after informed oral and written consent was obtained from each participant. Each interview

which lasted on average from 15 to 25 minutes was conducted at the manager's office of each interviewee. Almost each hotel owner was employed as a manager for his/her hotel. Agreed-up on interview schedules were made with each informant before researcher conducted all the interviews.

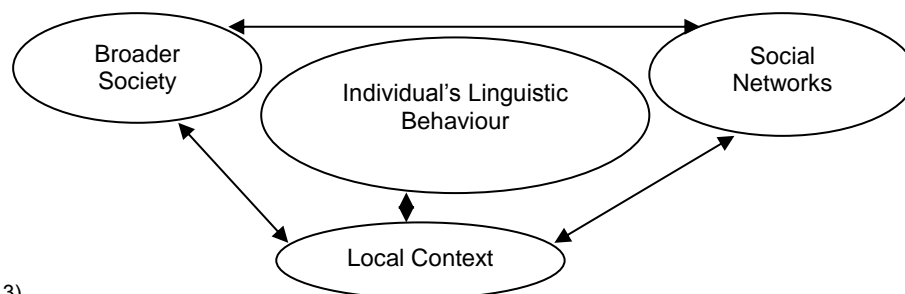
The findings and discussions were made on the basis of the on-the-building and the outdoor texts which were collected from the high streets of the three towns: Bahir Dar, Mekele and Nazreith. Viewed from the Ethiopian Constitution perspective (1994), these three Regional State towns have linguistic and geographic variations. Situated on the southern shore of Lake Tana, Bahir Dar town is located approximately 578 kilometres north-west of Addis Ababa, unlike Mekele, which is placed approximately 780 kilo metres north of the Ethiopian capital. Nazreith town, which is an hour drive to and from Addis Ababa, is located east of the capital and used as a destination for many incoming and out-going tourists.

Overviews of Hotel Signs/Billboards

Hotel signs, which are out there in the public space, communicate different levels of information that might range from indications of the physical locations of the hotels to the quality and quantity of the services which hotels render to their identified as well as assumed guests. In a competitive market, business owners may use a range of modalities such as outdoor signs, indoor signs, multimodal online advertisements, brochures, newsletters and so forth to advertise their services to their customers. Spolsky (2009, p.34) and defined signs by classifying them into 8 classifications: "street signs, advertising, warning notices and prohibitions, building names, informative signs, commemorative plaques, and objects (post box, police call box), [and] graffiti". Hence there exist plenty of signs in all the public spaces of cities and towns; it could be useful to give fuller accounts of hotel signs from the marketing perspectives. The non-paginated electronic version of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) explains that a sign is "a piece of paper, wood, metal that has writing or a picture on it that it gives you information, instructions, a warning etc." This definition seems to be more explanatory because it appears to refer to all the textual populations of a sign of one form, or another. The use of the signs could stand on a continuum of transferring information, for example, where something, i.e., a product or a service could be found (physical presence) to giving other strict warning messages which people should know about things in any of the public arena where they live in permanently, or stay for some time.

Theoretical Framework

Christoffersen's (2013) Dynamic Model of Social Structures (for short, DMSS) was employed. Firstly, it connects issues of language choice that might range from macro-societal level (larger context) to micro-interactional level (individual's linguistic choices). Secondly, the early language choice models such as the Predictive Models (Ferguson, 1959; and Fishman, 1965) were engaged in identifying particular language that is most likely be used in a certain context. Thus, the predecessor models such as Lam's (2007) Multi-agentive model were heavily criticised, for they were inefficient to describe the diverse and multilingual contexts of varied speech communities that used to share the same linguistic space either temporarily, or permanently. Thirdly, this model connects issues of individual language choice with broader state level decisions made by different stakeholders. The latter includes policy makers at the macro levels. Christoffersen (2013) comments that issues of language choice at micro-interactional level date back to Halliday's (1977) Systemic Functional Linguistics. Before Halliday's revolutionary work, linguists used to view language as an object and how language works and what purposes it serves (discursive functions). Though this model is criticised for its quantitative tabulations, it emphasizes the constant movement and influence of various social structures up on one-another.



From: Christoffersen's (2013)

Figure 1: An Ecological Model of Language Choice

Approaches of the study

A descriptive approach was employed to describe the languages chosen to write the texts of the billboards, the variations observed in the choices and frequencies of languages. The factors for language choice and the genres of the texts of hotel signage and the semiotics of hotel names beyond naming were also described. As a quantitative approach, nearly, all the available texts of the hotel billboards were collected through a digital camera from three linguistic ecologies/towns in March 2015. All the working billboards of the existing hotels, which were erected on the major highways, and entrances as well as exit gateways of these towns, were collected. For one thing, the expansion of hotels follows the major streets and highways of the towns. This happens mainly along the routes of the major highways. For another, it is also common to experience an increasing number of hotel signage in the entrance gateways as well as exist gateways. Equally, the interviews were used to explore the semiotics of hotel signage beyond naming.

A qualitative approach was also conducted to examine the messages which were made the priorities of the short and long texts of the billboards to communicating the quality and quantity of services of the hotel signage. In-depth interviews were held with ten hotel owners to identifying the factors which might cause the variations in the choice of languages of the hotel billboards.

The study focused on three varied linguistic ecologies with the assumption that these towns could constitute the major destinations for varied local, national and international guests. Moreover, these towns are from varied geographical locations in the country and have at least a constitutionally declared linguistic variation. They also serve as transit towns for tourists between Addis Ababa and regional tourist destinations or vice versa. The hotel signage was chosen, for it meant for a larger audience of locals, nationals, and internationals. For example, the guests of shops were assumed mainly to be for locals, so did the other signs. Unlike the other signs in the public space, the possible audiences of the messages of the hotel signs could be heterogeneous. Also, hotels serve as final destinations for all incoming as well as out-going guests of all types than it could have been otherwise.

Results and Discussion

Languages used to write the textual populations of hotel billboards, observed variations and factors for the choice of languages

The hotel signage which was collected from Bahir Dar is discussed first and these were followed by the ones collected from Nazreith town. Successively, the findings of the texts of the billboards which were gathered from Mekele town appeared last. As shown in Table 1, the languages of the texts of the billboards in Bahir Dar town ranged from English-Amharic with one (3.7 %) to Amharic-English bilingual billboards with 16, i.e., 59.3% which were the least chosen languages and the most frequently chosen ones, respectively. In fact, the Amharic-English on-the-building bilingual billboards were also the least frequently used next to the English-Amharic outdoor billboards. However, 8 (59.35%) of the only English monolingual billboards constituted the most frequently written hotel signage subsequent to the Amharic-English ones. Except the only English monolingual billboards which constituted nearly 30 percent of the total signage, all the hotel signage in Bahir Dar town were classified either as Amharic-English or as English-Amharic bilingual billboards.

Table 1: *Frequencies and percentages of the textual population of hotel billboards in three towns*

No.	Research Settings	Nature of billboard	Frequencies of Classified Billboards (f)	Percentages of Classified Billboards (%)	Number of Billboards in Each Research Setting
1	Bahir Dar (Monolingual)	Only English Monolingual	8	29.6 %	27
		Bilingual	1	3.7 %	
		Amharic-English Bilingual Billboards	16	59.3 %	
		Amharic-English Outdoor Bilingual Billboards	2	7.4 %	
2	Nazreith Town (Multilingual)	Only Oromo Monolingual Billboard	2	6.6 %	30
		Only English Monolingual billboards	4	13.3 %	
		Only Amharic Monolingual Billboards	3	10.0 %	
		Oromo, Amharic, Arabic Multilingual Billboard	1	3.3 %	
		Amharic, English, Oromo Multilingual billboard	2	6.6 %	
		Oromo, Amharic, English, Multilingual Billboard	12	40.0 %	
		Oromo, English and Amharic Multilingual Billboard	1	3.3 %	
		Oromo-Amharic Bilingual Billboard	5	16.6 %	
3	Mekele Town (Bilingual)	Only Tigrigna Monolingual Billboards	3	10.3	29
		Only Amharic Monolingual billboards	6	20.7 %	
		Amharic-English Bilingual Billboards	20	68.9 %	
Total Number of Observed Billboards in the Three Towns				100%	86

All together, these types of signage accounted approximately 70% of the signage. In the orders of Amharic-English and English-Amharic, Amharic was frequently used to write varied hotel texts. This could be exemplified by the following on-the-building texts.



Source: Photo taken by the author

(a) On-the-Building English-Amharic Bilingual Billboard of the Ethio-Star Hotel

As could be seen from the placement of the use of the English phrase “ETHIO-STAR HOTEL” and its direct Amharic version “ኢትዮ ስታር ሆቴል”, the English text came first and the direct Amharic version came second, last. Hotel billboards with this placement accounted for the least hotel signage and were rarely observed. This might have been practised due to the constitutional and the de facto right of the Amharic language has to enjoy among many of its speakers in the region—including the public space. Some of specific factors for choice of languages were also captured on the extracts of the interviews. Consequently, a component of the interview held with interview 1, a hotel owner, suggests the placement of the English first, and the Amharic second for the following reasons:

It has become common and customary to write the names of hotels and hotel billboards in English and Amharic. Yeah. We have written the name of our hotel in English and Amharic, for the former is an international language and the latter serves as a federal language as well as a regional language. Yes, we do not have any other reasons for writing it in two languages... Amharic is being spoken by [all Ethiopians] and English is also being used as an international language... First it is written in English and the Amharic version came under it.

Yes, it has become reasonably habitual practice to observe when the names of hotels are written first in English. (Interviewee 1).

As to this participant, the writing of hotel names as well as texts of hotel billboards, signage, in two languages was seen as a common and a customary practice that everyone should be abided by irrespective of the linguistic landscape of Bahir Dar town. In an extended narration made by the same informant, the prestige of the English language and the regional prestige of Amharic were given as justifications for the placement of English first and Amharic second. This could show that the instrumental function of the English language seemed to out-way that of the Amharic.

Interviewee 2 also pointed out that Amharic was chosen; for it was the language of the majority of the locals whereas the English texts were used, for some of the guests were foreigners. Consequently, the use of bilingual texts could avoid communication misunderstandings and confusions which might arise from the use of the only Amharic signage. Texts: 2a to 2e below would recount as common bilingual texts because they accounted for nearly 67% of the hotel signage in Bahir Dar town.

2 (a) On-the-Building Billboard at Blue-Nile Hotel



2(b) On-the-Building Billboard at Grum Gayt Hotel



2 (c) On-the-Building Billboard at Semein Mountains Hotel



2 (d) On-the-Building Billboard at Asinuara Hotel



2 (e) Map of Mount Asinuara (Located in Near West of Bahir Dar Town)



Source: Photos taken by the author

Only English monolingual billboards were also the other most frequently preferred in a non-English linguistic community, Bahir Dar, next to the Amharic-English bilingual billboards. Nearly 30% of the hotel texts were written in English language. In witness to this, the following billboards appeared to be worth looking.

3 (a) On-the-Building Billboard of the Grand Spa and Resort



3 (b) An outdoor Billboard of the Dib-Anbesa Hotel



Source: Photos taken by the author

On the one hand, Interviewee 3 justified that English was used in the signage to ease the assumed communication that hotel owners had with their international guest via these texts. He also claimed that its use went with quality of the services and increment of the sales of the services. Other interviewees also appeared to give converging justifications. On the other hand, interviewee 3 forwarded his argument hierarchically with the functions these two languages. It might be concluded that nearly 70% of the texts were bilingual ones: Amharic-English or English-Amharic unlike only English monolingual billboards which constituted 30 per cent of the signage. This finding supported the findings drawn from the extracts of the interview about the instrumental functions of the English language, for it explained nearly 100% of the signage irrespective of its placement. The English versions could help the hotel owners to communicate with guests from all over the world.

The use of language of the wider communication, number of guests (linguistic) and simplicity of communication (sociolinguistic) were mentioned as factors for the choice of language. In the words of interviewee 5, this goes as:

We use Amharic because the majority of our guests are Amharic speakers. Sometimes, we use also the English one, for some others are foreigners. So, these visitors will not be confused when they come to our hotel to get a range of services... We mainly take into account the majority of our customers who speak Amharic. Next, we consider English speaking guests who sometimes come to our hotel to get different services... Yes, we use to consider the former as our regular guests, too (Interviewee 5).

In Nazreith town, the number and the placement/order of the languages the texts were written found out to be highly disordered. The hotel signage ranged from monolingual billboards, i.e., only Oromo, or only English, or only Amharic monolingual to multilingual billboards such as Oromo, Amharic and Arabic; Amharic, English and Oromo; Oromo, Amharic and English; Oromo, English and Amharic Multilingual Billboards. Of these, the Oromo, Amharic and English multilingual billboards explained almost 12, i.e., 40% of the signage. Arguably, these texts seemed to accommodate the communication needs of locals, nationals and internationals, guests of hotels. The highly disordered nature of signage could bring into questions the very goal of the texts and make difficult the kind of information the consumers could construct from the texts. Even for worse, it would create communication barriers and cause confusion and frustration among assumed guests. More importantly, this finding went against the communicative purposes of the hotel signage and evenness of communication. This situation could be exemplified by the following texts of the on-the-building billboards and outdoor billboards.

Example 1: Only Oromo Monolingual Billboard Written in Ethiopic and Latin, English, Scripts



Example 2: Only Amharic Monolingual Billboards



Billboard I



Billboard II



Billboard III

Example 3: Amharic-English Bilingual Billboard

Billboard I: A Billboard of the Sunshine Hotel Illustrating the Ethiopian Traditional Dish of the 'Kurt', Dish of the Raw Meat and Locally Brewed Beers and Bottled Mineral Waters



Billboard I

Example 4: Oromo, Amharic and English Multilingual Billboard Texts



Billboard I



Billboard II



Billboard III



Billboard IV

Source: Photos taken by the author

Still, Oromo texts were placed first compared with Amharic and English ones which were in the second and in the third, placements, respectively. The English ones were in third; last, placement. Unlike the first placement, these texts were the least preferred to any other ones. The major finding could be that the first placement of the Oromo texts and their frequent incidence could reflect the recurrent linguistic ecologies of Nazreith town as well as the region (Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, 2007). In all its placements, Oromo accounted for approximately 77% of the whole signage unlike the left behind percentage.

The multilingual hotel signage observed in Nazreith town was a unique experience unlike the signage in Mekele and Bahir Dar towns. This finding seemed to go with the findings of Spolsky (2009) who examined the signage in the public places and found that informative and symbolic functions defined all the signage. The signage in Bahir Dar and Nazreith towns appeared to go with the linguistic situation of the research settings. However, this was not true for the signage in Mekele town. In Mekele town, 10.3% of the signposting was found out to be Tigrigna while 21% was only in Amharic. The remaining, 69% of the signage was prepared in both Amharic and English languages with either order. This finding could show that the language of the region, Tigregna, was the least frequently chosen. This could contradict with the cherished statements that are stated in the preamble of the constitution of the Federal State of Tigray (1995). As the case in Bahir Dar, Amharic-English bilingual billboards accounted for nearly 60% of the signage in Mekele town though there appeared to be 9% variation. The hotel signage in Bahir Dar and Mekele was limited to either monolingual or Amharic and English bilingual texts. However, there were variations in the choice, in the order and in the number of the languages used to write texts. This finding might support the research findings of Al-Athwary (2014) who found out that the signage failed to get across the intended message to guests who visited streets of Sana'a' for different purposes and caused frustration and confusion.

Genres of the communicative acts of hotel texts

Frequently observed genres of the texts of the billboards were roughly identified as advertisement texts (texts of quality and quantity of hotel accommodations); regulatory texts (commands and directives); welcome messages and holiday wishes. Partly, these findings appeared to converge with Katz's (2010) research who reported that the signs were useful to reduce consumer search by giving succinct and unambiguous information to consumers.

Texts on accommodations and other hotel facilities

Texts in this classification included some of the *phrasal bilingual* texts included. Amharic texts and their English versions below could exemplify some of the informational texts.

- (1) a. The original Amharic version: “የመስብሰቢያ አዳራሽና ምቹ መኝታ ክፍሎች አሉን?”
b. English translation: “Conference, hotel, Comfortable bedrooms...”
- (2) a. The original Amharic version: “ምቹ የአልጋ አገልግሎት እንሰጣለን?”
b. English translation: “There is a comfortable bed service”
- (3) a. The original Amharic version: “ንጹህ የአልጋ አገልግሎት አለልዎ::”
b. English translation: “There is a clean bed service”

The following Amharic-English bilingual billboards could be cited.

1 (a)



1(b)



1 (c)



1 (d)



Source: Photos taken by the author

Regulatory Texts

Some of the regulatory texts in this genre included directives and commands. Thought deviated it might seem from the major purposes of the hotel signage; informational purposes of the texts, partly, these texts advised heavy drinkers. Also, partly, the same texts restricted the age for drinking and banned those ones below 18 not to drink alcoholic drinks. Other sentential texts banned intoxicated drivers from driving act. Moreover, there were texts on one's drinking intake/quantity restrictions. Below are some of the translated textual populations of these texts.

- (1) a. The original Amharic version: “እባክዎን በኃላፊነት ይጠጡ!”
 b. English translation: “*Drink responsibly!*”
- (2) a. The original Amharic version: “ከ18 አመት በታች ለሆኑ የተከለከለ!”
 b. English translation: “*It is too forbidden to drink for those whose age is below 18!*”
- (3) a. The original Amharic version: “ጠጥቶ መንዳት በህግ የተከለከለ ነው!”
 b. English translation: “*Driving while intoxicated is highly forbidden!*”

Texts on Quality and Quantity of Hotel Services

Announcements on the quality and quantity of the services of the hotels constituted the third genre of texts. Some of these are presented below.

- (1) a. The original Amharic version: “ልዩ የፆም ቡሬ መዘጋጀት መጀመራችንን በደስታ እንገልጻለን!”
 b. English translation: “*We gladly announce that we have started preparing varieties of fasting food.*”
- (2) a. The original Amharic version: “እንደቁርጣችን ተመራጭ ነው ብሬችን!”
 b. English translation: “*Just like our raw meat, our fasting food variety is unique!*”
- (3) a. The original Amharic version: “የላቀ ጣእም፣ የላቀ ቀለም፣ የላቀ ቢራ!”
 b. English translation: “*Unique content, unique colour, unique beer!*”

Semiotics of Hotel Names beyond Naming

In connection with the fifth research question, many of the hotel names were seemed to indicate multiple identities of hotel owners. Girum Gynit Hotel, Assinuarua Hotel, GASA hotel, Adama Ras Hotel, Gojjam Hotel, Homeland Hotel, Axum Hotel and the Semein Mountains Hotel could be mentioned. For example, Assinuarua Hotel was named after the Mountain Assinurua, the birthplace of the male hotel owner. This name was named after Mount Assinuarrua (See p.6 of this Article).

Identifying a particular hotel from some other ones is the overt purpose of naming hotels in particular and naming in general. Yet, many of the hotel names represented anything else that had any form of connection with the identities of the hotel owners: names of hotel owners and place names. Girum Gynit Hotel, Gojjam Hotel, Assinuarrua Hotel, Adama Ras, Homeland Hotel, Dallol Hotel, Ethiopia Hotel and Africa Hotel were names named after the birthplace of the hotel owners as the case was true for the first four hotels. Two of the hotel names in the last four, on the contrary, were actual specific place names (Adama Ras Hotel and Dallol Hotel). Similarly, the last two: Ethiopia Hotel (name of a

country, Ethiopia) and Africa Hotel (name of an African continent) which seemed to represent collective Ethiopian identity and African identity, respectively. Some others seemed to represent local place names, birthplaces of the hotel owners.

In Mekele town, some hotel names were named after famous foreign singers and foreign place names. Whitney Hotel, Milano Hotel and Paris Hotel could be mentioned. This did not include hotel names which seemed to represent common nouns, i.e., specific season such as the Summer Land Hotel in Bahir Dar town and the Sunshine Hotel in Nazreith town. The question is: why do hotel owners opted for using names of specific seasons and the weather? These could constitute possible gaps for further research.

Some other classifications of hotel names seemed to have connections with past historical icons such as leaders of Ethiopia (King of Kings), historical places and governed political administrations. Still, though limited it seemed to be, some of the naming appeared to perpetuate the ideologies of the incumbent Ethiopian government and preserve collective identity. Hidase Hotel, which is roughly translated as “The Renaissance Hotel”, in Mekele town and Tokuma Hotel, which is translated thematically as our unity, in Nazreith town could be cited. Moreover, some of the hotels were named after wild animals: birds and endemic wild animals. The Eagle and the Nyala Hotels could form this category. Some others were also named after locally flown rivers and internationally flown ones, proper nouns. Cases for these could be the Awash National Hotel and the Blue Nile Hotel. There were hotel names which were given names of mountains: the Semein Mountain Hotel and the Eju Gura Hotel. Gura in Oromo means mountain.

Saints’ Days, common nouns, were also given to some hotel names. These stood for specific days and months which particular saints are remembered by the Christian Communion. This is a common religious phenomenon, especially among the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who worship the Saints in their interminable interpretation of a life after death. The St. ‘Arsema’ Motel and St. ‘Kidanmhiret’ Hotel could be mentioned. The specific reasons for hotels with these names might need an in-depth qualitative research to be conducted.

Conclusion and policy implications

Language choice and use in the public space of hotel signage require the attention of language policy makers, for these were found out to have connections with the quality and quantity of the sales of the services and satisfaction of the assumed guests. The choices, orders and the types of the languages used in the hotel signage were practised in line with the existing linguistic and sociolinguistic factors. On the one hand, number of guests, frequency of their visits, languages of the guests and identity of the guests were counted for main linguistic reasons for the hotel signage. On the other hand, the prestige of the languages, their instrumental functions, language of wider communication, simplicity of communication, quality and quantity of the sales of the hotel services, the nature of the assumed hotel services, satisfaction of the guests, nationality of the guests and the status/rank of the hotels were also reported as the main sociolinguistic factors for the observed hotel signage across the three linguistic ecologies. Thus, hotel signage might better be done on justifiable linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural, socioeconomic and business grounds.

Nevertheless, the choices, orders and numbers of the languages of the hotel signage in the three linguistic ecologies were exceedingly disordered. In signage, local languages, language of a wider communication or a link language, national languages, and international languages should be considered. The hotel signage should better be done with those languages which could facilitate the communication needs of the locals, nationals and internationals. It should not be done arbitrarily. Because sign making is both a linguistic and an applied linguistic issue, its utilisation requires multi and cross-disciplinary professionals. Linguists, applied linguists, sociolinguists, market analysts, urban specialist and environmentalists and others concerned should evaluate a sign and its texts from their own perspectives before it is used. Then issues of issuance and approval of a particular sign might come next.

To achieve the intended communication goals of hotel signage, the use of signs of all forms of texts should overlap with the communication needs of the regions, potential guests as well as the hotel industry. It would be informative to use multilingual hotel signage which might better consult the market outcomes of the languages, the intended market of the hotels, effective applications of the texts and the communication needs of the guests to whom the hotel signs are meant for. Communication satisfaction of the guests and the unique sales of the hotels’ services also count for the hotel signage.

References

- Al-Athwary, A.A. H. (2014). Translating Shop Signs into English in Sana'a's Street: A Linguistic Analysis. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*. 4(12), 140-156.
- Chirstoffersen, K.O. (2013). An Ecological View of Language Choice in a Bilingual Program: A Dynamic Model of Social Structures. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*. 28(20), 35-54.
- Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1994). December, 8, Addis Ababa.
- Ferguson, C. A. (1959). Diglossia. In L. Wei (Ed.), *The Bilingual Reader, 2nd Edition* (pp.325-340). London: Rutledge.
- Fishman, J. A. (1965). The Status and Prospects of Bilingualism in the United States. *The Modern Language Journal*. 49(3), 143–155.
- Galgoczi-Deutsch, M. (2012). The Many Faces of One Town: Mapping the Linguistic Landscape of Downtown of Hodmezov Asarhely from Various Perspectives. (pp.232-237). Accessed March 2, 2015 from <http://leto.mgk.u-szeged.hu/RARD/2012-1/42-25.pdf>
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1977). Text as Semantic Choice in Social Contexts. In T. A. van Dijk and J. Petofi (Eds.), *Grammars and Descriptions*. New York: de Gruyter.
- Hussein, R. F., M. Y. Nofal, & A. J. Mansour. (2015). The language of shop signs in Amman: A socio-linguistic study, *International Journal of Educational Research and Reviews*. 3(2), 155-164.
- Katz, A. (2010). Beyond Search Costs: The Linguistic and Trust Functions of Trademarks: Law and Economic Perspective. *BYU L. Rev.* 1555, 1563. Accessed December 2, 2015 from <https://web.stanford.edu/dept/law/ipsc/pdf/katz-ariel-ab.pdf>
- Lam, A. S. L. (2007) The Multi-Agent Model of Language Choice: National Planning and individual volition in China. *Cambridge Journal of Education*. 37(1), 67-87.
- Olive, S.F. & Olive, B.B. (2006). Intellectual Property Law. Olive & Olive, Durham, North Carolina. Accessed December 2, 2015 from <http://www.oliveandolive.com/>
- Population and Housing Census Report of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2007). Proclamation. No. 449/1997.
- Shibiliyev, J. (2014). Linguistic Landscape Approach to Language Visibility in Post-Soviet Baku. *Linguistic Landscape Approach to Language Visibility in Post-Soviet Baku*. Autumn (21): 205-232.
- Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language Management*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- The Constitution of the Federal State of Tigray (1995). June, 19, Mekele Town.
- Turnbull, J. (2008). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Online Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yanhong, M. & Rungruang, A. (2013). Chiang Mai's Linguistic Landscape in Tourist Attraction Areas: A Study on the English Language Use. *The Golden Teak: Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. 19(2): 59-70.