

Title:	Language, Signs, and Little Manila: The role of visual semiotics in constructing diasporic identity among Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong
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Abstract

With a population of 190,000, Filipina domestic workers (FDWs) play a crucial role in supporting Hong Kong families by managing household chores and caregiving. However, their identity is often reduced to their occupation, overlooking their complex experiences and contributions. Therefore, this study explores the construction of FDWs' diasporic identity through the examination of the linguistic landscape (LL) as represented by the language patterns and prominent languages of 305 bottom-up signs displayed in World-Wide Plaza (WWP). More importantly, this research challenges the reductionist narrative surrounding FDWs' identities. The study goes beyond FDWs' perspectives by incorporating the views of local Hongkongers who reported a sense of “foreignness” when seeing signs with Tagalog, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between physical spaces and identity construction. Ultimately, the findings contribute to a more inclusive societal approach that connects the cultural representations, social opportunities, and practical functions of a place in the construction of FDW diasporic identity, promoting a deeper understanding of their experiences in Hong Kong.

Reflection

Like many others, when I was prompted to pick a subject and research it for a semester and then create a real product from it, I was very unsure. Much of my time as a student was spent deciphering theories with little effort in comprehending the practicality and applications of these concepts. I, too, questioned the relevance of my learning. The power of this capstone journey for me was that chance to synthesize the information from the program with my personal experience and perspectives. It provided me the opportunity to take an observation that has been in my mind for a long time and expand it into a fully realized conceptual model through a structured process that kept me both accountable and motivated.

My sincere and heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Prof. Gonzales as a wonderful supervisor for providing me with the guidance and counsel I need to succeed in my capstone project. He has been a great mentor in mapping the journey, advising on a research topic, being available and responding to my emails and questions. Prof. Gonzales' wealth of experience in my area of research interest has been the main driver of this project. Working under his supervision has been very enjoyable and I have valuable lessons that I will carry with me as I transition into a professional career.