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"Island-scape":
Investigating the Multilingual Linguistic Landscape of a Philippine Island

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[*Abstract*]

Many linguistic landscape (LL) studies have been done in the Philippines, but despite its archipelagic nature, there is not much LL research that considers the context of an island. This paper investigates the LL of a Philippine island, with special attention to multilingualism. It focuses on the languages displayed in the signs, top-down and bottom-up signs, their functions, and their materiality. These features are analyzed to describe how the island's LL establishes orders of indexicality. The results show that despite the local language being used in the daily affairs of the locals, English dominates the island's LL. Moreover, the LL is dominated by top-down signs, which, considering their materiality, places the local government in a memorializing and authoritative position, leaving the public voice seemingly suppressed. This study coincides with previous research about the omnipresence of the global English and the preference for majority over minority languages, especially in LL.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, island-scape, multilingualism, minority language, indexicality

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Ⅰ. Introduction

Linguistic landscape (LL) is an area of inquiry in applied linguistics that has gained prominence over the last two decades since its introduction in the late 1990s (Bernardo 2024). In the Philippines, research within this field has also received relatively wide attention from language scholars. Some studies focus on schoolscape (Reintegrado-Celino and Bernardo 2023; Bernardo 2024), churchscape (Esteron 2021), healthscape (Ellaga and Valdez 2020), LL of train stations (De Los Reyes 2014), a town (Luna 2023), or even a protest (Monje 2017), among others. The Philippines is known for its multitude of languages; thus, it serves as a rich context for LL investigations. It is also for this reason, however, that more research must be conducted, specifically in the context of minority languages and linguistic communities. Many, if not most, of these languages are underrepresented in the literature of linguistic scholarship in general and LL research in particular. Much of the work on LL in the Philippines has been done in the context of the metropolitan capital, e.g., a study of a prominent university in Manila (Bernardo 2024) or of Manila Chinatown (Jazul and Bernardo 2017). While there is also a decent number of studies in the context of regional languages (see, for example, Luna 2023; Astillero 2017), they do not (yet) offer a good representation of the huge percentage of minority linguistic communities in the Philippines; some LL studies center their investigation on the use of English in the regional area (see, for example, Cantina 2021). It has been observed that LL research, not only in the Philippines, generally focuses more on urban, rather than rural, settings (Karpava 2024). Moreover, an LL study in the urban capital has shown that English is dominating and othering, silencing, and peripheralizing Philippine languages (Bernardo 2024). Thus, it is worth exploring if this “peripheralization and centralization” (Pietikainen and Kelly-Holmes 2013) is also evident in a rural setting. This study aims to further advance studies on regional, especially minority, languages, particularly through an LL lens.

This study, albeit considering the multimodality of signs, gives special attention to multilingualism in the LL of a Philippine island, a place where a minority linguistic community resides. An island’s

LL, or what is termed in this paper as "island-scape," is a suitable, and arguably necessary context for LL research because an island and its language(s) provide an ideal case for observing language development and language change (or even language death), which are the major research foci of linguistics (Nash 2019). Moreover, the archipelagic nature of the Philippines makes it an interesting (and perhaps compelling) context for island-scape studies. Language change and development can be evident in an island's linguistic landscape, especially since it is a place of contact with outside languages. The penetration of the "global English," for example, provides a rich LL "playground" (Gorter et al. 2019: 498) on an island. This richness can then be capitalized by looking into how the languages "play" especially since minority languages tend to be used less often in signs with a preference for the majority languages (Cenoz and Gorter 2006).

Islands have been the interest of previous LL investigations. Good examples of these are the studies analyzing the LL of the island country Cyprus (Karpava 2024), of the Australian Norfolk Island (Mühlhäusler and Nash 2016) and Kangaroo Island (Nash 2013), and of the Marshall Islands (Buchstaller and Alvanides 2017). In Karpava's (2024) work, she found that while Cyprus is a multilingual country, language status and prestige dictate the visibility of languages in the island's LL. This visibility can be indicative of the languages' vitality, in which the agency of sign creators and owners is a crucial factor. Specifically, the dominance of English relates to the owners giving importance to cultural values and, at the same time, boosting their commercial success. Overall, the cultural identity of Cyprus is constructed due to increased mobility, globalization, and tourist flow.

In a related study, Buchstaller and Alvanides's (2017) findings in their investigation of the Marshall Islands show that there is also a dominance of English in the country's LL. Behind a proposed bill that requires all public signs to be Marshallese-English bilingual—a move that aims for cultural renewal and community empowerment—monolingual English signs dominate, regardless of whether they are top-down or bottom-up. This clearly shows the status of the natural LL "playground" which could be a challenge to the

implementation of the proposed bill in the country.

While studies like Karpava's (2024) and Buchstaller and Alvanides's (2017) show how English dominates other languages, other island-scape studies center on how an island's LL is instrumental in the revival of minority and endangered languages. In the Australian Norfolk Island, Mühlhäusler and Nash's (2016) study shows how the local language Norf'k affords a new instrumental function, i.e., a value-enhancing tool for Norfolk tourism. Norf'k has been regarded as a hindrance to linguistic power, but it is now used to strengthen the flailing tourism of the island. The study demonstrates how the island is viewed through the Norf'k language evolving from "Norf'k 'the language of defiance' to Norf'k 'the language of tourism'" (Mühlhäusler and Nash 2016: 77).

Island-scape studies can also look at place names. In an LL investigation of another Australian island, Nash (2013) analyzed diving site names and how their indexicality relates to tourism. With Kangaroo Island as his research site, his paper speculates that the diving site names serve as pilgrimage locations connected with tourism of particular cultural landscapes. As such, through the names of the diving sites, places are created, remembered, and traveled to.

In the Philippines, there seems to be a paucity when it comes to research focusing on island-scape. One study is Oab's (2016) dissertation on the tourism landscape in the province of Palawan. Focusing on three major tourist destinations—the city of Puerto Princesa and the municipalities of El Nido and Coron—she found that English is prevalent in Palawan's LL, though the local language is also relatively stable and preserved. Moreover, an inimitable identity of the province is constructed through authenticity and mobility observed in the discourse of the landscapes, structured in a non-hegemonic mechanism.

A common point in the island-scape studies mentioned above is their investigation leaning towards indexicality, as observed through the language norms and mobility practices in the islands. Also in an island context, the present study aims to provide an interpretation of the indexicality of the island's LL. With an

emphasis on multilingualism, this paper adopts Blommaert's (2007, 2010) concept of “order of indexicality” as a theoretical framework. In its fundamental sense, indexicality is what a sign points to (as if an index finger). According to Blommaert (2007, 2010), indexical meanings are those that connect discourse to contexts; there are predictable or entailing directions, e.g., language connecting to cultural patterns. Thus, if a sign is in English, a fundamental question may be asked: What does it mean if it is in English? The same question may be asked if a sign is in other(ed) or minority languages. Signs may invoke different social meanings. Blommaert (2005) argues that indexical meanings are ordered and that these ordered indexicalities occur in stratified complexes, with some ranked higher than others. He then forwards the term order of indexicality to mean “a sensitizing concept that should point a finger to (index!) important aspects of power and inequality in the field of semiosis” (Blommaert 2007: 118). Thus, orders of indexicality are stratified patterns often seen as “norms” to which language users (in the case of this study, the creators of signs) orient themselves (Blommaert 2005). Through this orientation, they reproduce such norms in relation to other norms. This reproduction could become manifest in signs where the owner’s social and cultural valuation may be evident; signs could display traces of power and authority—struggles where there are winners and losers. In a macro perspective of the present study, there could be conflicting meanings indexed by an island’s LL, where one could win over the other.

Informed by Blommaert’s (2007; 2010) orders of indexicality, this study investigates the LL of the island of Banton in the province of Romblon in the Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the characteristics of the signs in the LL of Banton Island?
2. How do these characteristics establish orders of indexicality in Banton’s LL?

Ⅱ. Methodology

With the need for studies in regional areas and minority linguistic communities and with the rich multilingual LL "playground" of an island, the small island of Banton in the province of Romblon is chosen as the survey area for this study. The island is a fifth-class municipality with a population of 5,737 people according to the 2020 census (Philippine Statistics Authority 2021). While the island speaks the local language Asi as its mother tongue, it is now a context where multilingualism is evident, which is attributed to language contacts, intermarriages, and the internet (Fabregas 2024). Education also plays a role in multilingualism as English and Filipino are taught in basic education institutions on the island. With its beaches and other attractions, Banton is slowly becoming a small tourism spot, albeit only seasonal (mainly during the dry season). As such, multilingualism could also be affected by this emerging tourism on the island.

To investigate Banton's LL, signs were collected from the island, employing the sampling method of Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: 11), i.e., focusing on the parts of the Banton that have "prolific LLs —that is, where the major commercial activity takes place and the principal public institutions are located." As an "insider" to the community, the researcher has predetermined these areas. Specifically, these include the circumferential thoroughfare of the island (along where the principal institution, the municipal hall, is also located) and major tourist attractions, i.e., beaches (including the roads and paths that lead to them). In the case of the town proper, where multiple streets could complete the "circumferential," only one is included, i.e., the main traffic artery which is also the road that follows "the usual pattern of locals" (Luna 2023: 208) (and by extension, tourists) in traveling around the island. A "count all" (Soukup 2020) procedure of data collection is adopted. This means that the data comprise all signs visible in the defined areas, including mobile signs such as those in waste materials (e.g., wrappers) and "ephemeral signs" (Buchstaller and Alvanides 2017: 70) like parked vehicles. This is to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of the orders of indexicality of the island's LL. Photos of all the signs were taken using a smartphone camera. The data

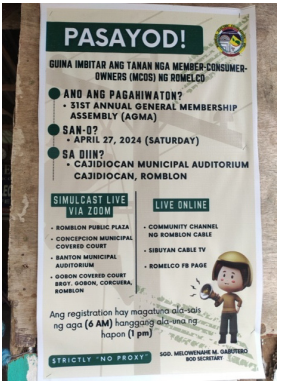
were gathered in the months of May and June 2024, totaling 525 signs.

To answer the research questions, this study analyzes different features of a sign: the languages displayed, top-down and bottom-up signs, their functions, and materiality. First, following Gorter (2007), this study provides a description of the number of different languages in a sign. This part also includes a description of the combination of these languages. Second, the signs are classified as top-down or bottom-up (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006), i.e., signs made by the government or by private entities, respectively. They are then categorized according to their functions. Cook (2013) classifies the functions of signs as locating, attracting, informing, controlling movement and behavior, and servicing. He adds “other” signs which seem impossible to be categorized (e.g., transgressive signs with uncertain meanings). Lastly, the materiality of the signs is described, e.g., whether they are made of metal, paper, or stone, among others. Cook (2015) argues that the materiality of a sign indexes a particular meaning. For example, signs made of metal signify quality and authority. All the codes are considered to ultimately analyze how orders of indexicality are established in Banton’s LL.

Ⅲ. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Languages Displayed

There are a total of 5 languages found in the 525 signs in Banton’s LL. As previously discussed, multilingualism is evident on the island; thus, it is normal for an observer to see signs containing the languages Asi, English, and/or Filipino. Surprisingly, there are two other languages found on the island: Ini, a language spoken in other parts of Romblon (it is also the language in the provincial capital), found on 11 signs; and Spanish, found on three signs. The Ini language is found on similar signs containing an announcement from the island’s electricity distributor, the Romblon Electric Cooperative (ROMELCO) (see Figure 1). The Spanish language is found in different establishments, with the most prominent on an old fortress on the island (see Figure 2).



<Figure 1> Sign with the Ini Language

<Figure 2> Sign in Spanish

There are 422 signs with only one language. An overwhelming number is found on signs containing English (n = 378). This is followed by Filipino (n = 26), Asi (n = 15), Spanish (n = 2), and Ini (n = 1). In bilingual signs, English is also dominant, appearing in 40 signs in combination with Filipino, nine with Ini, eight with Asi, and one with Spanish. There is only one bilingual sign that does not have English: Filipino-Asi. English is also found in all multilingual signs, combined with Filipino and Asi (n = 3), and Filipino and Ini (n = 1). It should be noted that there are signs that do not contain any language at all (n = 40), which include place names and transgressive signs. The frequency of the different languages and their combinations are summarized in Table 1, arranged from highest to lowest.

<Table 1> The Languages Displayed

Languages	Frequency	Percentage
English	378	72
English-Filipino	40	7.62
Filipino	26	4.95
Asi	15	2.86
English-Ini	9	1.71
English-Asi	8	1.52
English-Filipino-Asi	3	0.57
Spanish	2	0.38
Ini	1	0.19
English-Spanish	1	0.19
Filipino-Asi	1	0.19
English-Filipino-Ini	1	0.19

3.2. Top-Down and Bottom-up Signs

As seen in Table 2 below, most of the signs in Banton's LL are top-down: 358 out of 525 or 68%. In relation to languages, English dominates both top-down and bottom-up signs. The number of top-down signs in English is more than twice that of bottom-up signs. In most languages, and combinations of languages (bilingual and multilingual), there are more top-down than bottom-up signs. A case where there are more bottom-up than top-down signs is with Ini-English (the most number). These signs are the same signs that are presented in Figure 1, the ones from ROMELCO. Others include Ini, Ini-English-Filipino, and English-Spanish. 40 signs belong to the "no language" category, with not much difference between top-down and bottom-up.

<Table 2> Top-down and Bottom-up Signs

Languages	Top-down	Bottom-up
English	266	112
English, Filipino	29	11
Filipino	22	4
Asi	11	4
Asi, English	6	2
English, Filipino, Asi	3	0
Filipino, Asi	1	0
Spanish	1	1
Ini	0	1
Ini, English	0	9
Ini, English, Filipino	0	1
English, Spanish	0	1
No language	19	21
Total	358	167

3.3. Functions of Signs

Based on Cook's (2013) classification of signs, Banton's LL is dominated by signs with an informing function, with a total of 358 (68%), which includes all the mobile and ephemeral signs (n = 10). This is followed by locating (n = 61) and controlling (n = 38) functions. In Cook's (2013) discussion, locating signs "shade" into the function of attracting, thus putting both functions in the same category. In this study, while it is true for most locating signs, there are functions that are categorized as purely attracting (n = 3, all

<Figure 3> Sign with Attracting Function

<Figure 4> Controlling and Informing Sign

<Figure 5> Sign with Uncertain Function

bottom-up signs), since they do not have any locating element in them, e.g., as seen in Figure 3. This sign is found on a landscaping project (which of course aims to attract people) made by a particular community. There are also signs that have both informing and controlling functions (n = 36), as in Figure 4. As the sign shows, it controls people's behavior with the "NO LITTERING" heading and, at the same time, informs them of the details should they violate the ordinance. Some signs have uncertain functions, all of which also happen to be bottom-up signs (n = 15). An example of this is seen in Figure 5. While this transgressive sign resembles a phallic figure (with the Asi word for it), the creator of the sign is unknown and so is the intention for making the sign.

Except for the purely attracting and uncertain functions discussed above, all the functions have more frequency in top-down than bottom-up signs. More specifically, most of the functions in top-down signs are more than twice the number in bottom-up signs (see Table 3). There are no signs with a servicing function. According to Cook (2013), service signs are those that provide access to various utilities like manhole covers, fire hydrants, or telephone booths, among others. These utilities are not found in Banton.

<Table 3> Functions of the Signs

Functions	Top-down	Bottom-up	Total
Informing	246	112	358
Locating/attracting	39	22	61
Controlling-informing	34	2	36
Controlling	27	11	38
Locating-informing	12	2	14
Servicing	0	0	0
Uncertain	0	15	15
Attracting	0	3	3

When the functions of signs are placed alongside languages, English dominates all the functions, with informing (n = 259) being the highest. The three purely attracting signs are also in English. English-Filipino bilingual signs come next with 33 informing signs, four controlling-informing signs, two controlling signs, and one locating-informing sign. Third is Filipino with 20 informing signs and six controlling signs. The local language, Asi, has minimal frequencies of functions: seven locating/attracting, six informing, one controlling, and one uncertain. Most bilingual and multilingual signs function as informing.

3.4. Materiality of Signs

The LL of Banton is composed of signs made of 11 different materials, as shown in Table 4. Metal has the highest frequency (n = 114) among top-down signs, followed by concrete (n = 107) and tarpaulin (n = 47). Among bottom-up signs, the most frequency belongs to paper (n = 44), also followed by concrete (n = 33) and tarpaulin (n = 31).

<Table 4> Materiality of Signs

Materiality	Top-down	Bottom-up	Total
Metal	114	12	126
Concrete	107	33	138
Tarpaulin	47	31	78
Wood	42	21	63
Paper	33	44	77
Marble	12	18	32
Plastic	3	3	6
Tree	0	2	2
Stone	0	1	1
Whiteboard	0	1	1
Leather	0	1	1

The category concrete comprises many signs painted on concrete structures (used as a canvas) like what is seen in Figure 6. But there are also those whose concrete structures are specifically made for the sign (see Figure 7). Some of the paper signs are laminated—15 top-down and nine bottom-up. Paper is one of the only two materials that have a higher frequency in bottom-up than

top-down signs. The other one is marble. Many of the bottom-up marble signs contain statements of donation by certain individuals (n = 15) (e.g., Figure 8). While some of these donations contain the names of politicians, they are not categorized as top-down since the donation is not a government initiative per se (they are private donations by the politicians). As also shown in Table 4, bottom-up signs include those that can be found on trees, stone, whiteboard, and leather, while there are no top-down signs with these materials.

<Figure 6> Concrete Structure as Canvas

<Figure 7> Concrete Structure as Sign

<Figure 8> Marble Sign

<Figure 9> Transgressive Concrete Sign

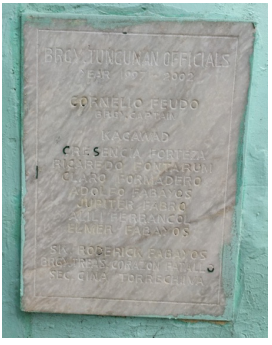
In relation to language(s) used, English is dominant in a great majority of the materials. English is most frequent in signs made of concrete (n = 104), metal (n = 90), and tarpaulin (n = 59), followed by paper (n = 53), wood (n = 38), and marble (n = 29). English-Filipino bilingual signs are most frequently seen in metals (n

= 13) and tarpaulins (n = 12). The 15 signs in the local language Asi are made of wood (n = 8), concrete (n = 5), metal (n = 1), and paper (n = 1). All the other languages and language combinations have a frequency of less than 10. Interestingly, the signs with no language are dominated by concrete (n = 20), followed by metal (n = 9) and wood (n = 5). It should be noted that almost half of the language-less concrete signs (n = 9), like the one in Figure 9 (a name inscription), are transgressive and are concentrated in one small space, most likely made when the structure was being constructed.

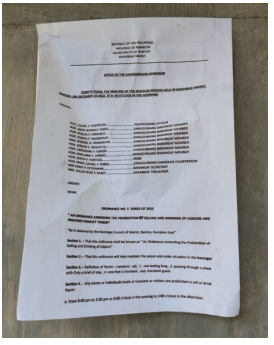
3.5. Establishing Orders of Indexicality

Starting off with the languages displayed in the signs, the LL of Banton gives the impression that the island has a very high preference for English over all other languages. The national lingua franca, Filipino, is 14 times less used in the island’s LL. When compared to the Asi language, English is 25 times higher. Bilingual and multilingual signs would always have English in them, with only one exception (an Asi-Filipino sign). While other languages aside from English and Filipino penetrate Banton, they seem to do so only occasionally, but with the attempt to spread all over the island. In the case of Ini (as in Figure 1), most of the signs appear to be relatively new and are found in many parts of Banton.

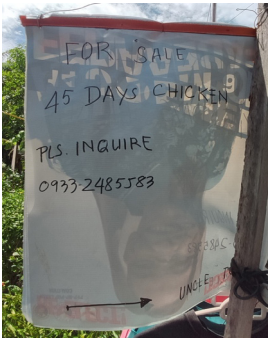
While the people on the island speak Asi, it is rather surprising that only a small minority of the signs are in Asi. This may be attributed to what Gorter et al. (2019: 498) call the “omnipresence of ‘global English,’” or what Cenoz and Gorter (2006) argue regarding the preference of majority over minority languages in signs, that even in small and relatively remote islands like Banton, English also dominates. Ironically, while the norm for Bantoanon people is to use Asi in daily conversations, this norm does not manifest in their LL. Instead, it appears like the norm in making signs is using the English language. While it may be inconclusive to say that this has been the norm for a long time, signs like Figure 10 (presumably a 23-year-old sign, based on the date) could imply so. As such, it can be deduced that the use of English in signs would still continue to be the norm of the Bantoanons.



<Figure 10> Old Marble Sign



<Figure 11> Top-down English Sign



<Figure 12> Bottom-up English Sign

Banton's LL is largely dominated by top-down signs. The number of signs put up by the government is more than twice that of the signs made by private entities. The prevalence of English is observable both in top-down and bottom-up signs. It is clear that English is already firmly established in the island's LL. It is common for the government to put up signs in English, and with it comes the expectation that the consumers of the signs are also adept in the language. To illustrate, in signs like Figure 11 above (an excerpt of an ordinance), an Asi-speaking local may struggle not only with the English language but also with the technicalities of the ordinance. If the purpose of the sign is to inform the public about the ordinance, there could be a good number of individuals who will probably not fully digest the content of the sign. In this sense, the public is obligated to adjust to languages that may not always be something that they speak. And it appears that they have already done so, as evident in the prevalence of English bottom-up signs. It is understood that it is the "public" that creates such signs, thus expecting other members of the public to understand the language(s) used. In Figure 12, the sign caters to Bantoanon customers, given that it is situated only in a small neighborhood, but the use of English presumes the customers' competence in the language.

One might suppose that the dominance of English signs in Banton is to cater to foreign visitors; after all, Banton is becoming a tourist destination. However, majority of the signs demonstrate that they cater to the locals instead, especially if the functions of the

signs are considered. Some signs that seem to serve foreign visitors include the controlling and informing signs and a few direction signs, though they obviously serve the locals as well.

Banton’s LL is dominated by informing signs, most of them top-down and in English (as in Figure 11). Many top-down signs contain information about government projects, especially infrastructures. Signs like Figure 13 can be seen in road widening and farm-to-market road projects. Other top-down signs are similar to what is seen in Figure 7; in the 17 barangays in Banton, it is common to see concrete structures (made specifically for the sign) containing information about the barangay such as the government officials, barangay profile, or mission-vision statements. Surely, signs like these cater less to tourists and more to the Bantoanon locals. In other words, Banton’s LL is largely composed of government signs, as if constantly telling the public of their (omni)presence and declaring that they are in service of the island and the people. As such, the signs seem to “memorialize” government initiatives and public servants. Many signs show the names of barangay officials, if not accomplished projects.

As the government does this, the public also has its own way of leaving a memory. This is seen in donation signs like in Figure 8. Other donation signs can be seen in government establishments like a public school’s concrete fence. In some cases, the public seems to “strike back” at top-down signs, as seen in transgressive signs in Figure 13 (name inscriptions, especially on the left side). This can also be observed in the case of Figures 5 and 9—the vandalism “striking back” at top-down structures.

<Figure 13> Top-down Sign with Vandalism

<Figure 14> Durable Metal Sign

Metal signs such as Figure 13 are the most prevalent among top-down signs. As discussed by Cook (2015), metal signs suggest permanence or durability, newness, or quality. This speaks much about the memorializing signs put up by the government, which could also signify authority. Metal signs indicate that a good budget has been allocated since metal, as compared with other materials, is relatively more expensive. Moreover, the metal signs in Banton appear to have been made by professional sign makers; the intricacy of letters, inscriptions, and logos cannot be done by the average person. Some metal signs are even more permanent—placed on concrete and covered by transparent acrylic (see Figure 14)—thus increasing the quality. Permanence, durability, quality, and authority are also seen on concrete signs, the second most prevalent material. Many top-down concrete signs are notably similar in Banton's LL; as discussed above, signs like Figure 7 can be found in each barangay. The information in these signs (like names of politicians), then, can be firmly ingrained to the public. The third most common material, tarpaulin, also suggests permanence, durability, and quality, but does relatively less so. Interestingly, tarpaulin signs function mostly as controlling, containing local ordinances. Thus, given the quality (and size) of metal and concrete signs as compared to tarpaulin signs, it seems that political names and government projects are given more significance than local rules and regulations. In doing so, English is highlighted as the majority of these signs are written in the language.

If top-down signs display permanence, durability, and quality, the opposite seems to be the case for bottom-up signs, suggesting a less authoritative position. The most prevalent bottom-up signs are those made of paper. While there are efforts to increase durability, like laminating or covering with plastic (see Figure 15), it is not enough for paper signs to last a long time. They fade and deteriorate rather quickly. Thus, paper signs are limited to certain areas where they can be placed; they cannot be exposed to changing weather conditions. Private entities, then, can only do so much with the reach of their sign, and this reach will not be a permanent one, as opposed to the potential of top-down signs to firmly ingrain information. While some bottom-up signs are made of concrete,

they are just inscriptions on an existing structure (thus, quality is not as good as those in concrete-as-a-sign), except for a few like a church sign. Other bottom-up signs are made of tarpaulin (e.g., business advertisements and warning signs by private construction companies), but, again, these are not as durable as metal and concrete; after all, tarpaulins are disposable materials, with some being recycled for a different purpose (see Figure 12). Even less durable and less permanent signs are those in trees (Figure 16) and a big rock (Figure 17), which are all transgressive signs with uncertain functions. They are certainly affected by weather conditions. Moreover, the signs on trees will eventually be outgrown by the tree itself. In general, bottom-up signs suggest a certain level of scarcity in sourcing quality materials, as compared to the well-funded top-down signs. Despite this scarcity, it is notable that English continues to prevail.

Overall, the LL of Banton Island demonstrates an overwhelming preference for the English language. When the local language Asi is used in the signs, they are mostly in materials of less durability, permanence, or quality (like wood), thus less authoritative. Behind the norm of using Asi in the day-to-day affairs of the Bantoanons is the LL norm of using English. These opposing norms lead to the people adjusting to English, as evident in bottom-up signs. These findings are similar to the results of previous island-scape studies showing the dominance of English in an island’s LL (Karpava 2024; Buchstaller and Alvanides 2017).

Despite the emerging tourism of the island, Banton’s LL predominantly caters to the locals rather than tourists. The results show that the local language is not the language of tourism on the island (cf. Mühlhäusler and Nash 2016), given its minimal frequency. Moreover, majority of the signs are owned by the government. This top-down dominance also portrays a memorializing and authoritative position, given the permanence and durability of the signs, to the point of giving less significance to relatively more essential matters like ordinances. While the local public can “strike back” at this position, they can only do so much with limited resources in making the signs.

<Figure 15> Plastic-Covered Paper Sign

<Figure 16> Sign on a Tree

<Figure 17> Sign on a Stone

In conclusion, the orders of indexicality established by Banton's linguistic landscape are highlighted in "voices" given to particular elements of the sign. As demonstrated, English is given the highest voice in the LL, as if silencing the local language. This practice of the sign owners is seen as an ordered meaning (perhaps with a long and complex process of becoming): a norm that is prevalent all over the island. This voice is even amplified by the dominance of top-down signs, leaving the public voice seemingly suppressed in the island's LL.

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