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Sociolinguistics of Names of Hotels in Accra: A Linguistic Landscape Perspective

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Abstract

In recent times, the language in public spaces (as seen in street names, school names, names of buildings, names of metro stations, names of tourist attractions, and commercial signs) has attracted scholarly attention in onomastics, with the focus on how it reflects the linguistic situation of urban landscapes and how it can be used to construct several identities. The present study aimed to investigate names of hotels in Accra – the capital city of Ghana, with considerable financial, cultural, and industrial significance – using Landry and Bouris's (1997) Linguistic Landscape as a theory. The data comprises 160 hotel names accessed from the website of *Yello Ghana*, a well-known business directory. The analysis revealed, first, that most of the hotels deployed English monolingual names, with a few utilising bilingual names. Closely allied to this finding is the trend towards globalisation, as captured in some names of hotels. These key findings have implications for the scholarship in onomastics, urban landscape, language policy and planning, and further research.

Keywords

Ghana, linguistic landscape, multilingualism, names of hotels, sociolinguistics

Introduction

This paper reports on a study which investigated the languages used in names of hotels in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. In this section, we provide contextual information, by first offering a background to the study. The background essentially focuses on conceptual and empirical information on language displayed in the public domain, especially in multilingual contexts such as Ghana. After the background, we focus on the multilingual nature of Ghana, focusing especially on the major languages in Accra as well as their currency. We conclude this introductory section by providing the theoretical lens of the study.

Background to the Study

Language in the form of speaking and writing as well as other semiotic codes found in spaces or places is used to index particular localities. Written language is surrounding us, as it is shown on shop windows, business signs, banners, and so forth (Gorter, 2006). Such modes guide us through various degrees of regional and cultural definition including personality claims, power relations, and their contestations (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). Through this use of language, space is socially built. For example, the language in which the official name of a place is presented speaks volumes of the place.

Today, the world has become a global village, with English intruding in the public space of cities alongside other languages (Bolston, 2012). A study conducted in Milan, for instance, has revealed the visibility of English in the names of facilities such as cloth shops, hairdressers' salons, and car parks (Ross, 1997). This was further confirmed by McArthur (2000), who, having studied the street signage in Uppsala and Zurich noted that about 45 percent of Uppsala signs and 58 percent of Zurich signs used English. He also realised that some of the signs were multilingual in nature, suggesting that European cities are becoming increasingly multilingual. Dorier-Apprill and Van Den Avenne (2002), confirmed this, noting that the city provides a multilingual space where language practices are "implicated in meetings, crossings, passings from one quarter to another" (p. 151). Similar revelations have been made by studies conducted in other European and Asian cities such as Rome (Gorter, 2006), Wales (Coupland, 2010), Tokyo (Backhaus, 2006), and Bangkok (Huebner, 2006). In general, these studies have revealed signages as serving as material culture of multilingualism (Aronin & Hornsby, 2018). Again, all these studies focused on urban areas, rather than rural areas, because these are where public signs are more visible.

In the context of Africa, the explorations of various public spaces have highlighted issues of multilingualism, layering, and Africanism (e.g., Akindele, 2011; Dlibugunaya & Obaje, 2017; du Plessis, 2011; Kayam et al., 2012; Loth, 2016; William, 2011). Those that focused on multilingualism, like studies conducted elsewhere (Backhaus, 2006; Coupland, 2010; Gorter, 2006), generally, have revealed the dominance of English over other languages in urban public spaces. Such studies have also indicated that linguistic landscape serves as a mechanism to "effect, manipulate and impose *de facto* language practices" (Shohamy, 2006, p. 111). From the "layering" perspective, studies have revealed, among other things, the interactive coexistence of signs (Adetunji, 2015). Regarding issues of

Africanism, a study has revealed diminished linguistic features of African origin in Lagos and Port-Harcourt (Adebileje, 2017).

While the studies reviewed in the previous paragraph were conducted in Nigeria and South Africa, the public spaces of other African countries have also been explored. Woldemariam and Lanza's (2014) study, for instance, examined the language contact taking place in two regions of Ethiopia (Tigray and Oromia), focusing on languages displayed in the public space. The findings revealed how the residents of the above-mentioned areas develop new literacy practices by drawing on the multilingual resources of the languages. Lusekelo & Alphonse (2018) similarly investigated the use of language on billboards and shop-signs as a reflection of the multilingual nature of urban Tanzania. The study revealed, among other things, the dominance of Kiswahili-English bilingual signposts and monolingual English posts.

A further emerging trend in studies conducted in Africa concerns the exploration of the linguistic landscape of specific universities. Generally, such studies have revealed how the linguistic landscapes of various universities do not reflect the language policies of the universities concerned (Abongdia & Foncha, 2014). Additionally, it has been evidenced that unequal promotional attention is given to official languages in multilingual countries like South Africa (Philibane, 2014).

In the case of Ghana, studies exploring the language displayed on the public space are rare, with Quayson (2014), Nyame & Tomekyin (2018), and Afful (2018) among the exceptions. Quayson's (2014) phenomenal work titled *Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism* aimed to elaborate the tensions in Accra's local-transnational streams and contacts. To the extent that Quayson, rather tangentially in one of his chapters, explored the images and messages displayed publicly along the Oxford Street, he can be said to have acknowledged linguistic landscape as a way of indexing urbanism and other such phenomena as hybridity, multiculturalism, and multi-ethnic politics. In a more explicit study, Nyame & Tomekyin (2018) investigated the languages seen on vehicles in two Ghanaian towns (Winneba and Ajumaku), revealing the dominance of English in the linguistic landscape. Focusing on a Cape Coast, a former capital town and currently the regional capital of great touristic significance, Afful (2018) examined the use of English in the onomastics of billboards, posters, and shops along two busy streets.

The findings of these few studies in Ghana serve as a springboard for the investigation of the linguistic landscape of Accra, the capital of Ghana, because of its financial, cultural, and industrial significance. The present study, therefore, investigates the linguistic landscape of Accra, focusing on the languages used in names of hotels. Our focus on hotels was informed by the dearth of literature on the linguistic landscape of hotels in general (Yan & Lee, 2014). In the present study, we focus specifically on Accra hotels because recent times have witnessed a rapid growth in the hotel industry of Ghana, with majority of the hotels established in Accra (Hiamey, 2012). As revealed by the previous studies, the dominance of English in the African public space places African languages in danger, thereby evincing implications for language policy and planning.

The Linguistic Situation in Ghana and the Linguistic Profile of Accra

Ghana is a highly multilingual country with a population of over twenty-five million people with both exogenous and endogenous languages. Among some exogenous languages used in Ghana are English, French, Arabic, Hausa, and Chinese. The official language of Ghana is English (Adika, 2012). Hausa, which is spoken as the most widely used language among the Muslims, and Arabic, which is learnt in Islamic schools the country over, are predominantly utilized for religious purposes (Anyidoho & Dakubu, 2008; Dakubu, 1988). In recent times, due to the increasing role of China in international politics and economics, Chinese is becoming an important language, as it is being taught in basic schools, senior high schools, and some tertiary institutions through outreach programmes carried out by Confucius Institutes in Ghana.

Notwithstanding these 'foreign' languages, Ghana has more than 50 local languages, with Akan, Nzema, Ewe, Ga, Dagaare, and Dagbani being the significant ones. Out of the multitude of local languages, just 11 of them are studied in schools and a couple of them are utilised on the radio and TV. The significance of Akan, Ga and Ewe relies on their popularity among speakers of other languages, who use them as second languages. In particular, the Twi dialect of Akan has been significantly used as a medium of cross-cultural communication over the years. Akan has several other dialects, with one (Bono), spoken in Ivory Coast. Of all the native Ghanaian languages, Akan is the one with the largest volumes of written materials. Forty percent of Ghanaians use it as their mother tongue while among 60 percent of Ghanaians, it is used as an additional language (Adika, 2012).

As per Dakubu (1996), Accra can be described as a multilingual city with four main languages: English, Akan, Hausa, and Ga. In addition to these four languages are other languages transplanted in Accra predominantly through migration. Ga, the indigenous language of Accra, is spoken by about 4% of the Ghanaian population. With the exception of some traditional Ga communities, such as James Town and Teshie, Akan is predominantly used in most communities in Accra. Though both Ga and Akan are both considered to be Kwa languages, they are not mutually intelligible and their relationship is not obvious. Hausa is considered to have come to Ghana from Nigeria. Those who introduced Hausa to Accra had a colony and used the language in their army and police. On the other hand, English was introduced by the British and is currently used as the only official language in Ghana and Accra.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the linguistic landscape approach in studying the names of hotels in the cityscape of Accra. A fairly new concept in sociolinguistics, linguistic landscape was first used by Landry & Bourhis (1997). Prior to their study, however, Spolsky & Cooper (1991) had carried out a study in Jerusalem which emphasised sign creation in multilingual Jerusalem, considering the influence of political regimes on the linguistic landscape. In their seminal paper, Landry & Bourhis give this definition for linguistic landscape:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shops signs and signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration (p. 25).

Fundamentally, linguistic landscape studies focus on examining written language on visible signage or in the public space, with public space defined as that space which is exposed to the public eye, such as streets, parks, billboards, shops, stores, and offices (Ben-Rafael & Barni, 2010). Earlier studies on linguistic landscape focused on the distribution of languages on public signage. Linguistic landscape has also been useful in examining the vitality of languages used in a community. Today, it is used in language planning and multilingual studies too (Gorter, 2006).

Landry & Bourhis (1997) underscore that the linguistic landscape of a region may be either informational, symbolic, or both. With respect to informational capability, they demonstrate that linguistic landscape might perform an area checking capabilities by showing the geological limit of a region a specific language possesses. In such manner, steady and predictable linguistic behaviour can be a helpful marker of regional limit between a given language local area and its adjoining networks. The prevalence of a specific language on bilingual/multilingual public signs can give data on the language that overwhelms social intercourse locally. The predominant language is the regular choice in that speech community. All the while, bilingual/multilingual signs likewise mirror the bilingual/multilingual nature of the area. Likewise, the dominantly displayed language wields power and glory in that locality (Azaryahu, 1996).

Linguistic landscape carries out the symbolic role, as visibility of a language in the open arena adds to the sentiments that the speakers of that language have some power over speakers of languages not visible in the linguistic landscape. This is conceptualised in linguistic landscape as the language's ethnolinguistic vitality (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). As indicated by Landry and Bourhis (1997), linguistic landscape might go about as the most recognisable and quick record of the overall power and status of the linguistic communities a given region. Hence, power and identity are enacted by linguistic landscape. For this situation, linguistic landscape can reflect the diglossic profile of an area. The commonness of a language on open signs then represents the language's strength comparable to different other languages. Thus, the shortfall of one's language shows that the language has a low status in the general public. This view is additionally underlined by Cenoz & Gorter's (2006), who contend that the visual data that comes to individuals and the language wherein signs are composed can positively impact individuals' impression of the situation with dialects in a multilingual society.

Scollon & Scollon (2003) contend that the utilisation of "foreign" dialects, especially on business signs, may have a representative capability. On account of English, for instance, shop names written in English in areas where Chinese is spoken may be representing foreign preferences, designs, or relationship between specific items or sorts of organisations and English-speaking society. It could likewise imply that English is seen as being more esteemed than neighbourhood dialects, especially when these nearby dialects are spoken by not many individuals in that territory. Then again, a commonness of signs in English frequently denotes a "tourists space" and can consequently be

deciphered as serving both enlightening and representative purposes, since there is a need to speak with sightseers through a most widely used language as well as to advance the picture of the spot as tourist-friendly and cosmopolitan (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

Linguistic landscape can, thus, be considered to mirror the clear language policies of a state, or the more confined language practices of a local area and to give a window into the local power relations among languages (Huebner, 2006). As Cenoz & Gorter (2006) note, the connection between the linguistic landscape and the sociolinguistic setting is bi-directional: the linguistic landscape mirrors the overall power and status of various dialects in a specific sociolinguistic setting, while simultaneously adding to the development of that extremely sociolinguistic setting. To put it plainly, the linguistic landscape gives off an impression of being a commendable object of examination since (a) linguistic decisions in open spaces indicate more extensive social attitudes, (b) linguistic tokens out in the open spaces might be representative markers of status and power, and (c) the investigation of linguistic landscape may, in this manner, give understanding into social identities.

Method

The data used for the analysis were taken from *Ghana Yello*, available on the website, which brands itself as Ghana Business Directory. *Ghana Yello* provides information on all kinds of hotels in Ghana. The data were retrieved on 15th June, 2018 and a total of 160 names were obtained. We then visited the websites of the hotels and went through their picture galleries to retrieve pictures that contained their names. All of the names contained more than one element. Following Tan (2011), we distinguished the obligatory element, on the one hand, and the optional element, on the other hand. The optional elements are often modifiers such as determiners or adjectives and generics (such as *Hotel, Suite*). The optional element could occur either before or after the obligatory element. In most cases, where the name consists of two elements, the optional element comes after the obligatory element, for example *Elking Hotel, Greenfield Hotel*. In few cases, the optional element comes before the obligatory element, as in *Villa Monticello*, where *Monticello* is the obligatory element and *Villa* the optional element. In general, the optional element belongs to the class of determiners, such as *la* (the French equivalent for *the*), adjectives (such as *Grand*), or nouns that are descriptive and generic (such as *Hotel, Suite* and *Apartment*). Some names contain more than one optional element (e.g., *Hollywood Lexus Suite Hotel, Hotel Maple Leaf International*).

The analysis was quantitative, where names were classified into monolingual names, bilingual names, and *others*. In the analysis, items from the general lexicon were generally unproblematic. For instance, in *Beauty Hotel* and *Forest Hotel*, the obligatory elements (*Beauty* and *Forest*) and the optional element (*Hotel*) were analysed as having English source so such names were classified as monolingual. A difficulty we faced concerned hotel names rooted in personal/place names. Edelman (2009), who faced a similar problem, noted:

A researcher who does not cope proper names as foreign languages get an incomplete picture of the linguistic landscape's multilingual character. Moreover, the possibility of the translation of

names, however limited, shows that names can sometimes be part of specific languages. Many other linguistic landscape researchers, although they do not account for that choice, did assign proper names to their language of origin (p. 152).

Following Edelman (2009), we, therefore, analysed place names or personal names associated with a linguistic group as having source in that language. Therefore, the obligatory elements in *Ampomaah Tourist Hotel* and *Celona Hotel*, which are *Ampomaah* and *Celona* respectively, were analysed as having source in Akan and Italian respectively. With this, we classified them as bilingual names. This method of analysis, however, left some names unanalysed, because in some cases, hotels were named with a combination of letters (e.g., example *MJ Hotel*) or were given coined names (as in *Richester Hotel*). In such instances, such names became impossible to analyse based on languages. We, therefore, coded them together under the broad heading *others*.

Results & Discussion

As indicated earlier, based on languages used in the names analysed, the names were classified into monolingual, bilingual, and *other* names. Out of the 160 names analysed, 124(77.5%) were monolingual, 27(16.68%) were bilingual, and 9(5.63%) fell under the category, *others*.

Most of the hotel names analysed were monolingual, with most of the names being English. To be precise, while 124(99.19%) of the monolingual names were in English, 1 (0.81%) was in French. Below are examples of monolingual names identified in the data.

- a. English: *Best Star Hotel, Cardinal Hotel, Campbell Hotel, Oak Plaza Hotel, Golden Key Hotel, Accra City Hotel, Holiday Inn Accra Airport Hotel, White Sands Hotel and Beach Resort, Hotel Airport View, African Royal Beach Hotel, Elegance Guest Hotel, The Sleepy Hippo Hotel, Pink Panther Hotel, Oscar Park Royal Hotel, Grand Star Hotel, Best Western Premier Hotel, Charleston Hotel, Capital Court Hotel, Best Choice Hotel, Triple Hill Hotel, Beauty Hotel, Crown Jewel Hotel, Global Summer Hotel, Airport West Hotel, Crystal Palm Hotel, Sunlodge Hotel Ltd, Hill View Hotel, Airport View Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, Best Western Plus Hotel*
- b. French: *Hôtel Du Goût* (meaning *Hotel of Taste*)

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate monolingual names identified in the data analysed, with the former being an English monolingual name and the latter a French monolingual name.



Figure 1. English monolingual name

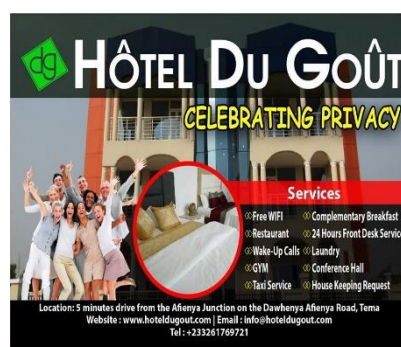


Figure 2. French monolingual name

As seen in Figure 1, the name *Charleston Hotel* is an English monolingual name because the obligatory element, *Charleston*, together with the optional element *Hotel*, has its source in English. Figure 2, on the other hand, presents the only French monolingual name identified in the data. *Hôtel Du Goût* is the French rendition of “hotel of taste”.

The dominance of English is also evident when we take a look at the bilingual names. As regards the bilingual names, all the categories are formed by a combination of English and a variety of other languages including Akan, Spanish, Latin, Italian, Chinese, German, Hebrew, French, Sanskrit, and Igbo. To be specific, among the bilingual category of names, the English and Akan bilingual names category recorded the highest frequency of occurrence. Out of the 27 bilingual names, this category recorded 6 occurrences, representing 22.22%. The English and Spanish as well as English and Latin categories each recorded 4 occurrences, representing 14.81%. English and Italian and English and Chinese categories of names each recorded 3 occurrences (representing 11.11%), while English and German and English and Hebrew names recorded 2 occurrences each. Finally, English and French, English and Sanskrit, and English and Igbo names each occurred once (3.70%) in the data. Figures 3 and 4 present examples of names from the bilingual category of hotel names.



Figure 3. *Ampomaah Hotel*



Figure 4. *Gye Nyame Hotel*

In the pictures above are two examples of English/Akan bilingual names. In Figure 3 above, the name is classified as an Akan/English bilingual name because its obligatory element, *Ampomaah*, is an Akan personal names, while the optional element is English. In a similar vein, *Gye Nyame Hotel* (as seen in Figure 4) is classified as an English/Akan bilingual name because the first two elements in the name, which appear obligatory, come from Akan. Literally, *Gye Nyame* could be interpreted as “Unless God”. Other examples of bilingual names identified in the data include the following:

- a. English/Akan: *Lake Bosomtwi Hotel*, *Paa-Aku Hotel*, *Dokua Royal Hotel*, *Afia Beach Hotel*
- b. English/Spanish: *Ramada Resort*, *Crown Apartamento Hotel*, *Apartamento Hotel*
- c. English/Latin: *Lucia Hotel*, *Paloma Hotel*, *Festus Hotel*
- d. English/Italian: *Celona Hotel*, *San Giorgio Hotel*
- e. English/Chinese: *Mandarin Hotel*, *Tan Palace Hotel*, *Xiangyu Hotel*
- f. English/German: *Mövenpick Ambassador Hotel*, *Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City*, *Lola Baby Hotel*

- g. English/Hebrew: *Beulah Hotel, Golden Simcha Hotel*
- h. English/French: *Vis-à-vis Hotel Ghana, La Palm Royal Beach Hotel*
- i. English/Sanskrit: *Nirvana Inn Hotel Ltd*
- j. English/Igbo: *Ikem Hotel*

A look through these names reveals a pattern where English language provides the optional elements of the names while the obligatory elements come from the other language. For instance, in the names, *Ramada Hotel, Beulah Hotel* and *Celona Hotel*, the obligatory elements *Ramada, Beulah*, and *Celona* have their source in Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew respectively, while the optional element, *Hotel*, is an English word.

As indicated earlier, the names that were coded *others* were mainly coined names and names formed from initial letters of names. While they were not categorised as monolingual or bilingual, they generally contained elements from the English language. Examples of such names are given in Figures 5 and 6 below:



Figure 5. *Mensvic Grand Hotel*



Figure 6. *M Plaza Hotel*

In Figure 5, we realise that the obligatory element appears to be a coinage. This is because it was difficult to trace its source language. The name *M Plaza Hotel Accra* is also treated as *others* because its initial element, which appears to be part of the obligatory elements, is the letter *M*, probably an initial letter of a name. Because it is not certain the source language of the name from which the initial *M* was derived, we treated the name as part of the *others* category. Other examples of names that fell under this category are as follows:

- a. *Dikab Hotel*
- b. *Ampaqx Grand Hotel*
- c. *MJ Grand Hotel*
- d. *Hotel Evan-Q Ltd*
- e. *M Suites*
- f. *T.S. Hotel*
- g. *Richester Hotel*

Given the distribution of English in both the monolingual and the bilingual hotel names analysed, it is clear that English has a strong presence in the linguistic landscape of Accra. This confirms Adika's (2012) claim that English in Ghana is enjoying some expansion in its multilingual environment. Given that English is the official language of Ghana, this finding is not surprising. It is simply a reflection of the language policy of the country. Also, the dominance of English in the names analysed can be seen as a reflection of the relative power and status of English, as compared to other languages in Ghana (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). This can be seen negatively as the major language causing the death of minor languages, making English the killer language (Mazrui, 2004; Tan, 2011). Matiki (2001) observes that the dominance of English in the public space is part of the large-scale globalisation of the English language, where English language has become widespread, with functions ranging from widespread global politics to the intricacies of peoples' lives.

Additionally, English is considered as a language of neutrality. Wardhaugh (1989) sees English as everyone's language since it is no longer linked to any particular socio-economic or political group. Accra is a cosmopolitan city, attracting people of diverse ethnic or cultural backgrounds, including tourists from all parts of the world (Boateng, 2009). With this, it appears reasonable for hotels to be named in English to avoid being linguistically biased towards specific ethnic groups. Thus, the hotels are named in English so as to integrate them into the world (Sjöblom, 2013).

The dominance of English, as found in the present study, reveals the language ideology in Accra. People in Accra seem to have a positive attitude towards English, as compared with other Ghanaian languages. For instance, in a study that examined the attitudes of residents of Accra about the issue of a national language, Anyidoho and Dakubu (as cited in Anyidoho & Dakubu, 2008) revealed that residents of Accra largely emphasised the suitability of English as a national language of Ghana. The study also revealed that some residents of Accra even considered the English language as a Ghanaian language. Darko and Quarcoo (2017) also observe that Ghanaians see English as a language that can give them better career prospects in terms of securing a job. In effect, many Ghanaians even avoid speaking Ghanaian languages to their children at home, as they rather prefer their children to learn English.

Shohamy, Ben-Rafael and Barni (2010) also argue that the use of English in place names projects the "self" of the actor (name giver) as "Western" or modern. This could be true in the case of this study. This is because some of the names analysed actually contain the word "Western" (e.g. *Best Western Premier Accra Airport Hotel*, *Luxury West Hotel*, *Western Sun Hotel*, *Best Western Plus Hotel*, *Luxe Suite Hotel*). A similar observation was made by Alomoush (2018) in his study on the linguistic landscape of a Jordanian city. He noted that English is used in many fashion shop names and catch phrases to symbolise Western outstanding feminine beauty and masculine elegance. Relatedly, evoking royal connection (as evident in names such as *La Palm Royal Beach Hotel*, *Dokua Royal Hotel*, and *Oscar Park Royal Hotel*) helps to give a "kingly" flavour to the services provided by such hotels, affirming their quality (Gabryś-Barker, 2014).

It is also important to note that people give names to communicate some information. Information needs to be communicated in a language that is widely spoken. Because of the status of English as a global language, it is obvious that a large number of people are able to read and understand English. Naming a hotel in a language which is cannot be read and understood by a lot of people may not be advisable, especially in a culturally diverse situation (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). Therefore, naming hotels in English, instead of Ghanaian languages, is important as it enables visitors, particularly tourists, to read and understand. This is particularly true of Ghana “where almost every literate person who ever reads, writes or listens to the radio does it in English more than in any other language” (Obeng, 1997).

The use of Latin words in bilingual names can be explained by the reason given by Sjöblom (2013). This language and Greek are universal given that in contemporary times, they are not linked to any particular country. They have gained recognition and significance when it comes to brand names. On this, Pappenhagen, Scarvaglieri, and Redder (2016) argue that some hotels choose names which are nearly impossible to categorise in terms of language use, because they are parts of a number of different language systems. Such names make use of basic linguistic knowledge, most of them originating from Latin words that have become common in a number of languages. The fact that they are identifiable in several languages maximises the group of potential customers, which supports the economic purposes of the hotels.

Globalisation does not, however, explain the use of names of French, Italian, Sanskrit, and German origin. This is because these languages are not generally spoken in Ghana. Their use can be explained in the light of “impersonal multilingualism”, a situation where foreign languages “serve to stimulate the reader’s feelings and to create a pleasant mood of cosmopolitanism” (Haarmann, 1989, p. 110). On the other hand, though these languages are not spoken in Ghana, the hotels may choose those names to attract the target customers of such hotels. In effect, given that hotels mostly offer accommodation to foreigners, including tourists who come from all over the world, the hotels may be named in such languages to attract such tourists. Relatedly, the linguistic background of the owners of the hotels may have an influence on the choice of such names. Since Accra is a cosmopolitan city with migrants from all over the world, it is likely that the owners of such hotels come from countries where those languages are spoken.

Following Sjöblom (2013), one can argue that naturally, the use of Akan in the hotel names analysed can be seen as a local feature. This includes names with a local toponym (for instance *Lake Bosomtwe Hotel*) or locally known person or just a local personal name (for instance, the use of *Paa-Aku*, *Ampomaah* and *Dokua* in *Paa-Aku Hotel*, *Ampomaah Tourist Hotel*, *Dokua Royal Hotel* respectively). Thus, it reflects an attempt of the hotel owners to express glocalisation, which involves negotiations, re-appropriations, and resistance of global significations (Coker, 2014, p. 60). Additionally, the dominance of the Akan language over other Ghanaian languages explains the prestige Akan enjoys in Ghana (Obeng, 1997). Obeng has noted that Akan enjoys immense prestige in the language areas adjacent to it and that languages such as Ga, Ewe, and Dangbe have borrowed considerably from Akan. Obeng also added that Akan serves as a lingua franca alongside English and Hausa.

It must be noted that the native language of Accra, Ga (as well as other Ghanaian languages spoken in Accra), is completely but surprisingly missing in the names of hotels analysed. This may not mean that the language is less valued as suggested by Landry and Bourhis (1997). There are several other modes of displaying languages in the public space, which may contain the language in question. The study focused exclusively on the names of hotels, which is just a small portion of the entire linguistic landscape of Accra. Thus, we cannot conclude that the absence of Ga in names of hotels suggests that it is not valued. Additionally, the naming of the hotels may be a reflection of the target groups of the hotels.

Conclusion

The study sought to investigate language use in names of hotels in Accra. The study adopted Landry & Bourhis's (1997) linguistic landscape as a theory. One hundred and sixty hotel names which were collected on a business directory on the internet formed the data for the analysis. Having realised that all the names are made up of two or more elements, following Tan (2011), we, therefore, drew a distinction between the obligatory element, on the one hand, and the optional element, on the other hand. Languages that were used in each of the two element types (that is, the obligatory element and the optional element) were counted to find out the degree of visibility of the languages in the names analysed.

The findings indicate the dominance of English in the names of hotels analysed. This finding is not surprising, given the official status of English in Ghana as well as the language ideologies concerning English in Ghana. For instance, this finding reflects the opinion of residents of Accra that English is a Ghanaian language (Anyidoho & Dakubu, 2008). Also, the findings show the visibility of a variety of other European and non-European languages: German, Italian, Spanish, French, Hebrew, and Sanskrit. Generally, these foreign languages give the names a flavour or luxury and elegance. These languages also reflect the target groups of such hotels. In a few instances, Akan, the major Ghanaian language appears in some of the names, giving the names some local flavour.

While this study contributes to the study of linguistic landscape, it opens ways for further research in this field of study, particularly in the Ghanaian context. First, further studies may be carried out using a larger amount of data. Such a study of names of hotels, instead of limiting its scope to one urban centre or city, can investigate the linguistic landscape of all regional capitals of Ghana. Such studies would allow us to compare the linguistic landscape (of hotel names) of the various cities. Second, since this study limits itself to hotel names, future research may look at other aspects of linguistic landscapes in other domains such as education. In this regard, a linguistic landscape study can be undertaken in respect of names of senior high schools or tertiary institutions.

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