

Linguistic Landscape in Foreigner Populated Areas in Western Shizuoka Prefecture

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ABSTRACT

Many Brazilians reside in certain areas of western Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan. The linguistic landscape (LL) of these areas reflects how their language, Portuguese, interacts with the local language, Japanese. However, there is little research on the relationships between the languages in use on display in areas where foreign residents congregate. It is to be expected that Portuguese is often used on signs, posters, and billboards, but it remains unclear what messages are, or are not, shown in Portuguese in these areas. In this study, a database of 5,317 signs was examined, with a particular focus on Portuguese. As a result, the most common multilingual signs were "warnings (e.g., no entry)," "evacuation instructions," "instructions for garbage separation," and "prohibition of illegal dumping." It was found that in areas where there is a high concentration of Brazilian residents, many of the rules and norms of local society are indicated in Portuguese. On the other hand, information that is also necessary for Brazilian residents, such as information about public facilities, was not written in Portuguese.

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic landscape (henceforth, LL) refers to *linguistic information in public space* that can be passively viewed by an unspecified number of people. This study investigates and analyzes the LL in the western part of Shizuoka Prefecture, both in areas with a high concentration of Brazilian residents and in other areas. It is assumed that the amount and quality of the LL in public space of the target areas may affect residents' experience.

The term, linguistic landscape is defined in this paper as (Long, 2010, p.179):

- (1) Written language (e.g., signs, and labels on products in stores), not a spoken language (e.g., radio commercials, train announcements). In other words, it is visual information, not auditory information.
- (2) Written language found in public places (e.g., signs in shop windows), not private communication (e.g., correspondence between individuals, e-mails, etc.).
- (3) An object that is addressed to an indeterminate number of readers (e.g., a poster in a shopping mall), not to a specific individual (e.g., a note taped to a door at home).
- (4) An object that naturally and passively comes into

view (e.g., words used in the headlines of a magazine at a train station newsstand), not an object that must be intentionally read (e.g., an article in a magazine).

While there are many previous studies of linguistic landscapes in tourist destinations visited by large numbers of foreigners (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2009) there have been few studies of residential areas where foreigners live. Saito and Long (2020) conducted a qualitative study of the language landscape in an area with a high concentration of foreign residents called the *Homi Danchi* in Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture in Japan. Since Brazilians account for more than half of the residents in the area, many multilingual signs and several monolingual signs written in Portuguese were observed. Interestingly, the use of Japanese as some temporary loanwords, such as *arubaito* (part-time job), *shaken* (vehicle inspection), and *sougei* (pick-up), were also observed. In addition, some Japanese signs were written in alphabetical characters to accommodate second- and later-generation Nikkei who have difficulty reading and writing both Japanese and Portuguese. Furthermore, after comparing Japanese and other languages in multilingual signs, they were not directly translated, but were adjusted to be more natural. However, the amount of data in this study is limited to 43. To the best of the

author's knowledge, there have been few qualitative studies focusing on foreign residential areas and their surroundings with discussion of who the signs target or for what purpose they were placed.

The purpose of this case study is twofold: first, uncovering the languages used in the public spheres of western part of Shizuoka Prefecture; and second, analyzing the relationship between Portuguese and the other languages present in areas with Brazilian residents and other areas in terms of their content and the languages used.

METHODOLOGY

Based on Nakagawa (2020), foreign-dominated areas can be defined as those areas that meet both of the following criteria: (1) areas with more than 50 foreign residents and (2) areas with more than 10% of all residents. According to *the 2015 National Census Results* released by Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, there were 33 towns and villages in western Shizuoka Prefecture that met the criteria. Of these, *Enshuhama* in Minami Ward, Hamamatsu City (Hereafter, Area 1), *Toshincho* in Iwata City (Hereafter, Area 2), and *Sanarudai* in Naka Ward, Hamamatsu City (Hereafter, Area 3), the top three regions with the highest percentage of Brazilians, were selected as the Brazilian population concentration areas for this survey. The number of residents, number of foreigners, and percentage of foreigners in each area are shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: The number and the rate of foreign residents

Area	Residents	Foreigners	Rate	Code
Enshuhama 1	1,496	184	12.3%	Area 1
Enshuhama 2	1,277	143	11.2%	
Enshuhama 3	1,708	249	14.6%	
Toshincho	1,157	563	48.7%	Area 2
Sanarudai	3,379	541	16.0%	Area 3

There are two methods of data collection in this study. One is the "field survey," in which the author visited the location where the signs can be observed and took photographs of the signs for later analysis. The other is the "web survey," which the author used 360-degree photos available on the Internet, such as Google Street View. The locations of the signs were also mapped in order to understand the features and trends of the LL in the target areas. The collected photographs

were then fed onto a database and the defining characteristics of each sign were identified. Traffic signs and movable written languages such as newspapers, tattoo, t-shirts, or vehicles were excluded from the data (Reh, 2004).

The analysis procedure is to (1) extract the languages from the signs collected in the survey, (2) identify the purpose and target of the signs, and (3) tag them for later analysis. The signs surveyed were assigned an identification code as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Identification Codes for the LL

Code	Message
COM	Signs for company, store, and organization name
AD	Signs for job advertisement
FAC	Signs for facilities such as town halls, hospitals, libraries, and the like
REL	Signs related to religion such as shrine, temple, and church name or religious motto
POL	Political signs such as campaign posters and political party signs
EVA	Signs directing evacuation in the event of a tsunami or earthquake
SLO	Slogan related to lifestyle habits, such as "Greetings in good spirits"
DUM	Signs prohibiting illegal dumping
GAR	Signs instructing people to properly separate garbage
PET	Signs to promote proper disposal of pet waste
WAR	Warnings against dangerous behavior, such as "Beware of Jumpers"
OTHER	Signs for commemorative tree planting, etc.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The total number of linguistic landscape data obtained from this survey is 5,317. Among them, 4,355 data were obtained outside of the foreigner population areas, 523 data were obtained in Area 1, 99 data were obtained in Area 2, and 340 data in Area 3. The signs reveal the presence of three main languages in the LL: Japanese, English, and Portuguese.

Linguistic landscape outside of foreigner population areas

Examining the 4,355 signs outside of Brazilian population areas, the significant presence of Japanese as a main language was observed. As can be seen from Table 2, Japanese concentrate the highest percentages.

Figure 1 shows that of the 1,496 linguistic landscapes of [COM], 2.07% were in English and 4.63% were bilingual, English, and Japanese. In addition, 95.11% of AD were written in Japanese, indicating that the signs related to companies and stores were installed mainly for Japanese language users as

the recipients of the information.

Related to 83 signs of [POL], campaign posters and billboards related to political parties, all of which were written in Japanese. Since voters are usually Japanese, it is very likely that they do not see the need for political messages to be written in a foreign language. This means that foreign residents who do not understand Japanese may not be able to obtain information about what kind of politicians are active in the area where they live and what kind of policies they advocate. However, considering that foreign residents are affected by the policies as much as Japanese residents, it would be appropriate to provide the information in a foreign language as well

As for [WAR], 97.25% of them were written in Japanese. For example, "Beware of Jumpers" signs at intersections were written only in Japanese, at least within the areas of this study. Since these linguistic landscapes are accompanied by illustrations of children running toward the road, it is likely that even if foreign languages were omitted, they would still be understandable for drivers.

On the other hand, for [EVA], 49.48% were found to be marked in a variety of languages, with Japanese indicated as the primary language. The sea level and evacuation building signs were marked in five languages: Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, and Portuguese, and some sea level markings near the coast were marked in three languages: Japanese, English, and Portuguese. In addition, there were signs in Japanese, English, and Portuguese encouraging people to evacuate to higher places to avoid tsunami damage in the event of an earthquake. These findings suggest that even outside areas with a high concentration of foreign residents, multilingual signage is being used to provide evacuation instructions and other life-saving information.

In the [DUM] category, 89.47% of the signs includes Portuguese, and only 6 signs were written in Japanese. This indicates that illegal dumping by foreigners, in this case Portuguese speakers, can be seen as a problem even though the area is not heavily populated by foreigners.

The similar type of sign for [PET] was written only in Japanese. This is thought to be related to the high cost of purchasing and keeping pets, and the limited number of rental apartments that allow pets, which foreign residents visiting Japan as migrant workers cannot afford. It may also be related to the fact

that keeping pets requires some necessary procedures, such as reporting rabies vaccinations.

Table 3: Overall number of texts for each language in signs outside of foreigner population areas (JPN: Japanese, ENG: English, POR: Portuguese, MUL: Multilingual)

Signs	JPN	ENG	POR	MUL	Total
COM	1,395	2	31	68	1,496
AD	1,207	2	11	49	1,269
FAC	278	0	1	4	283
REL	15	4	0	0	19
POL	83	0	0	0	83
EVA	49	0	0	48	97
SLO	72	0	0	3	75
DUM	6	51	0	0	57
GAR	160	51	0	1	212
PET	70	0	0	0	70
WAR	636	1	5	12	654
OTHER	40	0	0	0	40

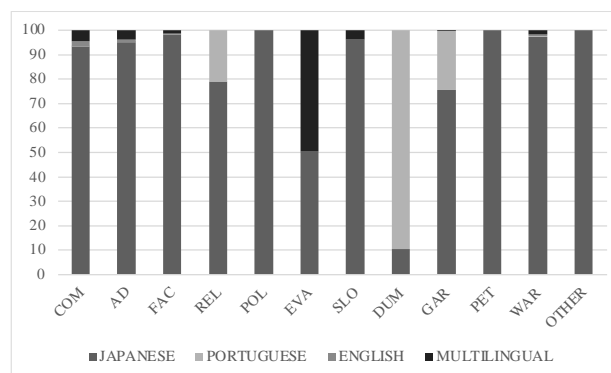


Figure 1: Percentage of languages in signs outside of foreigner population areas

Linguistic landscape in areas with a high concentration of foreign residents

Unexpectedly, out of the 962 signs collected in areas where foreign residents congregate, 84.72% are written only in Japanese and signs written only in Portuguese were significantly fewer. Instead, signs indicating the rules and prohibitions of Japanese society were multilingual. As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 2, there are significant differences in which languages were used depending on what was displayed on the signs. The LL in areas with a high concentration of foreign residents shows that Japanese-only writing is not significantly different from that outside these areas.

The characteristics of the areas are evident in [WAR], where Portuguese is frequently used along with Japanese. Also, [EVA] was displayed in several languages as outside the foreigner residential areas, but in Area 1, 44.00% of the signs were in Japanese only,

which is slightly higher than in the other areas. A distinctive feature was an illustration of a catfish with Japanese words urging people to evacuate from a tsunami. These were in Japanese only and showed obvious age-related deterioration such as fading and scratches (See Figure 3). The multilingual sign, on the other hand, was in relatively good condition, indicating that it had been installed in recent years (See Figure 4).

Area 2 is the smallest survey area in this study, which limited the amount of data on LL. In this area, which is characterized by signs mainly written in Japanese and Portuguese, English is rarely found compared to other areas. A vast majority of Brazilian residents will find some written Portuguese on the signs prohibiting illegal dumping of garbage and instructing on garbage separation. For example, a sign in Figure 5, in a speech bubble at the bottom of the sign is the Japanese phrase "Illegal dumping is not allowed" and immediately below that, "Proibido o abandono ilegal de lixos," which means that illegal waste disposal is prohibited. The exact same sentence is written on the bottom of the sign.



Figure 3. The [EVA] sign in Japanese



Figure 4. The [EVA] sign in Japanese and Portuguese

Table 3: Overall number of texts for each language in signs in areas with a high concentration of foreign residents

Sings	JPN	ENG	POR	MUL	Total
COM	531	0	23	23	577
AD	487	2	6	4	499
FAC	211	0	0	8	219
REL	4	0	0	1	5
POL	39	0	0	0	39
EVA	35	0	0	26	61
SLO	46	0	0	3	49
DUM	8	0	0	23	31
GAR	182	1	3	40	226
PET	38	0	0	0	38
WAR	422	11	0	37	470
OTHER	45	0	0	3	48



Figure 5. The [DUM] sign in Japanese and Portuguese

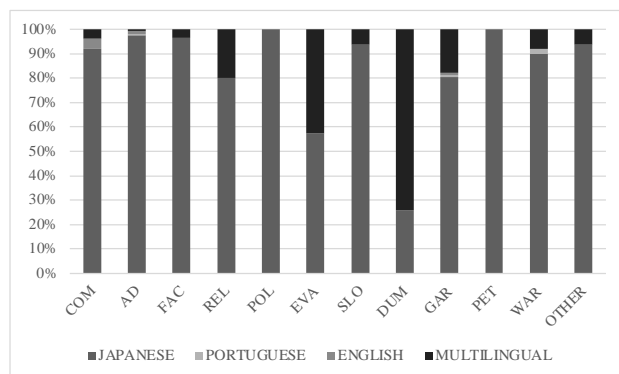


Figure 2: Percentage of languages in signs in areas with a high concentration of foreign residents

CONCLUSION

The data in the previous section show that the concentration of Brazilians does not make the target areas a multilingual place where Portuguese and Japanese coexist.

In reply to the present study's first research question, which concerned the languages used in public space in western part of Shizuoka Prefecture, findings indicate that the local language, Japanese, was by far the most prevalent language in the LL, both in areas with a large Brazilian population and in the other areas.

The second research question inquired into the relationship between Portuguese and Japanese present in the target areas in light of the messages in the signs. The findings can be summarized as below:

- (1) Many of the signs that indicate the names of shops, businesses, and other faculties are written in Japanese.

(2) The LL related to politics, such as election campaign posters and signs representing political party slogans, are all written in Japanese.

(3) Half of the signs instructing people to evacuate in the event of an earthquake or tsunami were written in multiple languages, but the relatively older ones were written only in Japanese.

(4) Signs prohibiting illegal dumping of garbage were written in both Japanese and Portuguese in areas where Brazilians reside, and only in Portuguese in other areas.

(5) After those related to evacuation and illegal dumping, the third most common signs in Portuguese were those related to garbage separation. As in (4), in areas where Brazilians are concentrated, signs were written in Portuguese and Japanese, and in other areas only in Portuguese.

We often do not pay attention to the written texts that surrounds us. However, the language used in the public sphere reflects the intentions of the producer of messages on signs. In this study, the author examined the LL in the areas where many Brazilians live, comparing them with the other areas in the western part of Shizuoka Prefecture. An analysis is given of the use of Portuguese, the local language, Japanese, and English as an international language. The data are analyzed to determine the languages used on the signs and the specific characteristics of the signs. The results show that many of the rules and norms of Japanese society are displayed in multiple languages in areas where there is a high concentration of foreign residents. In addition, many Japanese descriptions are difficult or ambiguous for foreign residents and need to be improved. To solve these problems, not only should multilingual descriptions be added, but the use of "easy Japanese" should also be considered.

References

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Acknowledgement

This research is supported by the Individual Research Project of Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology. I would like to thank Hiroki Nakatsugawa for his dedicated cooperation in data collection.