

Restaurant Advertising Signage in Selected Tourist Destinations in Southern Sri Lanka: A Linguistic Landscape Study

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The linguistic landscape is an ever-evolving domain of research since the use of language is constantly modified to communicate with a wide range of audiences for different purposes. Advertising signage plays a key role in linguistic landscape study due to its innovative use of language. In the tourism industry, advertising is a prominent mode of attracting visitors to different travel destinations and places of interest. It is often observed that the language used in these advertisements is rich in a variety of linguistic characteristics that are reflective of dominant cultures and lifestyles in a particular area. In this context, this study examined the restaurant advertising signage in the tourist destinations of Mirissa, Weligama, and Galle Fort in Southern Sri Lanka to investigate the different linguistic features utilized in designating restaurants and their menus displayed outside. Accordingly, 20 restaurant advertisements observed in the selected tourist destinations were photographed and analyzed by adopting a qualitative method. The theories by Landry & Bourhis (1997) and Spolsky & Cooper (1991) were incorporated in examining the salient use of language in the linguistic landscape. The findings revealed that the creative and innovative use of language is prominent in restaurant signage with the incorporation of elements denoting the local culture and different traditions. Vocabulary items and linguistic expressions synonymous with the authentic lifestyle were frequently observed during the study. Burrowing, direct translation, and writing Sinhala terms in English were identified to be the most commonly applied strategies for titling the restaurants and dining spaces.

Keywords: Advertising, Innovation, Language, Linguistic Landscape, Restaurant