

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF INSCRIPTIONS ON SHOPS IN KUMASI**

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fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree  
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## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, ASARE ODURO KOFI, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

### SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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DATE: .....

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to my mother, Madam Comfort Oduro who inspires me through prayers and encouragement up to how far I am now.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Holy Scripture states that God knew each and every one of us before we were introduced to life. Thus He planned our lives before we were conceived. I thank God for designing my life the way it is. I thank Him for His guidance and protection throughout my duration and, most importantly, I thank Him for believing in me and for giving me strength when I wanted to give up during the duration of this thesis. To my family (especially my mother, Comfort Oduro and my siblings, Gladys Oduro and Lawyer Alex Kwaku Oduro), I thank God for allowing me the privilege to be born, grow up and be one of you. My whole life has been a blessing because of you and because you were there with me instead of being there for me throughout every trial and tribulation that comes with growing up. Thank you for years and years of encouragement to acquire as much education as I can, and for reminding me that quality education was once a dream to a so-called 'Black child'. Because of that, my mind is set to believe that no impediments life can throw at me I cannot rise above. To Dr. Charlotte Fofu Lomotey, my supervisor, I thank you for being a guardian and a mentor to me, my peers and the rest of the Linguistic Department. You believed in most of us and saw a diamond in the rough when we did not think that any of our ideas were worth listening to in the academic sphere, for that I thank you. May God preserve you and grant you many more years to come. To my colleagues and friends, most of us arrived at this university in the year 2018 and in that year we knew each other from a distance. Looking back now I realize that I knew what each of you were capable of before I knew who you were. Each time I spent with you I learnt a thing or two; that is inevitable when you spend your time around geniuses. You all have a special place in my heart. I would like to thank Dr. Kwaku Ofori, I owe a great deal of my scholarly growth in the University of Education, Winneba as you taught me morphology in my course of study.

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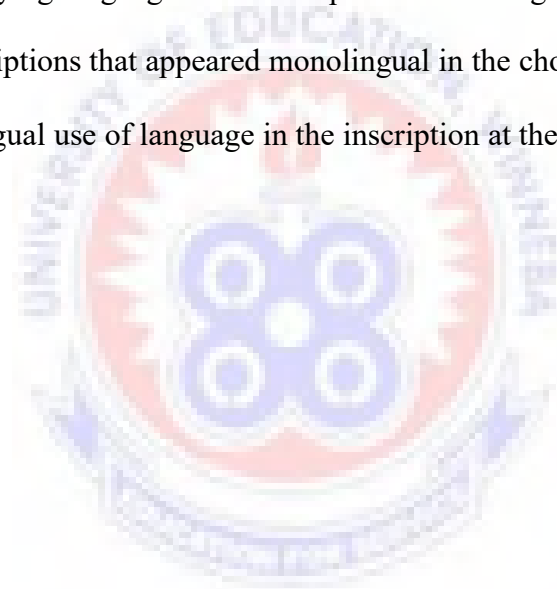
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## ABSTRACT

The study of signs in public sphere either in writing or in symbolic forms is termed as linguistic landscape. Landry and Bourhis (1997) for the first time coined and defined the notion as “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration” (p.22). The intention behind this research work is to examine shop signs in Kumasi, the capital city of Ashanti Region because it is one of the most popular cities in the country and it has not yet been explored adequately. These shop signs are entirely collected from Kronom to Kedjetia stretch of road, Kumasi. The signs on the selected shops were captured using a modern/standard digital camera after a thorough interview had been conducted, one-on-one with the shop owners/keepers. In addition, the approach to the study is qualitative in design. The study attempts to highlight themes featured in the inscriptions on the shops, the intention behind their usage by the shop owners/keepers and functions of the shop signs at the chosen research area. The languages featured in the inscriptions on the shops included; the in-group language, Akan (Twi), Ga, Ewe, Fante, and the “omniscient” global language, English. The findings proved that English (been the global language) is a dominant language but it was realized that the in-group language, Akan (Twi) was competing with it. That shows how serious the ethnic group (speakers of that language) cherish their language. The study in addition analyzed themes identified to be dominant in the inscriptions used. It was established that theme of religion/faith was the most dominant theme because the chosen research area is a place where people pay much attention to their object of worship, God. The study further concludes that through the inscriptions featured on the shops at the chosen research site, shop owners/keepers are able to express and share their experiences, sentiments, thoughts and opinions to others/the general public.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the study

Man uses language in various forms to communicate. Jones (1967) describes language as a system of arbitrarily organized sounds used by a speech community. Hurley (2003) also states that language has two basic linguistic functions. That is, to convey information and to express or evoke feelings. This means that in the case of the former definition, communication can be considered as one of the basic functions of language. Bortolucci (1996) defines communication as the act of sharing information with others by speaking, writing, moving part of the body or using other signals. It is therefore convincing here that man in general uses language in diverse context of situation to express feelings, experiences, ideologies, notions among others for various reasons which could fall under persuasion, education, inspiration, professionalism, information among others.

Visual communication involves communicating through visual aids. It involves the use of typography, tattoo, drawing, graphic design, gestures, facial expression, statue, illustrations and colors to share information with others (Lehman & Dufrene, 2002). Sekyi-Baidoo (2002) argues that every form of communication must have a sender, a message and an intended recipient. The communication process is complete once the recipient has understood the message. Hence, it is worthy to note that a critical examination of the way people use language to communicate in different social contexts provides a wealth of information about how language works, the social relationships that exists in communities and the way people signal aspects of their social identities (Holmes, 2008, p. 1), cited in Mgbemena (2013). According to (Bettinghaus & Coby, 1994) persuasion is a process which involves a conscious attempt by one individual to change the behaviour of another individual or a group of individuals through the transmission of some messages. In communication strategies, persuasion is a tool of

advertisement that are shown in either oral or written forms of communication. This means that, it is convincing that people use persuasion as a tool in constructing varieties of inscriptions of their shops. As a result, the shop owners/keepers used inscriptions on their shops in one way or the other to convince people to patronize their goods and services. That is to some extent attracts attention of readers (the general public) to the message been put across on the shops.

It is therefore not surprising that the shop owners in greater Kumasi specifically Kronom-Kedjetia stretch of road inscribe these inscriptions on their shops with their intention to communicate or extend some form of information to readers or the general public. The shop owners/keepers through the inscriptions express their thoughts, experiences, feelings among others to the general public. Basically, this research work is set out to examine themes of inscriptions found on shops, the rationale that underpins the choice of particular inscriptions as well as the functions of the signs at the chosen research area. This will be done in connection with the ethnolinguistic vitality theory models (status, demographic and institutional support) which distinguishes a dead language from the one which is actively alive (vital).

The term linguistic landscape was proposed by Landry and Bourhis (1997), when they conducted a research seminar on signs in some areas in Canada. These philosophers for the first time defined linguistic landscape as the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region. They further provided a vivid explanation for a better understanding of the term as “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), who coined and defined linguistic landscape for the first time distinguishes the notion into two in terms of functional domain. According to these philosophers, linguistic landscape has two major functions: informative and symbolic informative function. The informative function according to them indicates the borders of the

territory of the linguistic group. In other words, it shows the specific language or languages meant for communication or to sell goods and services. On the other hand, the symbolic function refers to the value and status of the languages as perceived by the members of a language group in comparison to other languages.

The topical issue that underpins this study is inscription. Various scholars have come out with seemingly different views on what inscriptions are. Etymologically, the word, inscription, originates from the Greek word ‘epigraphē’ meaning ‘to write on’. The word was introduced into the English language as epigraph – a term which was used to define any inscription on a structure and its study as epigraphy. Epigraphy is thus the study of inscriptions from the earliest civilization through the present day, their interpretations and their classification. According to Panciera (2012), inscriptions or epigraphs is defined as any writing affected in a given culture by the substitution of writing tools and surface used for writing. This means that in a culture, where one customarily writes with a suitable tools on wooden tables, tree bark, papyrus, parchment, or cloth an inscription would be any writing made on different writing surfaces, regardless of the technique used (Panciera, 2012). He also argues that inscription is any particular type of written human communication in a unidirectional, in the sense that inscription does not anticipate that a respond will be provided to the sender.

Coupland & Adam (1997) state that behind every inscription lies a reason. Thus, inscriptions are true reflections of the life of a person or people. An inscription can also be defined as a word or group of words written or engraved on solid substance for preservation or public inspections. Such inscriptions are evidently manifested in the form of graffiti, billboard advertisements, handbills and inscriptions on shops. In brief, an inscription is the artistic use of language to express the writer’s or the user’s emotion, thought, ideas, philosophy and general outlook of life as a means of communicating something to the readers or the people. In Ghana, inscriptions are used in most places and they come in various forms: some are written on books,

dressess, cars, canned foods, foot wares and many more. The shops in Kumasi are no exception. These inscriptions come with various themes such as the love of something, an idea about life, the issue of politics, the issue of religion and others and these inscriptions call for curious investigation. This aim of this study is to examine the signs that are inscribed on shops between Kronom to Kedjetia in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Linguistic landscapes are more than just displays because they depict the history of the location they are occupying, the diversity of occupants and languages they speak and most importantly, they depict languages of importance within the area they occupy (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Gorter, 2006; Sabatier & Armand, 2008). Generally, the bulk of research on LL in Ghana has focused on inscriptions on canoes, vehicles, billboards, street names, place names and others. Even though Ofori and Quayson (2016) and Tuffour and Asamoah-Poku (2019) have described inscriptions on shops, their focus was mainly on the languages used regarding which one was more dominant as well as the meaning they conveyed. The focus of this study is Kumasi, a highly multilingual society where speakers of many different languages live and work. Several messages as a result of different themes featured the inscriptions are being conveyed. Meaning of these themes could be sometimes distorted from the point of view of readers. This study in addition goes further to analyze the functions of the signs on the shops at the research area. This is the gap that this research in the literature intends to fill.

## **1.3 Research objectives**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the themes that emerge from signs on shops along Kronum-Kejetia road;
2. investigate the rationale for choice of signs by shop owners/keepers;
3. discuss the functions of the signs on the shops.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

This current study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What themes emerge from the inscriptions on the shops?
2. What rationale underpins choice of particular inscriptions by the shop owners/keepers?
3. What are the functions of the signs on the shops?

#### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

As the data collection process involved a lot of movements, much time and money was needed for the study. Getting the data from the shop owners/keepers for example was a challenge as most of the shop owners/keepers were not willing to open up for the interview intended to be conducted. Again, the recently increased spate of unscheduled electricity outages slowed down the process of writing this thesis as there were times when I could not do any work on the thesis for many hours/days because there was no light.

#### **1.6 Organization of the study**

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows:

Chapter 2 discusses the literature review. This consists of issues such as linguistic landscape, the theoretical framework that underpins the study, and the importance of signs. Chapter 3 comprises the definition and a vivid description of the methodology for this current work. It sets to include the techniques for obtaining the data, sampling technique and research instruments used among others have all been explained under this chapter. The next chapter, Chapter 4, seeks to provide the analysis of the collected data. In addition to that, it provides an analysis of the categorization of the inscriptions into themes as well as the rationale that underpins the choice of particular inscriptions on the shops. The chapter also examines the functions of the signs which are created by the owners/keepers. Finally, Chapter 5 highlights

the findings from the research. It further sets out to include the significance of the use of signs, and suggestions for future research.





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews other research works relevant to this study. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is also not left out under this same chapter. One part discusses the related literature based on Linguistic Landscape (LL) while the other part highlights the theoretical framework. In this chapter, an overview of Linguistic Landscape is given as well as the key ideas that language researchers have found to be associated with the term. Also, many inferring works on linguistic landscape are reviewed here, and from them, the themes, functions and syntactic features that come with linguistic landscape are brought to bear to help us understand the linguistic landscape situation in Kronom, Kedjetia and the Kumasi community as a whole. The chapter again, explores the basic tenets of Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory which is the theory used for this study. It also presents the strengths and criticisms that come with the theory as well as the implication of the EVT on the study.

#### **2.1 An overview of the notion of linguistic landscape**

In the quest of analyzing the nature, functions and the rationale behind the choice of words on public signs, many researchers have come up with numerous inferring definitions for the term over the years (BenRafael, 2009; Gorter, 2006; Landry and Bourhis, 1997). The term “Linguistic Landscape” first appeared in Landry and Bourhis’ (1997) report on the perceptions of Francophone high school students of public signs in Canadian provinces. They, however, emphasize that the study of the language of public signage is not an entirely new phenomenon as humans have been studying signs since time immemorial – even before the term linguistic landscapes was coined. In their report, Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 25) defined linguistic landscapes as “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place

names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration”.

BenRafael (2006, p. 14) also defines linguistic landscape as “any sign announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location”. Gorter (2006) on the other hand, sees linguistic landscapes as any written language exhibited in public domains that are visible and can be viewed by the members of the public. For Shohamy and Gorter (2009), the term, ‘linguistic landscape’ or ‘public sign’ goes beyond the items it covers in the commonly quoted definition from Landry and Bourhis (1997) as it can be expanded to include a variety of literacy items such as icons, images, and logos and even cover more and more places for different research purposes. Therefore, for them, Linguistic Landscape refers to “the languages that are visible in a specified area, more precisely, the language that can be found in cities, indoor markets, shops, schools, offices of government and big corporations, moving buses, campuses, beaches, icons and so on.” Thus, linguistic landscape or public sign can be said to be the visibility and salience of languages on public as well as commercial signs in a given territory or region (Landry and Bourhis, 1997).

A substantial number of studies done on linguistic landscapes have shown that they are more than just displays on the side of the road because they tend to depict the history of the location they are occupying, the diversity of occupants and languages that are spoken in that area and most importantly, they depict languages of importance within the area they occupy (Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Gorter, 2006). Reh (2004, p. 38) mention that the study of linguistic landscape helps to draw conclusions on the social layering of the community, the relative status of various societal segments, and the dominant cultural ideals of that particular society. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) also assert that studying the linguistic landscapes of a particular locality does not only give one an in-depth knowledge of the locality and the people living in that speech

community, but also portray the languages that have power and prestige on the ground and the ones that are devalued.

Landry and Bourhis (1997) and Kotze (2010) also mention that linguistic landscapes are not just signs displayed for public benefit but are in fact ‘instruments’ that carry intentions, beliefs, ideologies and the unadulterated message that an individual wants to send out. Therefore, it is undeniable that this area of research has received a considerable amount of attention in recent times as a great deal of information can be inferred about a given area just through studying signs in a given territory or region (Ben-Rafael, 2006; Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977; Gorter, 2006; Kotze, 2010; Landry and Bourhis, 1997). These insightful generalizations are what inspire this study to investigate the inscriptions on the shops in one of the multilingual cities in Ghana, West Africa to find out the language phenomenon at the moment and also the beliefs, ideologies and identity that comes with its people.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

It is an undeniable fact that no linguistic description or observation can be complete without theoretical framework and that all linguistic landscape description is to that extent *theory impregnated* (Popper, 1972, p. 104). Therefore, this study is framed within the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory (EV) of Landry and Bourhis (1997). This theory stems from the notion of Ethnolinguistic Vitality which is usually defined as “what makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations” (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977, p. 308). Thus, a group’s ability to maintain and protect its existence in time as a collective entity with a distinctive identity and language (Landry & Borhis, 1997). According to Yagmur (2010, p. 112), Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) proposed the model of ethnolinguistic vitality as a framework for integrating the role of socio-structural variables in intergroup relations, cross-cultural communication, second language learning, mother tongue maintenance, and language shift and loss. The EV theory was originally proposed as a general

language theory to explain interethnic relationships between different groups that face more or less favourable conditions for survival. However, many researchers have also used it to explain the language choices and behaviour of speakers in bilingual and multilingual societies (Bourhis, Giles, & Rosenthal, 1981; Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977; Yagmur, 2010).

The major claim of the theory is that status, demographic, institutional support, and control factors combine to make up the vitality of ethnolinguistic groups. The status variables involve the economic, social, socio-historical, and language status of the group within or outside the mainstream community. Demographic variables are those related to the number and distribution patterns of ethnolinguistic group members throughout a particular region or national territory. Demographic variables also include the birth rate, the group's rate of mixed marriages, and the patterns of immigration and emigration. Institutional support factors refer to the extent to which a language group enjoys formal and informal representation in the various institutions of a community. Institutional support has to do with the degree to which an ethnolinguistic group receives formal and informal support in the various institutions: mass-media, education, government services, industry, religion, culture, and politics. It is argued that these variables shaping vitality provide an *objective* picture of the group as a collective unit. However, Bourhis, Giles, and Rosenthal (1981) proposed that group members' subjective vitality perceptions may also be as important as the group's objective vitality because it covers the individuals' perceptions of the societal conditions influencing them as well.

Thus, within this framework, a group's strengths and weaknesses in each of these domains could be examined to find out whether an ethnolinguistic group has a low, medium, or high vitality. It is explained that low vitality groups are most likely to go through linguistic assimilation and *cease to exist as a distinctive collectivity*. On the other hand, the high vitality groups are likely to maintain their language and distinctive cultural traits in multilingual settings. Thus, the vitalities of speakers' first and second languages can influence sign creators

to either use L1 or L2. For example, if Akan is the dominant language in the research area and English is less dominant, then we are likely to find creators of the shop signs using expressions in Akan than English like *Onyame ne hene* instead of *God is King*. Thus, deep down, it is a group identity issue (Tajfel, 1978). Tajfel (1978) explains social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 63).

Ellemers, Kortekaas and Ouwerkerk (1999) also argue that there are three components of social identity; cognitive, evaluative and emotional. According to them, these three components are conceptually distinct aspects of identity; and that only the “group commitment appears to be the key aspect of social identity which drives the tendency for people to behave in terms of their group membership” (p. 386). Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) emphasize that this commitment can be said to be a bounded solidarity, which is the feeling of unity that often arises from real or perceived threats to the group. Thus, ethnolinguistic vitality could be defined as the group’s will to act collectively, deriving from its members’ emotional attachment to this particular group membership. The stronger the affective commitment is, the more vitality the group possesses and vice-versa. They also add that the affective commitment is not the sole cause that motivates group members to behave collectively in intergroup situations. This is because sometimes people are unintentionally forced to participate in the actions of the group even if they do not approve with an action of an individual by how they react to what is being done.

Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) also refer to this phenomenon as enforceable trust, which is defined as the group’s capacity to sanction those who do not obey the norms. To be more precise, bounded solidarity and enforceable trust. This is in line with the two facets of what Bourdieu (1991, p. 170) calls symbolic power – a power of “making people see and

believe, of conforming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world ... by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization ... capable of producing real effects without apparent expenditure of energy". For Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993), emotional attachment, bonded solidarity, enforceable trust, and symbolic power are all built communicatively in public, private, and educational discourses which are used by groups to construct and enhance social cohesion and raise ethnolinguistic vitality.

### **2.2.1 Implications of the Ethnolinguistic vitality theory on Linguistic Landscape**

That the various language choices we see on linguistic landscapes are as a result of the bilingual and multilingual nature of the society is one assertion that has been accepted by all (Bourhis, Giles, & Rosenthal, 1981; Gorter, 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In fact, many including Landry and Bourhis (1997) hold the view that linguistic landscapes act as the most observable and immediate index that reveals the relative power and status of languages in a bilingual and multilingual communities. Hence, the reason why the study on linguistic landscapes are normally in the cities where there are people from diverse ethnicities. For this reason, Gorter (2006) coined the term 'multilingual cityscapes' to avoid using the term 'linguistic landscapes', because the term linguistic landscapes connotes 'countryside' whereas collections of signs are customarily found within cities. Even though the term 'city' is somewhat accurate, Edelman (2010) argues that the term 'multilingual' denounces the possibility of encountering monolingual or even bilingual landscapes.

From the discussion, it can be noticed that the main objective of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory is to reflect on the relationship between linguistic landscape (LL) and language presence and vitality, especially in culturally-diverse societies with bilingual and multilingual speakers. The theory also helps one to understand the roles played by the different factors influencing the visibility of languages in LLs, such as the linguistic situation of the area, the size of the city, the extent of the immigrant communities, and employment opportunities in

the area. The rest are migration channels and migration status, community organizations, and the local public policy towards immigrants (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Shoshamy, 2006; Shoshamy & Gorter, 2008). According to Shoshamy and Gorter (2008), though the linguistic dynamics and the vitality of the linguistic groups of a society usually move within two different poles and often lead to opposing outcomes in terms of linguistic contact, there is also a tendency towards a situation of monolingualism. Thus, in every society, there is usually a case of dominant languages versus minority languages however, this usually shifts to a situation where only one language (the dominant language) becomes the medium used by almost all the populace. This happens because the dominant language becomes a necessary and indispensable tool for interaction, as well as a symbol of integration, assimilation and full citizenship (De Mauro, 1963, 1989).

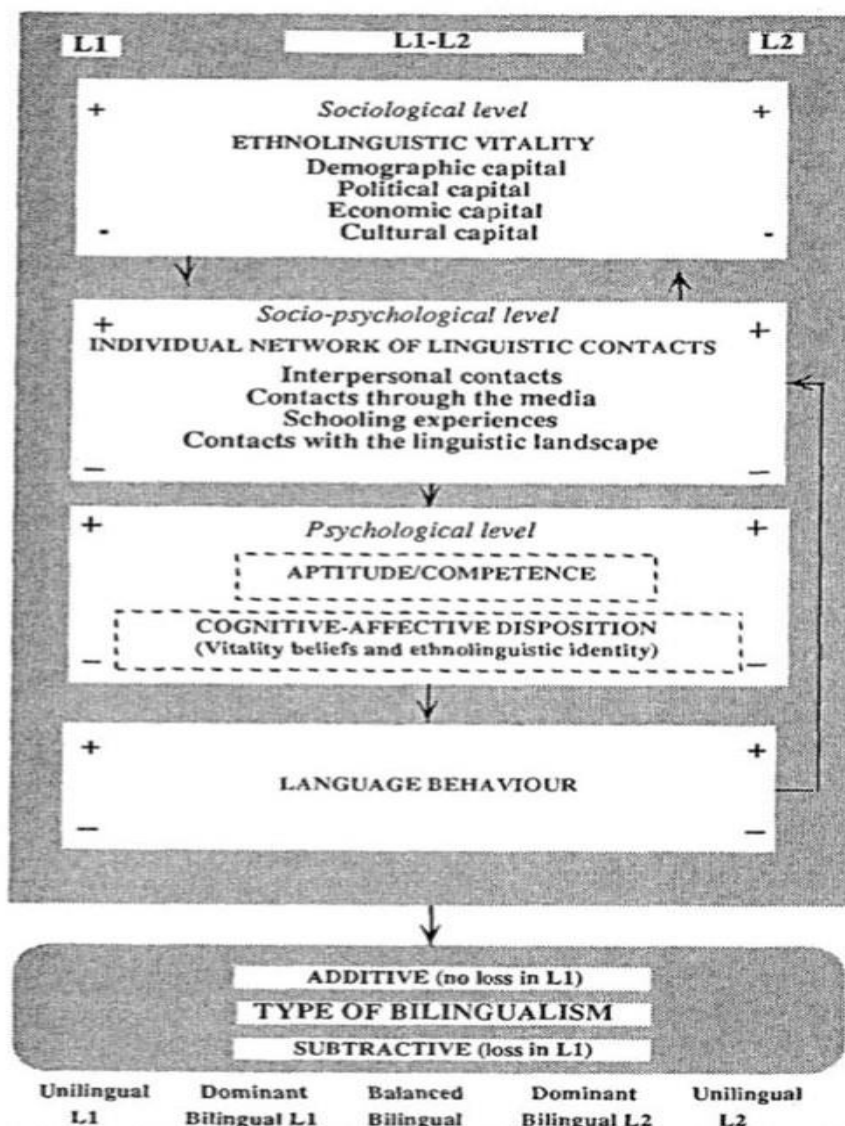
On the other hand, however, many researchers including Landry and Bourhis (1997) also mention that there is also a tendency towards multilingualism because the high vitalities of ethnolinguistic groups whose languages are not even dominant. They mention that such groups often tend to have high vitalities because of the position they may hold in the area, or due to the size of their speakers. Therefore, they hold that in a big city with a strong multi-ethnic component, every language phenomenon is possible as it is usually a place where collective and individual identities are enabled to express themselves and also because in such settings, there is room for creativity and change. Also, the relations between social and linguistic groups are also more dynamic compared to other geographical areas.

Therefore, to understand the rationale behind the choices of languages on the inscriptions of the shops in this study, the researcher employs the Landry and Bourhis' (1997) model with additive and subtractive bilingualism as possible intermediary outcomes that influence public signs. Additive bilingualism refers to the situation where a person has acquired the two languages in a balanced manner while subtractive bilingualism refers to the situation

where the person learns the second language at the detriment of the first language, especially if the first language is a minority language. Here, mastery of the first language decreases, while mastery of the other languages (usually the dominant languages) increases. And this normally is the language situation in most bilingual and multilingual communities. In this model, objective and subjective vitality serve as the determinants of additive and subtractive bilingualism/multilingualism. Objective vitality is the socio-structural factors of an ethnolinguistic group and the group members' cognitive representation and perceptions of the relative vitality of different groups is termed subjective vitality. This is represented in Figure 2.1.

As can be seen from the diagram, L1 refers to the first language of the members of the community whereas L2 is the second language that the speakers have acquired or normally associate with. From the model, the socio-structural factors of Ethnolinguistic Vitality constitute a sociological level, a socio-psychological level and a psychological level, all of which influence the process of bilingual and multilingual development (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). At the sociological level, there are four forms that come to play. These are demographic capital, political capital, economic capital and cultural capital. Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) mention that the overall objective vitality of each language group can be estimated by assessing the strength of each of these domains. The demographic capital here deals with the number and the proportion of group members relative to the overall population. Thus, if the total number of speakers for a particular language is high, then the use of that language for inscriptions will be higher than if the speakers are just few.





**Figure 2.1. Landry and Bourhis' (1997) Ethnolinguistic Vitality model**

For the political capital of a language group, it can be assessed by monitoring the degree of use of the language in government functions and services and this tends to also have an effect of which languages one is likely to find on inscriptions in some areas compared to other areas. Also, the political capital can be examined by analyzing the position of group members on the hierarchical decision-making structure. This is because often, the language of such members of the society tends to be the language of the majority and has dominance over other languages. The economic capital looks at the use of the group's language in the various aspects of commerce; selling and buying and making general business transactions. Language groups

that control important sectors of financial and commercial activity in the community will tend to have their languages dominate others, hence, appearing more on inscriptions than others. The cultural capital looks at the language used for the cultural practices and the normal every day way of life in the speaking community.

Another level on the diagram is the socio-psychological level. This level looks at all the possible contacts a speaker may have with the languages in the society. At this level, there are a lot of social variables like interpersonal contacts, contacts through media, schooling experiences and contacts with the linguistic landscape. These social variables often show why speakers often choose the languages that they use and in this case the reasons behind the language on the inscriptions. The last level on the diagram is the psychological level. Here, the variables are grouped under “the aptitude/competence factor and the cognitive-affective disposition of the individual” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 33). This level deals with the willingness of an individual to learn and use a particular language other than another. It shows how the members of the community unintentionally influence the kind of language choices of an individual. So for this study, these variables will help explain the different languages that still appear on the shop signs, even though they do not have majority speakers in area of study. It will also look at how the demographics of the speaking community push sign creators, making them choose languages that are not their first languages.

### **2.2.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory**

One of the key assertions of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory is that community languages with high ethnolinguistic vitality will be retained, while those with low ethnolinguistic vitality will tend to be replaced by the mainstream language. This helps to provide a broader and more inclusive explanation for the reasons for the various language behaviour we see every day in our communities, compared to other models. This theory is also able to assess the vitality of ethnic groups according to status, demographic, and institutional

factors and show the power distinctions that exist among languages in a particular speaking environment. According to Yagmur and Ehala (2011, p. 106), “the greatest merit of the EV theory is its sensitivity to social factors and its care of relational cues”. Mc-Entee-Atalianis (2011) also mentions that it must be acknowledged that the theory is a point of reference and has been very productive over nearly forty years. The theory also has expanded through different fields (e.g. Sociology, Social Psychology, Cultural Studies, and Anthropology) and amounted to a growing body of empirical evidence. Certainly, the subjective side of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory helps one understand the overt attitudes of the members of the ethnic groups for their general language usage, while the application of standardized measures and the assessment of demographic factors are also necessary steps to provide an overview of the interethnic relationships.

Nevertheless, like every theory, the EV theory also comes with some weaknesses (e.g. Mc-Entee-Atalianis, 2011; Ehala & Zabrodskaja, 2011; Yagmur, 2011). This is summarized in Yagmur (2011) who states that:

The most important criticism of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory is that the theory alone does not fully explain the vitality of a language but must be complemented with other findings and methods. A heavy reliance on the mainstream institutions and demographic and status factors defined from the perspective of the dominant groups tends to underestimate the vitality of minority languages and to ignore processes of social resistance, mobilization, and emotional attachment from minority groups. (pp. 117-118)

From the above generalization, it can be realized that resting solely on the EV theory and its parameters sometimes may not give you a clear finding of the situation on board and therefore may need some principles, findings and strategic methods of collecting and analyzing data from

other empirical studies done in order to confirm the adequacy of the findings that the EV theory proposes.

Another weakness of the theory is that, there is no clear definition of the notion 'Ethnolinguistic Vitality'. Many researchers have argued that since the EV theory was originally proposed as a theory to explain the role that language plays in interethnic relationships and ethnicity, it therefore, mainly relies on pronunciation features taken as indexes of convergence and divergence of a language. This sometimes makes the theory unable to give a clearer picture for the language behaviours that speakers tend to portray in a community, adding that often the variables and criteria for measuring have to be changed for every given situation in order to get adequate results (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977; Clyne, 1992; Yagmur, 2011). For example, Clyne (1992) asserts that often, different criteria and perspectives of EV have to be raised depending on the language situation under study. Thus, for instance, while most of the studies on language contact have focused on interactional processes, studies on language death tend to focus on broader sociopolitical aspects. Likewise, studies of language attrition have focused on individual processes, whereas studies of language shift pay closer attention to social processes. Therefore, for Edwards (1992, p. 37), "the EV theory in its canonical form lacks specificity". In spite of these weaknesses, the theory have been found to be adequate in describing the linguistic landscapes of different contexts, and this means that it can be applied in the current study.

### 2.2.3 Summary

The theory which was proposed and developed by Landry and Bourhis (1997) posits that every ethnolinguistic group has what they termed "**vitality**" which is "**what makes a group to behave in a certain way unique from others**" is what is responsible for the language behaviour that we see day in and day out in our communities. The major claim of the theory is that status, demographic, institutional support and control factors are what affect a group's

vitality. The theory claims that ethnolinguistic groups could either have high or low vitalities. Languages spoken by groups with high vitalities tend to be the dominant languages while groups with low vitalities have minority languages. This makes the theory one of the most suitable frameworks that help to explain the language choices of owners of inscriptions and also the language situation that exist in a particular linguistic society at a particular time.

### **2.3 Syntactic structure of Linguistic Landscape**

One area that many language researchers have looked at when it comes to linguistic landscape is the syntactic structure of the signs (e.g. Backhaus, 2007; Samaila, 2010). Linguistic landscape in both monolingual and multilingual communities usually come with unique structures; in terms of how the words are arranged, the language patterns used, and the general linguistic elements that make up the inscriptions. Many studies report that while some of these public signages are written in complete sentences, others appear as phrases and words. In bilingual and multilingual communities, you are likely to find inscriptions with code-switching features, borrowed words and sometimes inscriptions in direct translation from one language to another (Backhaus, 2007; Dagenais et al, 2009). One area which cannot be overlooked in the analysis of linguistic landscape is the errors that are made on these signs; many of the signs are mounted up with poor semantics, omission, spelling, and grammatical errors.

For instance, Samaila (2010) examined the problems associated with inscriptions and signs on vehicles as well as signboards in areas such as Benue, Taraba and Enugu states. From this research, he was able to identify the grammatical errors in the inscriptions. He collected the data by using observation. To make meanings out of the inscriptions and to make them readable to the entire public, he collected a cross-section of the inscriptions as well as signs and re-inscribed them. He conducted interview on errors in their grammar and semantic analysis as far as their writings are concerned. This was a one-on-one interview between the

owners of motor vehicles as well as those who use signboards in the afore-mentioned areas. It was found that majority of the inscriptions, out of the total of one hundred and six (106) inscriptions that were collected, were grammatically incorrect and semantically not all that clear for public consumption. The errors in the inscriptions that spelt out were clearly seen as dominating including grammatical errors, omission errors, wrong spellings, punctuation errors and the use of non-existent English words.

According to Samaila (2010), there are a lot of challenges associated with inscriptions containing errors. This is because it becomes difficult to read, understand and also make meaning out of it. It is obvious that inscriptions written in Pidgin are generally preferred and understood by many people, especially in a speech community where their level of education is low. In areas of this nature they take delight in writing inscriptions full of Pidgin but grammatically unacceptable. In one way or the other, errors in grammar can negatively affect inscriptions on motor vehicles and signboards. They generally mislead the reading public. That notwithstanding, inscriptions with incorrect punctuation distort understanding and render the meaning the writers wish to put across the public domain meaningless and invalid. The relationship that exists between Samaila's work and the current research work is something we cannot overlook. Both works seek to discuss language pertaining to the public space. On the contrary, while Samaila's attention is focused much more on grammatical errors, wrong punctuation, incorrect spelling of words and others, the focus of this current work considers other things including the dominant language in the inscription on shop, the message that those inscription carry to people, and the factors that motivate or influence them to use a particular language for those inscriptions.

In another study, Mgbemena (2013) investigated language use, forms, popular themes and objectives of the inscriptions, using tricycles in Nigeria, popularly known as *Keke*. The data collected highlighted the current reality of Nigeria as a country that is multilingual. The

researcher identified that the data collected were in short catchy names and expressions which actually relate to diverse issues such as identity, aggressive stance towards opposition, and personal philosophy. The study also found that language use in this domain contributes to the development of language with English as the most common language used for the inscriptions on the tricycles in the country. This highlights how functional the language is in the public domain. According to Mgbemena (2013), when a language is being used effectively, it is properly studied and understood, bringing positive development to the language. He therefore indicated that this is the major reason for which English has now become the dominant developed language in Nigeria.

Oduro-Frimpong (2013) also investigated car owners by interviewing them to find out the specific life experiences that result in the coinage of mottonyms on their commercial vehicles. He found that most of these mottonyms are hinged on people's life experiences as well as names drivers of commercial vehicles used to identify themselves. Researches done earlier vividly showcased how these inscriptions are widely originated in human interpersonal relationships in personal and social experiences. The study showed that many of the inscriptions on vehicles in Ghana are displayed with poor semantics. Thus, if someone wants to get full understanding, one has to tap the strategies of how the inscriptions have been coined. However, Oduro-Frimpong (2013) found that most of the words inscribed on the vehicles lack complete meaning because of lack of competence in the language used for the inscription. For someone to develop competence in the language, one has to have partial understanding of the words, phrases as well as sentences in the language. However, the faulty signs clearly showed that the sign creators did not have competence in the language.

Narkotey (2018) also studied the domain of the inscriptions on vehicles as languages in the public space. In addition to that, he looks at a vivid discussion on commercial vehicles as well as their description, specifically in the city of Accra, Ghana. To the researcher, man makes

good use of language in diverse forms and in different contexts of situation to communicate their experiences, feelings, and ideologies for different purposes which may educate, persuade, inform, and socialize. One specific finding of his study attests to the fact that drivers/owners of commercial vehicles in the Greater Accra region communicate their thoughts, experience, feelings and the like through the use of inscriptions on their vehicles. In addition, he examined how languages used by the writers (drivers/owners) of the inscriptions could be engendered by variables such as location, age, education, style, and gender, to inform the choice of language used for writing the inscriptions on the vehicles. After the analysis of the data, he identified the surface meanings of the inscriptions and the reason behind their meaning. The errors in the inscriptions were spelt out and the researcher found grammatical errors, omission errors, spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, and the use of non-existing English words.

### **2.3.1 Some syntactic structures of Linguistic Landscape**

A substantial number of studies have found that linguistic landscape could appear as complete sentences, clauses, phrases, words, free morphemes or even bound morphemes (Bagna & Barni, 2009; Wang, 2017). The visual representation of outdoor advertisement is very unique and recognized to be highly influenced by the motivation and intended meaning of the sign maker. One of the most obvious intentions of making an advertisement for any establishment is to draw audience attention to the product advertised with a final goal of purchasing the product and this informs the kind of structure that is put up. Kress (2010, p. 10) notes that there are three main principles in sign making: (1) signs are made to certain motivated form and meaning; (2) the motivation of sign maker, and (3) the use of certain available resources to certain regions. These, according to Kress (2010) are what inspire the kind of structure that is used for the inscriptions. Cenoz & Gorter (2006, p. 71) also assert that the structure that shop signs fall in are influenced by who distinguishes the kind of product they



sell (clothing, books, furniture, food) or according to the shop owner, the community they belong to, the targeted domain (private or public) as well as the language to be used.

### **2.3.2 Linguistic landscape as complex sentences/clauses**

Some linguistic landscapes appear as sentences or even sometimes complex sentences. For example, findings from research conducted on linguistic landscape such as Wang (2017) reveal that mostly inscriptions that appear as sentences are normally public signs on billboards or on big notices put up by the government and some private-owned enterprises as well. These kinds of linguistic landscape are designed to give more information compared to the ones which may be single words. Tulp (1978) for instance, studied the languages of commercial billboards in Brussels and found that most of these signs were in sentences with a few being in phrases and words. Tulp (1978) concluded that this was so mainly because of the space available. Producing signs is somewhat expensive and therefore individuals may normally not go in for sentences as signs owned by the government who may have vital information to put across and also the resources needed for such projects. A preliminary observation by the researcher in the area for the current study shows that most of the shop signs mounted were in phrases and words with just a few in sentences. These inscriptions in sentences were all on notice boards within and outside the shops pasted to give information on how services are rendered and the mission and vision of the shops. Some were also used to give out information about new items available, mode of payments and direction to the toilet facilities present. There were inscriptions such as *'Goods sold are not returnable'*, *'Dear cherished customers, we will be closed from 27<sup>th</sup> December & re-open on 4<sup>th</sup> January'*, and other equally important ones.

### **2.3.3 Linguistic landscape as phrases and words**

Many of inscriptions in public space come as words and phrases. This pattern can be observed on a large number of signs within a community (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Korang, 2011; Reh, 2004). It is observed that normally, simplicity means a lot to shop owners as well

as the audience. Due to this, most linguistic landscape are concise in words and phrases with some even being free morphemes, all in an attempt to use the simplest form to achieve the most effective feedback. Usually, signs of this kind are made up of names of people, short expressions about life in general, and advices and personal opinions that sign creators wish to send across. Owusu (2011) observes that vehicle inscriptions usually come as words or phrases due to limited space on the vehicles. Korang (2011) also looked at inscriptions on T- shirt worn by students on campus and found that most of these inscriptions are either in words or phrases with just a few being sentences. From these generalizations, it can be realized that the structure that these public inscriptions come in are highly dependent on the space available, simplicity of the signs, the message being sent across, as well as the audience.

#### **2.4 Linguistic Landscape and language**

Language is usually one of the most salient cultural values of an ethnic group. According to Torras & Gafaranga (2002), an ethnic group's naming function, its patterns of cultural transmission, and its daily use for multiple practices, often make language salient for the identity of individuals. The languages spoken and the ways of speaking usually identify the individuals as belonging to a certain membership or class (Gafaranga, 2001, pp. 1913-1915,). Therefore, the cultural values and linguistic identities of the ethnic groups may be challenged in a given language contact case. Depending on the situation, the challenge may give room for some language learning and bilingualism for all or some individuals of one or more ethnic groups.

Usually, language use is very pervasive in public spaces inside and outside on streets, vehicles, shops, buildings, parks, and other public settings. This is because linguistic landscape generally is made up of language, whether verbal or signs. They often come in texts produced through different modes such as written/printed, pictorial/visual, aural/oral and even through gestures. And most especially, in culturally diverse societies, these texts are normally multi-

modal, multi-lingual in nature and represent varied speech acts in diverse social contexts. Hence, they help in examining of the linguistic situation of multilingual societies. Language is said to be an important component of a public sign as it is closely tied to the culture and functions as a symbol of national identity. Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014) asserts that many texts in landscape are identity texts which provide indigenous sources of knowledge about self and community, providing the members of the community with series of opportunities to engage, understand, and appreciate the culture and way of life around them. In addition, public signs can be viewed as language in use that represents individual, collective, and national identities. Thus, through the language of linguistic landscapes, members of the society are able to understand their history and culture, of which their indigenous language is an integral part of it all. Therefore, most times, researchers try to look at the roles the languages displayed on the inscription play in the community (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014).

An example of such is Adetunji (2013), who examined Ibadan linguistic landscape using photographic data sampled from its linguistic landscape of the local government areas. The concerns of the study solve three main problems. They include how meaning is made by the writers of the inscriptions and expected to be understood by the consumers of the linguistic landscape, what is communicated about the status of English in Nigeria, and lastly how this linguistic landscape provides valuable sociolinguistic information about Nigerian English in the context of world Englishes. The analysis of the data clearly showed two types of demarcated signs. They include top-down (official) and bottom-up (non-official). The linguistic landscape was used to perform both informational and symbolic functions. English as a language was preferred as a dominant language while the preferred code was usually positioned at the top of sign. However, it was observed by the researcher that bottom-up was frequently shown as against top-down signs. More often than not, the researcher identified that top-down signs were

entirely non-commercial and contained six languages while bottom-up signs showed different commercial and non-commercial content expressed in three different languages.

The findings revealed that the reader orientation anchored in six different languages, specifically the dominance of monophonic signs and overt multilingualism as well as idiosyncratic uses of English and Yoruba. The English on this public sign is valid, made up of standard and non-standard, as well as localized forms. This attests to the fact that English is a dominant language in Nigeria followed by Yoruba, predominantly spoken in Ibadan. Even though Yoruba dominates as a second language, there is a wide gap between English and Yoruba. Other languages such as Hausa, Igbo and Latin are the languages found in the public space and on top of it all, the preferred language was English. That notwithstanding, there were a lot of bottom-up as compared to top-down signs. The top-down signs consisted of six different languages and were almost completely non-commercial. Functionally, they served to name places as well as objects. In addition to that, they served to regulate human behaviour, commemorating human activities and give specific location of tourism. On the other hand, bottom-up signs highlighted different kinds of commercial and non-commercial contents shown in three languages.

Sibongile (2014) also examined the best system to maintain, preserve, and promote all languages existing in a country to utilize them in a multilingual manner. This is what constituted the three main mission statements in the University of Western Cape province examined. They claimed to develop multilingualism by encouraging the use of and development of IsiXhosa, English, and Afrikaans as languages of learning as well as teaching at the various institutions. This study was embarked upon to look into the practices of multilingualism in the three main universities of the Western Cape, upon consideration of quantity and quality (of IsiXhosa translation) in the linguistic landscape. The results showed uneven promotion of the three official languages in all the three universities. This was in terms

of number of signage identified as well as quality of the translation and at times incomplete translation of IsiXhosa signage. English as a language was identified as the most favourable and dominant language. This was followed by Afrikaans and IsiXhosa. The culture of giving favoritism to a particular language was also a traditional practice at the Stellenbosch University. A language attached with prestige was considered as different, with Afrikaans being a typical example.

In another instance, Akindele (2011) studied the linguistic situation of Gaborone, Botswana. The study looked at the common policies, prevalent language attitudes, and the long-term consequences of language contact, among others. The data were collected from specific public domains such as street signs, advertising signs, building names, warning notices and prohibitions, billboards, shop signs, and informative signs, and analyzed. The analysis revealed that Gaborone, in its realm of multilingualism, has English as the dominant language because it appeared on majority of the signs. The inscriptions gave a glimpse of the factors that influenced the multilingual nature of Gaborone. It revealed that this could be as a result of the active involvement in economic and social involvement by inhabitants. The analysis further revealed that the linguistic landscape in Gaborone is dominated by the bilingual signs in English and Setswana followed closely by Chinese and English. What this current study has in common with Akindele's work is that both set out to look for the dominant language(s) in the research area by the use of linguistic landscape as an effective tool. On the contrary, while Akindele collected the data from street signs, advertising signs, and billboards, the current research study collected data specifically from inscriptions on commercial shops.

Omondi (2012) also examined the contact between an official/national language and one or more indigenous languages. This study took place in Kenya. On the contrary, the study analyzed data from two unofficial indigenous languages in Kenya. It was observed from the studies carried out that when Luo and Luyia languages merge, there are three possible

outcomes: speech divergence, speech convergence, and code-switching. It was identified from the study that the Luo respondents make good use of speech divergence than their Luyia counterparts. It was also realized that Luyias outscore Luos in terms of speech convergence. In addition to these, code-switching, which had very low means scores in the two ethnic groups was considered as being the least preferred mode of communication. The studies showed that each of the three strategies performed varied social functions. The intention behind the research was therefore to consolidate the three communication strategies with ethnicity in order to show how language loyalties interplay with ethnicity in rural bilingual speech communities in Africa. The research throws more light on the relationship between ethnicity and ethnic languages in bilingual speech community. This work which was conducted by Omondi relates to this current study as both works analyze languages in speech communities.

Dixson (2015) examined how linguistic communities are represented in the linguistic landscape and what deeper symbolic meanings signs in the linguistic landscape hold for them. The researcher photographed and categorized all signs within a two-mile radius of Buffalo. It was observed that either the signs were fully or partially in non-English languages and were plotted on an electronic map and or fully examined for potential symbolic meanings. It was identified by the researcher that the linguistic landscape of Buffalo, New York, although vastly English dominant, reflects the diversity of the area, even though there was slight diversity in the area. Thus, in a way, the linguistic landscape reflects the need to properly learn English as a language to function well in the American society in areas like business transactions, politics as well as education. However, the lack of uniformity was found throughout the city that reflects the presence of non-English speakers in the area. The present study has something in common with Dixson's research work as both discuss languages used in the public space.

The idea of linguistic landscape was brought into existence by Landry & Bourhis (1997). The study was done from the sociolinguistic point of view. Language planners in

Belgium started it by way of recognizing the significance of marking the boundaries of linguistic territories through the use of public signs. They include billboards, street signs and commercial signs. There was a serious conflict between French and the Flemish speaking communities. This conflict came about as a result of marking territorial boundaries. These challenges were addressed through territorial solution to language problems. Belgium was demarcated into two, which led to the creation of self-administered uni-lingual territories. They were made up of the Flemish-speaking community in the South (Wallonia), Flemish in Flanders received administration and public services as well as schooling while Wallonia received only French. Brussels, the national capital of Belgium, was officially declared bilingual. As a result of its bilingualism, it provided services in both languages to its citizens. There was a need for linguistic division between the Flemish and the Walloon territory and it is through the systematic uses of unilingual public signs in Flemish and French that the identity of each region was made most salient as one crossed the linguistic frontier.

Symbolically, the linguistic landscape of a given region consists of government signs in addition to private signs. When one's own language is frequently found on most private and government signs, it brings out the strong desire and feeling that the in-group language has strong value and status relative to other languages within the sociolinguistic setting. So, it is obvious that when in-group languages are added to public signs, it is an undeniable fact that, that language is strongly valued in the speech community and can be used for official and other domestic activities.

On the other hand, when in-group language signs are not highlighted in the public space, it gives an impression that the language in question is devalued and has little status within the society. That notwithstanding, such exclusion conveys the notion that the in-group language has little use in conducting public affairs. Further, removal of the minority language on public signs may also merge sociolinguistic norms, making members of the group use their

own group language in an ever-declining range of language domains. The removal of the in-group language on public signs may bring into the limelight, the following effects in a speech community: banning the teaching of the minority language in schools and in-group members of that language devaluing the strength of their own language. This will in a way weaken their feeling, desires and their commitment to pass the in-group language unto future generations.

Tulp (1978) studied the languages of commercial billboards in Brussels. The study aimed to show how language usage patterns on these signs have been contributing to the city's quest in developing the French language. He considered that the visibility of a language in public space is significant for its perceived ethnolinguistic vitality. Tulp's (1978) attention was on three large billboards in and around Brussels. The territories the researcher took into consideration were: major tram, metro, and bus routes. At the end of it all, the research demonstrated that French as a language dominates the linguistic landscape of Brussels. The relationship that exists between the current work and Tulp's research is that both examine the dominant language in the research area by using linguistic landscape. On the contrary, while Tulp collected his data from billboards in Brussels, the current study collected the data from the inscription on shops in Kumasi, Ghana.

From all the studies reviewed, it can be seen that language has always been one of the key component of communication, and in this case, linguistic landscaping (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014). The studies discussed here showed that in linguistic landscaping, the sign creator or owner of the sign does not just put up signs, but constructs or mounts inscriptions in a manner that will be identifiable and recognizable by both the receiver of the message and the community at large in order to achieve the desired outcome. It is this that causes bilingual or multilingual societies to have a wide range of signs with diverse language choices, aimed at performing some functions for the members of the society. A look at the various studies reviewed in this chapter shows that linguistic landscape comprises of different forms. In fact,



Shohamy and Gorter (2009) points out that the notion “linguistic landscape” is broader than we can imagine, encapsulating other varieties of literacy items such as icons, images, and logos, and even cover more places for different research purposes.

Studies on linguistic landscape that were captured here have shown that through studying signs in the public space, a great deal of information can be inferred about that area. According to Shohamy and Waksman (2009), this kind of study is known as linguistic landscaping and has become one of the popular means of examining the language phenomenon of a particular speaking community as well as providing valuable insight into the culture, beliefs, and general way of life of a particular linguistic group. It was seen that studying the linguistic landscape of an area can determine a great deal about the people that live in that area, what language ideologies are at play, which languages have power and prestige, and which are marginalized (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre, & Armand, 2009; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Papen 2012; Yanguas, 2009).

It was also realized that the creation of the linguistic landscape involves many actors creating signs, commissioning signs, installing signs and most importantly, people who read, notice and interpret the signs. Although signs usually have an informative function, one that directs, gives information, or implores the reader in some way, signs also have a symbolic function, one that speaks to an underlying ideology (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Throughout the world, linguistic landscape reveals competing language ideologies, struggles for power and prestige, language policy, and provides a map of linguistic territories (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Papen 2012; Yanguas, 2009). Also, the various findings from the research done showed that linguistic landscape also gives visual cases of the global spread of English, and the symbolic meanings associated with the use of English on signs, such as prestige and modernity. It also threw light on some of the change patterns and processes that sign creators who are second language speakers of English create when constructing their signs with English words.

A number of studies have been done on linguistic landscape in Ghana and they cover signs on commercial vehicles, shops, T-Shirts of university students, and place names, with interesting findings that cannot be overlooked. Ofori and Quayson's (2016) study examined themes that emerged from inscriptions on shops and the rationale behind those themes. This study was conducted in Amamoma, a small community located within the University of Cape Coast. Unfortunately, none has been done in Kumasi, which is one of the most densely populated multilingual societies in Ghana. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the inscriptions of shops in Kumasi from the Kronum to Kedjetia road to find out the linguistic situation in the community and to determine the functions that these inscriptions perform in the community. Using the Ethnolinguistic vitality theory as the framework, the study also investigates the factors that influence the kind of languages that appear on the signs and the messages that these inscriptions come with.

## **2.5 Linguistic Landscape and its themes**

From the discussion, works done on linguistic landscape in Ghana shows that themes that emerge from the signs are largely determined by the life and beliefs of the creators of the signs. Thus, what they genuinely experience is what is likely to be put on the signs. Therefore, for Spolsky (2009), several participants are involved in the process of making a sign, and suggest more research be done to incorporate these participants into research on public signs. Ben-Rafael (2009) also notes that the linguistic landscape is a complex system in which many actors are involved in creating and interpreting messages and meanings. Due to this, it can be argued that the linguistic landscape interacts with so many people, not only the sign makers and/or shop owners, but the passerby on the street, because they are all likely to have similar experiences in the lives.

Language is closely tied to culture and functions as a symbol of national identity and therefore many of the texts in the landscape are identity texts which provide

indigenous sources of knowledge about self and community, hence they portray various themes that identifies with the owner of the sign. (p. 160)

For instance, Owusu (2011) examined funny and thought provoking inscriptions on vehicles in Ghana after independence and found that people tend to use public signage to communicate their opinions on issues in the society. According to Owusu (2011), these writings on the vehicles reflected how the people genuinely felt about Nkrumah's government and used the inscriptions on their vehicles to voice out their opinions. Some of these inscriptions were "*Nkruma Kwaseampani*" meaning *Nkruma, a fool and a bastard*, "*dandurunaka sheege*" meaning *His mum's stinking ass-hole*, "*Fathia, kɔ wo kurom*" meaning *Fathia, go to your country*, and many other equally profane ones. Another interesting finding from Owusu's (2011) study was that one could realize that these inscriptions on vehicles were normally borne from people's experiences from a particular situation. Thus, the inscriptions mimic the real-life experiences that people are faced with. Owusu (2011) realized that soon after there were new developments after the coup in 1966, they triggered different vehicle inscriptions.

Owusu (2011) explained that when Dr. Nkrumah was over thrown, the country was not conducive for investors coming from outside to invest in business. As a result, Ghana experienced hardship, bribery, corruption, hunger, as well as poor facilities in schools and in hospitals. This culminated into what was referred to as the PNDC era called "Rawlings Chain" which eventually ended up on the vehicles. He added that this gave birth to religious inscriptions since due to the hardship, many Ghanaians started to turn to God for their needs to be provided. So on the vehicles were inscriptions such as "*Onyame bekyere*" meaning *God will provide*, "*Awurade hu yen mmɔbɔ*" meaning *Lord have mercy on us*, "*Aka m'ani*" meaning *I am in trouble*, "*God is King*" "*Jehovah Jireh*" meaning *God is my provider*, "*Allahu Akbar*" meaning *God is great* and other ones inspired by religion.

Owusu (2011), still on the development of vehicle inscription in Ghana, revealed that the inscriptions on the vehicles soon changed when majority of its citizens' lives began to improve. He reported that during that time, one could see vehicle signs like "*cash man*", "*cool and collected*", "*lover boy*", "*envy no man*", "*pe wo deɛ*" meaning *look for your own*, *sika ye deɛ* meaning *money is good*, *ohia nyɛ* meaning *poverty is bad*, "*otan nni aduro*" meaning *hatred has no medicine*, "*who Jah bless*", "*sea never dries*", "*Ele Mawusi*" meaning it is in the hands of God, and "*I shall return*". Thus, it can be seen from these inscriptions that the experiences of people largely influenced not only the themes seen on the vehicles but also the language in which these messages are written. This is because Owusu (2011) found that while some messages were better understood in the indigenous languages, others also had to be in the English language to be able to serve its function.

Ogunnike (2013) examined selected significant features of language of religious stickers. This study took place in three major towns in Oyo state of Nigeria namely; Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomosho. She focused on the stickers of Christian and Islamic religions and after the analysis of the data, observed that most of the stickers were expressed in English language with few ones written in Yoruba. From her results, she concluded that the use of English portrays the importance of English as a language in Nigeria. Oyetade (2001, p. 107) asserts that "English is a prestige language in Nigeria". Therefore, according to Ogunnike (2013), there is no doubt that the use of car stickers were written in English. The study also examined the thematic functions of these stickers and found that owners used them to highlight more on God than any other theme. According to Ogunnike (2013), to show appreciation to God by owners of these vehicles, they resort to the use of these reverence stickers. Thus, it is a means by which the owners of these vehicles inform the whole world that God has actually done something good for them.

Ejik (2009) found that the inscriptions that were written on old cars in Ghana are totally different from the new ones, a claim that was confirmed by Owusu's (2011) findings. Owusu argued that normally, inscriptions are inspired from the experiences that one encounters at the moment and they do change from time to time, thereby changing the kind of inscriptions the individual is likely to display. Ejik (2009) states that the inscriptions on old cars are different from the inscriptions we have now, because according to him, they were more philosophical some years back compared to current ones which are normally religion-oriented. This assertion falls in line with that of Nana Ampadu (1985), a highlife musician who emphasized that the sayings on the old cars in Ghana were philosophical. Nana Ampadu (1985) mentions that most of the inscriptions were written to express wisdom, hope, as well as belief. Also, there are others that are inscribed to express frustration and sentiment and the rest. Whatever the drivers inscribed on their vehicles was purposely done for a specific reason. Some of the inscriptions on old cards include "*w'ano pe asem*" meaning *you like gossiping*, "*slow but sure*", "*poor no friend*", "*Ebaahi*" meaning *it will be alright*, "*fa w'ani hwe*" meaning *just watch*, "*monkey no fine*", "*Ebaah tsake*" meaning *things will change*, "*skin pain*" a direct translation of *ahoyyaa*, and "*Dabi ebeye yie*, meaning *it shall be well in the future*.

Ofori and Quayson (2016) also investigated themes that emerge from inscriptions on shops and the rationale behind those themes. This study took place within the geographical location of Amamoma, a community located within the University of Cape Coast. The rationale behind their study was to identify how educational environments can affect the themes of the inscriptions on shops. The data collected for the study established that the theme of identity was the most dominant one as most of the signs were written in English language and were therefore more elite compared to inscriptions in the neighbouring towns. It became obvious and evident that educational environments affect the choices of some of the themes depending

on where shops are located. Ofori & Quayson's (2016) work and the present study have commonalities; they both discuss languages in public space, especially on shops.

In Ejik's (2009) study, it was revealed that inscriptions used on Ghanaian vehicles are more often than not phrases and are not complete sentences as a result of insufficient space on the vehicles. He also observed various themes, among which are slogans with religious dimensions, slogans with interpersonal dimension, and slogans which cannot be categorized as pervasive in the inscription used on vehicles. The end result of this study was that there are several forms of discourse clashes identified in inscriptions on vehicles. Religious slogans that were identified on vehicles included '*God is alive*' and '*God is in control*'. Interpersonal slogans are as follows: '*suro nipa*' meaning *fear human*, '*nipa nye*', meaning *man is evil*. There were slogans noted as unclassified as in 'factual' and 'serious'. He observed from his study that religious slogans dominated his data set. This is because religion plays a prominent role in the lives of Ghanaians and therefore not compromised.

One important thing we need to know is that linguistic landscape is interlaced with the issues of people's culture and this has rendered it impossible to investigate linguistic landscape of an area without examining the people's culture and the way the people live their lives in the area. This is because their culture and their views of the world around and outside them greatly influenced how they use language. According to Hult (2009), linguistic landscapes carry crucial socio-symbolic importance as they actually identify and serve as emblem of societies, communities and regions. He also adds that the presence or absence of languages on linguistic landscapes in a particular speaking community signal some symbolic messages about the importance of power, significance and relevance of the languages in community. All these are due to themes and functions that these sign hold. Shohamy and Gorter (2009) point out that people create the language of the public space, therefore, the landscape communicates

messages conveyed by people, which often have a deeper meaning than what is seen on the surface. In addition, Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014) also asserts that

## **2.6 Linguistic Landscape and its functions**

Public signs or linguistic landscape can be found everywhere in a community and often contain themes of different orientations. They also come in different languages and comprise of texts in different modes and media, prints, electronic, audio-visuals, notices, advertisements, slogans and even local lyrics of songs in the community. They come in all these, to perform a function. Dixon (2015) discusses the importance of linguistic landscape in the statement as follows:

The linguistic landscape of an area reveals much about the people who live there, the languages spoken, what languages are valued, and what official or de facto language policies are in place in the neighborhood, city or even country. Through studying the linguistic landscape of an area, researchers see the obvious dominant language, but can also find minority language presence in an area even if only through graffiti or bilingual wordplay when language policy outlaws minority language signs. (p. 6)

Many researches done on linguistic landscapes hold that linguistic landscape can be said to play two major functions; informative and symbolic functions (Akindele, 2011; Cenoz & Gorter, 2009; Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). According to Kotze (2010), the informational function is the most basic function of the linguistic landscape because it gives information to the viewer/reader of the signage and it serves as a marker of linguistic boundaries. Akindele (2011) also throws light on the functions of linguistic landscape in the following statement. He states that:

Linguistic landscape has two functions: informative and symbolic: informative function indicates the borders of the territory of a linguistic group. It shows the specific language or languages for communication or for the selling of products. On the other hand, the

symbolic function refers to the value and status of the languages as perceived by the members of a language group in comparison to other languages. (pp. 2-3).

On looking at the informational purposes of linguistic landscape, Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 25) state that the informational function “gives information on the sociolinguistic composition of various groups in the area, as well as the power and status relations between them”. Tarkington (2009, p. 124) also concurs with Landry and Bourhis (1997) by stating that the linguistic landscape informs people about “linguistic characteristics, territorial limits, and language boundaries of the region they have entered” and can be used to present the language used for exhibition of that particular linguistic landscape as the language used “to communicate and to obtain services within public and private establishments” in that particular geographical area.

Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014) also confirms that the linguistic landscape of a given geographical area can provide two basic functions; informational function and a symbolic function. The informational function of the linguistic landscape serves as a distinctive marker of a geographical territory. Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014) also adds that the linguistic landscape can also serve to demarcate the limit of a territory of the language group it harbours in relation to other linguistic communities they share a border with. Thus, when language boundaries are clearly established, it can stabilize the rivalry that exists among language groups by clearly dividing the administrative territories where members of the speech community can expect to use and receive government as well as private sector services in their own language. When a language is frequently seen on the public space, it means that language can be used to interact and obtain services within public and private area. Thus, the linguistic landscape serves to inform in-group and out-group members of the linguistic boundaries of the region they have entered.



Gorter (2009) also adds that when a specific language is prevalent on public signs, it serves an informational function once the language in question can be used to communicate and also obtain services within public and private establishments that are found in the specific territory. In that instance, majority of the signs are written in that dominant language while just few of the public signs will be seen written in other languages in the public space. Many researchers also observe that symbolically, languages found in the public spaces function in more ways than to simply communicate information. Linguistic landscape reveals deeper symbolic meanings which can point to language policy, language imperialism, discrimination, and other social factors (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Leeman & Modan, 2009; Papen, 2012, Yanguas, 2009).

Another important informative function of linguistic landscape is that it can provide valuable insight into the linguistic situation of a community. This is done by showing the common patterns of language usage and giving information about the official language policies, prevalent language attitudes of language speaker,s and the long-term consequences of language contact among many others (Akindele, 2011; Hewitt-Bradshaw; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Landry and Bourhis (1997) mention that since public signs can be unilingual, bilingual, as well as multilingual, they are often used to map the diversity of the language groups present in a given geographical area. In some cases, only the dominant language group may be found on outside public signs whereas the less dominant language may co-exist with the dominant language on signs found within private and state buildings.

For the symbolic function of the linguistic landscape, Kotze (2010, p. 28) states that “it lies in the choice of message, and more specifically the choice concerning language, on public signage” and where and how each language is placed on the signage. Landry and Bourhis (1997) note that linguistic landscapes are not apparent signs displayed for public benefit but are in fact *instruments* that carry intention and information. This means that linguistic

landscapes can be manipulated to reflect intention of the creators of the signage rather than the *truth* about a particular geographical area. According to Kotze (2010), the symbolic marker function carries two main issues: *power and status*, and *identity*. On power and Status, Kotze (2010) states that governments and people in high position have a way of compelling language use in public spaces. He emphasizes that the languages of those in power can easily be favoured by linguistic landscapes; in fact, this is always the case.

One of the means used to compel and dictate language use within an institution, province, or a particular geographical area, is by drafting and enforcing language policies that stipulate the governing institutions' desired outcome. This way, everyone will have to abide by the language policy. Again, Kotze (2010) indicates that linguistic landscapes hold more power in the society than just being displays. As such, they can be used to send ideological messages to speakers of the dominant language, reassuring them about their position in society. This then makes those with less power rebel against this pattern often times by use of graffiti and less preferred languages in their private institutions. An example can be found in Scollon and Scollon's (2003) study in Quebec, where sign makers were compelled (by the language policy) to place French above every other language existing in the city.

Another symbolic function of linguistic landscape is that they can convey the identity of a language community, sociopolitical relationships between languages, economic messages imploring consumers, or information to the reader in some way (Barni & Bagna, 2009; Dixon, 2015; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). It is also important to note that whatever language is most dominant in the linguistic landscape automatically conveys a message that the language has strength, power, status, significance and vitality, as well as a reflection of the name and identity of the people in the area. For instance, when one enters an Akan speaking community or an Ewe speaking area, majority of the inscriptions on shops, vehicles, posters, and banners may automatically display the original language that the people are associated with, serving as a

reflection of who they are, their beliefs, and what they stand for. In contrast, languages that have little or no presence in an area are devalued, and are seen as having little use in public affairs (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

Some studies conducted on linguistic landscape have also shown that normally, many public signs may carry other symbolic functions that tend to be inspired from the sign creators' beliefs, experiences, ideologies, philosophies and how they view life in general. Sometimes, these meanings may be clearer enough, but other times, they may not be that all explicitly stated on the signs unless one thinks deeper to get the message that is being sent. Thus, creators of the signs do not put up signs in fine print just to showcase the languages they use and why, but tend to use them to signal a deeper meaning. Although signs in a given area represent primarily linguistic functions, they also function in social, cultural, and economic ways (Akindele, 2011; Dixson, 2015; Ejik, 2009). In relation to this, Sloboda (2009) points out that signs do carry ideological, religious, and cultural functions, adding that signs can act to reinforce ideologies and the way of life that an individual is expected to live in a society. Most of these kinds of signs teach, educate, and voice out the opinions and thoughts that normally could not be said freely.

Also, whereas the meanings of some of these inscriptions could be straight forward and precise, the interpretation of some symbolic meanings of signs could vary. As a painting can be interpreted differently by the viewer than the artist intended, or a novel can be interpreted to have more meaning than the author intended, or a song can cause the listener to recall experiences that the songwriter or musicians have never had, a sign can have more or less meaning to a reader than various actors involved in the creation and display of the sign intended. Dagenais et al (2009) intimate that one factor in determining how a sign is viewed depends on a person's social situation and what representations they affiliate themselves with. Apart from this, it can also depend on a person's experiences and interests.

Kasanga (2014) asserts that signs are normally full of discourses and they are powerful tool for promoting culture, religion and even democratic governance and politics. Kasanga examined how protesters use signs as a meditational means to make their demands known to others and to express their feelings. These actions and demonstrations were executed through the use of signs as sit-ins, chanting, and the use of barricades. The study discussed the symbolic meaning of the demonstration signs which revealed that there is power in public signs to execute action, reinforce their role and embedding act of protesting.

For Hicks (2002), some linguistic landscape also performs a mythological function. The mythological/folkloric function is relatively new, introduced in the field of linguistic landscapes. According to Hicks (2002), many researchers in recent times have now shown interest in recognizing place names as linguistic landscapes. This is because people intrinsically feel that the names on the landscape are identifiable with community and nation. Kotze (2010) also agrees to Hicks' (2002) assertion and presents the place names of a community that has suffered genocide as an example. Kotze's (2010) study revealed that the place name of a community who faced a genocide attack named places within the community in order for its surviving members to remember what once happened. He found that the people of that community did so because the place' name holds a sentimental value to them, in a sense that it may be the only remaining link to the tragic incident. So even if the name of the place of the tragic incident is acquired by another place as a memorial, the new place marks a sense of belonging to the survivors. This way of naming or linguistic landscape can be seen in many countries in the world. For instance, in South Africa, various similar cases can be observed where government buildings, residential areas, streets, schools, and hospitals are named after fallen apartheid heroes; that way, their efforts to achieve a democratic and free country to all gives a sense of belonging to its people.

## 2.7 Related studies

A number of researches have been done on linguistic landscape to look at its nature, syntactic structure, themes and functions. One of the earliest studies done on the said subject is Landry and Bourhis (1997) where they explored the perceptions of language vitality and language in Canada. Their findings revealed that the power and status of the language and its speakers is relative to the prevalence of languages within the linguistic landscape, which reinforced the perception of a linguistic in-group and an out-group. Thus, the study did not only spell out the prototypical features of linguistic landscape, but also showed that linguistic landscape is largely connected to language behaviour and that the visual presence of public signs reveal the minority languages and the dominant languages and the roles they play in that particular speaking environment. Ever since Landry and Bourhis' (1997) study, there have been other interesting works as well. And the more these studies are conducted, the more they continue to confirm that the term 'linguistic landscape' captures a whole lot more than it was originally said to be (e.g. Reh, 2004; Shohamy, 2006). This has caused some researchers, including Shohamy and Waksman (2009), to argue that there are broader dimensions of linguistic landscape. According to them, linguistic landscape is not limited to only the writings on standing signs, but can include graffiti, moving signs, icons, and images on public display, official and non-official announcements, product packaging, and even print materials. Hence, "the most unique feature of LL is that it refers to text presented and displayed in the public space" and this helps capture more items which usually would not have been associated with linguistic landscape (Shohamy & Waksman 2009, p. 314). Hult (2009) confirms this when he mentions that the basic premise of linguistic landscape is that the sign should be made up of a visual language used in public spaces which often represent observable manifestations of circulating ideas about multilingualism.

One of such examples is Nosovsky's (2006) study on tombstones. Nosovsky (2006), in examining epitaphs on tombstones, grouped them into three major categories; epitaph as a literature genre, epitaph as etymological source, and as a historical source. The study showed that epitaphs on tombstones perform some functions by telling the public about who the dead person was and also granting the dead person favour for his or her soul to be accepted in heaven. One specific finding of the research attests to the fact that inscriptions perform a function as a literature genre and serve as a medium through which the living make an appeal to the spiritual beings. After two years, Kim (2008) also undertook a research on Americans Grave Legacy of changing identification. Kim (2008) confirmed Nosovsky's (2006) assertion about the use of inscriptions or epitaphs. Like Nosovsky (2006), the study also showed that epitaphs or inscriptions on tombstones, apart from serving as a literature genre also provide some information about the dead person's background, also show their achievements. It was upon this that Kim (2008) came to the conclusion that inscriptions on tombstone are not inscribed without a purpose but that they are used as a way of providing credible information about the dead person's life legacy in death. The current study has a link with the Nosovsky's (2006) study as both works discuss signs in public space in a Linguistic Landscape. On the contrary, while this study collected the data from tombstones, the current study looks at the inscriptions on shops.

Another interesting study on linguistic landscape is Korang (2011) whose work examined the field of graffiti. She actually carried out a study on the languages of inscriptions on T-shirt put up by the students in a public University in Ghana and she finally came out with the conclusion that T-shirt with inscriptions are worn by students intentionally as a way of communicating various notions and ideas to others. She further grouped the inscriptions on T-shirt as follows: love and relationship, religion, designer labels, academics, insults as well as miscellaneous. The current study has a link with the Korang (2011) study as both works discuss

languages on inscription in the public space. On the contrary, whereas Korang (2011) collected her data from T-shirts worn by students on campus, this study looks at the inscriptions on shops.

Wielfaert (2009) is also another study on linguistic landscape which focuses on the multilingual written signage at the University of Western Cape. This study showed that normally, written signages that are predominant on campuses include official signposts in and around buildings and notices and advertisements that are put on noticeboards. According to Wielfaert (2009), every written sign is potentially interesting, including monolingual signs that replace multilingual signages or that are complimentary to the multilingual signs because they are not connected to the language behaviour of the people, but they have also been shown to be strongly associated with language policy. This is because these signs are able to depict the history of the location as well as show the effects of the language policies that have been put in place.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter highlights review of studies of related works done by philosophers and researchers. The literature review was mainly done on the concept of linguistic landscape (LL) and other relevant aspects to the study. The chapter presented the various inferring definitions that have been made about the notion of linguistic landscape. From the definitions, one premise that cuts through all of them is that linguistic landscape refers is the languages that are visible in a specified area, more precisely, the language that can be found in cities, indoor markets, shops, schools, offices of government and big corporations, moving buses, campuses, beaches, icons and so on. This makes linguistic landscape the visibility and salience of languages on public as well as commercial signs in a given territory or region (Landry and Bourhis, 1997).

It was found that linguistic landscape are more than just displays on the side of the road because they tend to depict the history of the location they are occupying, the diversity of occupants and languages that are spoken in that area and most importantly, they depict

languages of importance within the area they occupy (Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Gorter, 2006). Again, it was found that linguistic landscape helps to draw conclusions on the social layering of the community, the relative status of various societal segments, and the dominant cultural ideals of that particular society (Reh, 2004, p. 38). One important finding presented in this chapter is that linguistic landscape is interlaced with the issues of people's culture and therefore carries important messages that the sign makers may want to convey to the audience of these signs. According to Hult (2009), linguistic landscapes carry crucial socio-symbolic importance as they actually identify and serve as emblem of societies, communities and regions. He also adds that the presence or absence of languages on linguistic landscapes in a particular speaking community signal some symbolic messages about the importance of power, significance and relevance of the languages in community.

Some studies, for instance, Samaila (2010) reports that while some of these public signages are written in complete sentences, others appear as phrases and words and most especially, in bilingual and multilingual communities, you are likely to find inscriptions with code-switching features, borrowed words and sometimes inscriptions in direct translation from one language to another. It could be realized that much attention has not been given to the thematic analysis of inscription on shops. It is upon this inscription that the researcher seeks to fill in the apparent lacuna and contribute to knowledge on why people capture their emotions, thought, perceptions, etc. in terms of inscriptions or labeling of shops from Kronum to Kedjetia stretch of road in Kumasi.



The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central gear-like design with a red and white color scheme. The text "UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA" is written around the perimeter of the circle.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It examines the tools used in collecting and analyzing the data of the study. In addition to that, in-depth knowledge of the research areas including sociolinguistic background are also discussed vividly. It further highlights the tool/instruments used in getting the data as well as the research design used.

#### **3.1 Research approach**

The research approach used in analyzing the data collected was a qualitative technique. Qualitative approach as posited by Creswell (1994) requires the researcher to go to the research site of the participants in order to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and also involve in actual experience of participants. The features involved in the research are described thoroughly with data collected through interviews, observations and documentations.

Qualitative research can be further explained as a process of human inquiry into a social, economic or human problem to have a comprehensive knowledge of the situation. Moreover, it examines words, reports and opinions of informants to have a better understanding of the problem under investigation. In the current research work, qualitative research design dominates because the researcher is more interested in describing vividly the data collected through interviews, observation as well as documentation to find out the rationale behind the use of inscriptions of the selected shops at the research area as well as the functions of the signs. In view of this, the data collected were based on the discretion of the researcher.

### **3.2 Research design**

Creswell (2014) defines research designs as types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2001), other scholars refer to research designs as strategies of inquiry. There are several qualitative designs which include ethnography, case study, grounded theory, phenomenological and narrative research. However, the research design selected for this study was case study. Case studies are design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Case studies are bound by time and activity and the researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2012). In this research, case study was used to investigate the inscriptions on shops, their functions and the motive by shop owners for the inscription.

### **3.3 The research community - Kumasi**

Kumasi, the capital city of the Ashanti Region, is located in the rainforest of Ghana and it is popularly known as “The Garden City” because of its various species of flowers and plants.

It is the second largest city in Ghana, located in the south-central part of the country, about 250km from Accra. The largest ethnic group in the city is the Asantes, but other ethnic groups are growing in size. Approximately, there are 80% Christians and 20% Muslims, with a smaller number of adherents to traditional beliefs. The city rose to prominence in 1695 when it became capital of the Asante confederacy due to the activities of the then ruler, King Osei Tutu I.

Kronum is a suburb of Kumasi and part of the Suame Municipality. Kronum is about sixty (60) meters away from Kedjetia which is the heart of Kumasi's central business area and the location of all kinds of shops. It is a very busy place at all times, from morning till late in the night. Goods and services ranging from foodstuff, phones, electrical appliances, clothing and the like are traded there. These trading activities extend from the Kronum to Kedjetia stretch of road. One prominent thing that adds to the popularity on the afore-mentioned stretch of road is its numerous shops along the road. It is an important business area in Kumasi, the capital city of Ashanti region. Notable places along the road which have all kinds of shops include Maakro, New York, and Suame. This makes the stretch of road multilingual in nature as it consists of people who speak different languages.

### **3.4 Population and sampling**

Five hundred (500) shops within the stretch of Kronum to Kedjetia road in Kumasi was the ultimate number of shops targeted for this very study. But due to time constraints and other factors like power outage (light off) and unforeseen contingencies, the researcher employed purposive sampling method in order to allow him select three hundred ( 300) shops with inscribed inscriptions out of a total of five (500) shops within the afore-mentioned area. The ultimate factor considered here was that all chosen shops are to be located within that stretch of road, Kumasi. The researcher also deemed it fit to select three hundred (300) shops representing the entire shops because per the theory of saturation in data collection, they

actually represent the “optimum number” necessary to enable valid inferences to be made about the numerical strength of the shops (Marshall, 1996; Thomson 2011).

### **3.5 Research instruments and data collection**

Two types of instruments were used to collect data for the study. They are photography of the inscriptions and interview on one-on-one basis. Observation in every research work can be defined as a method of collecting data that employs the sense of vision as its main source. Information about the chosen site was properly known linguistically through observation and photographs of the signs (inscriptions) using a canon powershot 16.1 megapixel digital camera as well as administration of series of interviews.

#### **3.5.1 Photography**

In obtaining the visuals of the inscriptions, the researcher used a canon powershot megapixel digital camera 16.1 in taking pictures of the selected inscriptions on commercial shops in the afore-mention research area. The shops taken into consideration were those found along the stretch of the road and the researcher had to locate the original owners to ask for permission before taking pictures of the inscription and also conduct an interview with them. During the data collection, there were occasions where the researcher only met the shop keepers and not the main owners of the shops. In such instances, the researcher had to collect the phone numbers of the shop owners and later on called to find out the motives behind the inscriptions as well as the functions of the signs. The inscriptions were mostly found to be inscribed at the front, at the back, at the sides and at times inside of the shops for aesthetic reasons.

#### **3.5.2 Interview**

Research interview is a type of questioning characterized by oral or verbal questioning used as its main technique of collecting data. Therefore, it is an undeniable fact that, the researcher considered a strict structured one-on-one interview in obtaining accurate data for the current research work. According to Creswell (1994), every research structured question is

based on strict method and procedure where questions are read by the interviewer as prescribed by the researcher to the interviewee to provide answers. The interviews conducted were strictly based on face-to-face interaction with the selected shop owners to know more about the motive behind the inscriptions and the functions of the inscribed signs on their shops. Their recorded voice was played, transcribed and further analyzed qualitatively in order to aid detail information on the inscribed inscriptions. For the sake of confidentiality, the respondents were told prior to the interview that they would be recorded in order for the researcher to transcribe it later for analysis. The interviews were done using a tape recorder to record the interactions and the consent of the interviewees were properly sought before the recordings were done. Their consent was sought in order to cater for ethical considerations associated with this studies. Below are typical examples of selected interview questions that the researcher put before the respondents:

1. Please, may I know your name?
2. Are you the main owner of this shop?
3. For how long have you been working in this shop?
4. May I know the reason why you have written inscription on the shop?
5. Why did you choose this particular language on the inscription?
6. Is there any message that the inscription carry to the general public?

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The methodology for the current research work has been highlighted in this chapter. Based on the research objectives, the methods used for the data collection were photography and interview. The photography focused on the inscriptions on the selected shops while the interviews focused on what informs the inscriptions. The research area chosen for the study was Kronum to Kedjetia stretch of road, Kumasi. The research site was selected because it is a place where a lot of shops of all kinds are located.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion of the results obtained from the analysis of data collected. This research primarily used qualitative approach to analyze the data and this allowed the issues that emerged from the study to be described thoroughly with evidence from the data collected from the interviews, observation, and photography. This study looks at three different areas of signage; first, the themes that emerge from the inscriptions, second, the rationale for the choice of signs by shop owners/keepers, and finally, the functions performed by the signs. Therefore, the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory was the most suitable framework for this study because it was not only used to capture the role of socio-structural variables that influence language use in a multilingual society like Kumasi, but was also used to explain interethnic relationships between different groups that face more or less favourable conditions for survival. It was also used to explain the language choices and behaviour of speakers with regards to the kind of inscriptions they displayed. Again, the theory was used in assessing the

thematic components of the inscriptions that were collected and also the functional roles that these signs come with. This was possible because of the socio-cultural aspect of the theory.

The chapter is organized in three sections: The first section discusses results of analysis on the themes emerging from signs on shops. Here, the analysis showed that shop owners created the signs based on several factors. These are self-identity, personal experiences, life philosophy, advice to the general public, and declaration of religious affiliation and faith. The rest are a call to action or duty, warning to potential threats, ownership, inspiration, classic professionalism, and academics. The second section focuses on the discussion of the rationale for the choice of signs by shop owners/keepers. The results of the analysis here suggest that the rationale can be considered as status, demographics, institutional support, and control factors. From these, it is argued that these factors thus delineate objective vitality as they are what trigger the speakers to behave the way they do. The third and final section discusses the functions of signs on the shops. The analysis revealed that the signs convey information that depicts identity in terms of names, nickname and place of origin and ethnicity. Others serve to inspire, aspire and show ability, academics, and affiliation. From these, it is argued that signs, whether found on shops or any other places, serve important language functions that cannot be overlooked in linguistic analysis. The results are discussed in the sections that follow:

#### **4.1 Themes emerging from signs on shops**

This section discusses the results obtained on the analysis of themes that emerged in relation to the signs on the shops. Here, the study explores the various themes that the inscriptions collected in Kronom and Kedjetia are centred on. Studies on linguistic landscape have revealed that public signage do not only contain vital information about something or the place they are occupying, but also carry important messages and ideas on issues of concern to the members of community (Puzey, 2007; Yagmur, 2011). One assumption of the proponents of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory is that by studying linguistic landscapes, not only can

one view information about linguistic groups occupying a particular geographical area but also detect the societal beliefs, culture, norms, ideologies, stereotypes, and the general way of life of the people of the place where these signs occupy. Therefore, this section provides a thematic analysis of the shop signs collected within the stretch from Kronom to Kedjetia. To achieve this, I conducted interviews with the shop owners/keepers to know their perspective on these signs. Although the questions differed according to the nature of each interview, essentially, participants were asked the same questions to determine their take on the signage within the three areas.

A critical examination of the inscriptions on the shops reveals different themes in terms of what they say or mean. The variation of these themes is as a result of a multiplicity of factors. During the study, it was observed that shop owners/keepers use various themes as a means to communicate to the reading public. These themes emerged as a result of the owners' perspective in life, revolving around personal life, slogans, and others. These themes include; self-identity, personal experiences, life philosophy, advice to the general public, declaration of religious affiliation and faith, or a call to action or duty. Others are warning to potential threats, ownership, inspiration, classic professionalism and academics. This is further discussed in the following sub-sections:

#### **4.1.1 Inscriptions depicting self-identity**

The intention behind these inscriptions is to show the identity of the shop owners/keepers. According to Gee (2001), identity is the recognition of a certain kind of a person in a given context. In other words, it is something which is inherent to the complexity of a person's social practices but not a person's internal state. These types of inscriptions include personal names, slogans, names of relatives in high status, names of people they highly respected, and names of people who are successful in life. The rest are names of favourite



footballers, names of people who have achieved a lot in life, names of husbands or wives, as well as names of their newborn babies. Such is illustrated in Example 1.

It was observed that these names, in one way or the other help for easy identification of the shop owners/keepers. Consumers who are far and near can easily locate them through the use of these identity names. This location can easily be found when the shop owners indicate their identity on the shop and when those names are mentioned in the market, they are easily located. When a consumer mistakenly leaves something valuable that he or she has bought, the buyer or the consumer can use the inscription on the shop to identify the shop from which he or she bought the item.



Example 1. A sign on a shop depicting self-identity

The inscription in Example 1 clearly gives a clue to the fact that it provides information about the type of goods and services provided by the shop owners or keepers. I got to know this upon a thorough inquiry that the shop owners/keepers felt invisible in the market domain and so they decided to choose an inscription that will make it easy for them to be identified like the above-mentioned ones. In order for their intended customers and the general public to identify them easily, they usually go for inscriptions that will advertise the products they sell or the service they render rather than any other form of inscription. The shop owners are already aware of the fact that they may not choose a market brand of goods and services which are not

popular enough to compete with the already existing brands in the market doing same. In order for them to win the heart of their intended customers, they decide to go for inscriptions that can easily identify them.

#### 4.1.2 Inscriptions depicting faith/religious affiliations

There were some inscriptions which carried themes that were centred on religion or faith as seen in Example 2:



Example 2. A sign on a shop depicting faith/religious affiliations

This category of inscription shows the religiosity of the shop owners/keepers. In other words, they are inscriptions showing reverence to their object of worship. Reverence is the act of showing in-depth respect and obedience to our object of worship (God). Some of the shops in Kumasi, specifically along the stretch of Kronum to Kedjetia road, show that the owners/keepers are interested in religion. They used these inscriptions to express their gratitude and to demonstrate their belief in their object of worship (God). Some of the inscriptions actually display salvation. Others choose to inscribe Bible Scriptures on their shops. These include showing perseverance, showing appreciation to our maker (God), believing in Jesus, and power of God. For instance, the shop with the inscription *Bɔ wo nsam ma Awurade* (clap for Jesus) has nothing to do with the product or service rendered to people at the shop.

The intention behind it is to convey something more than just the service he offers. There are those that use these forms of inscriptions to express their appreciation to their objects

of worship (God) for helping him/her to start the business enterprise. Looking critically at the inscriptions, it could be noted that most of the shop owners highlight more on God rather than their products which goes a long way to confirm the point that of the theme inscribed on their respective shops. Examples of some of the inscriptions that talk about the faith or religious affiliation of the shop owners/keepers are Emmanuel (God is with us), Nyame nnae (God is not asleep), clap for Jesus, fa ndase ma Nyame (Give thanks to God), God gave us, and God is king.

By and large, the shop owners/keepers use these forms of inscriptions depicting the word of God to win the heart of their fellow Christians to patronize their products. That notwithstanding, there are shop owners/keepers who by these inscriptions indicate their strong belief in the object they serve (God) even though they may be going through some forms of difficulties. Some also display their protection from God against the work of the devil using these reverence inscriptions. Furthermore, there are some inscriptions that serve to preach to the general public to turn over a new leaf. Others too attempt to express the attributes of God such as Omnipotence, Omnipresence and Immortality of God using these inscriptions. This category of inscriptions alone constituted about 80 signs representing 41.5% of the entire data collected. One of the respondents, Mr. Awuah, the owner of the shop with the inscription *Emmanuel* (God is with us), made it known to me that when he was about to register his shop, he had a lot of inscriptions in mind, but he decided to use *Emmanuel* (God is with us) because God is the root of his business and success and he also wanted to spread the word of God.

#### **4.1.3 Inscriptions that depict advice to the general public**

One unique trait among Ghanaians is their willingness to give advice to others. It is therefore not surprising that advice has the power to change, shape, and also direct people in their day in and out activities. The researcher noted that some of the inscriptions were used as a means of advising people as seen in Example 3:



Example 3. A sign on a shop depicting advice to the general public

The inscriptions under this theme are 31 in number which constitutes 12.0% of the signs collected. These forms of inscriptions on shops as written by the shop owners/keepers serve to provide pieces of advice to the general public. These pieces of advice are not solicited but they serve to deepen the interpersonal function of language. The shop owners also display how ready they are to positively change the lives of people in areas where they operate through advice.

Ghanaians have many ways of giving advice to people. There are those who use songs, proverbs, or folktales. The various professions also have unique ways of advising the citizens. For instance, drivers try to advise the general public by inscribing something in the form of advice on their vehicles. Also, shop owners inscribe on their stores as a possible means of giving advice to the entire public. My respondents also see their enterprise as a way of giving advice to the general public. They believe that words are like a sharpened instrument, it has the power to pierce into the heart and mind and direct people to change their way and attitudes. These pieces of advice also serve to direct people on how to positively relate with others in order to avoid being disturbed and cheated, and not infringing the rights of others as they interact with one another. These pieces of advice also serve as a tool to direct people on the kind of people one must associate him/herself with as friends can either positively or negatively influence one's life.

One of the respondents, Mr. Asare, explained that he has the passion of giving advice, especially to the young ones but he cannot just stand up and attend to everybody to do this or that. So, as a means of reaching out the mass or the general public, he considers this medium to reach the entire public. In addition, another participant/shop owner confirms that these pieces of advice are used as a mean to speak against bad deeds of people living in the society. He emphatically mentioned that reaching out to people by way of giving them advice in a form of written inscription can positively change the lives of people to become patriotic citizens, avoid bad company, and also stay away from immoral practices among others. The shop owners/keepers further argued that apart from transacting business with the general public, their business enterprise is one way of communicating their intentions and thoughts to the outside world since they constantly come in contact with a lot of people. Some of the inscriptions that the shop owners/keepers used as a way of giving advice to the general public are **Abotaryie** (*patience is golden*), **Ɔbra safoa ne ahwɛyie** (*Carefulness is the key of life*), **Fa yɔnko pa** (*Take a good friend*), **This life no one is first**, **Ɛmmere pa bɛba** (*Good time will come*), **Ɛmfa Nni Agorɔ** (*Don't play with it*).

#### **4.1.4 Inscriptions that depict ownership**

Another theme that was prevalent in the shop inscriptions collected was ownership. The English Black Law dictionary defines ownership as the collection of rights allowing someone to use and enjoy property including the right to convey to others. The right of ownership manifests itself through idiosyncrasy as far as language is concerned. The use of language that is distinct and peculiar to individuals is termed as idiosyncrasy. In the same line of action, the use of some inscribed inscriptions in one way or the other reveals the personalities behind these inscriptions on shops as demonstrated by Example 4.



Example 4. A sign on a shop depicting ownership

In all, the number of inscriptions depicting ownership is 24 representing 8.0% of the data collected. Here, the researcher grouped all inscriptions that clearly identify the personalities behind the inscriptions under the theme of declaration of ownership. Some were the full names of the shop owners and others were abbreviated forms such as K.B.K Ventures, Mr.

Boateng Ventures, Jo and Ju Lubricant shop, Mr. Forson Barber shop, The Willies Number One stop shop.

The list of inscriptions goes a long way to support the assertion that the use of these inscriptions talk about the shop owners and not the product they sell or the service they render. It is therefore not surprising that, from the above examples, the owners of the shops are really not interested in advertising their products, rather their names. According to Jo and Ju, who sell lubricants, *it is advisable to name your shop in your name if you receive God's blessings and grace*. More often than not, these shop owners are the people who are already known and are popular in the market domain. They deem it fit to advertise their names simply because a lot of people already know the kinds of products and services they offer.

#### 4.1.5 Inscriptions depicting nicknames

The number of inscriptions under this category is 10 representing 3.3%. A nickname is a familiar or humorous name given to a person. A nickname is often considered desirable, symbolizing a form of acceptance, but can sometimes be a form of ridicule. Some shop

owners/keepers inscribe their nicknames on their shops. Such nicknames are made up of both local and foreign ones. They include Ronaldo, Messi, Owner one, Teecee, and International Shop. Example 5 is a perfect example of inscriptions of this nature.



Example 5. A sign on a shop depicting nickname

During the interview sessions with these shop owners, they revealed to me that the aim of doing that is for easy identification. In addition, some shop owners/keepers explained that such identification allows people far and near to easily locate them. They are also of the view that these nicknames are so important and special. Apart from that, they are able to sell them to their customers who in one way or the other find it difficult to locate them. This is because there are several shops along the stretch of the road at the chosen research site, and, with this inscribed nickname on their shops, they are easily identified.

Some of the shop owners/keepers confirmed that each shop is expected to have a unique number for easy identification. However, they indicated that but some owners either intentionally or not intentionally ignore this. They strongly believe that the names help for easy identification. For example, the shop owner with the inscription 'Ronaldo' explains that he likes this UEFA champion football player, so he supports him in every tournament or competition, hence, his choice to write his name on his shop. The owner of the shop with the inscribed nickname *international* made it clear that he has inscribed this because his customers see his products as abroad goods which are very durable and last longer. Hence, his reason to

inscribe that name on his shop. In addition, the owner with the inscription *Brazil* further explains that he cherishes the country Brazil, hence, his reason to inscribe the name on his shop.

#### 4.1.6 Inscriptions that depict life experiences

From the study, it was found that some of the inscriptions on shops carry messages borne out of the owners' life experiences. Example of such inscriptions is shown in Example 6.



Example 6. A sign on a shop depicting life experiences

The number of inscriptions under this category is 20 representing 6.7% of the data collected. The life experiences of the shop owners/keepers range from numerous encounters they had with people and through their career as shop owners/keepers. Some of the shop owners had had strange and bitter experiences with family members, friends and colleagues. These were the very people who they once believed and trusted, and they could never dream they will do anything to harm them. Furthermore, there are some shop owners/keepers who remember how they started life at the shop along the aforementioned stretch of the road. They also how they did not make good use of their time to take their chances for some opportunities that came up in the past. Some are also inspired from the experiences of being helped by benevolent individuals and being obedient to God. The following are some more inscriptions on the shops



that depict life experiences and their interpretations provided by the shop owners. The interpretations provided by the shop owners are also put in the bracket after the inscription for clarification: **Anyan yɛ aboa** (Witchcraft is stupid), **Patience is the key**, **Suro nipa** (fear Human), **Aware-bɔne** (Bad marriage), and **Rejected stone**.

#### 4.1.7 Inscriptions that depict inspiration

There were some shop signs that depict inspiration. Inspiration is something that inspires the performance of a particular act. It can further be explained as something that mentally simulates someone to do or feel something. The shop inscription that immediately follows is an example of this kind of signage.



Example 7. A sign on a shop depicting inspiration

The number of inscriptions under this category is 15 representing 5.0% of the data collected. It was observed that some shop owners use their inscriptions to inspire the general public. Their source of inspiration could be demonstrated in God, fellow humans, or even a text read from somewhere. The following are some more typical examples of inspired inscriptions on selected shops Arise and shine, Seeing is believing, Which one, Encounter Beauty salon, Easily way done carpentry shop, Arise and Build, and Tumi wura (owner of authority)

The listed inscriptions give credence that some shop owners' views in the use of inscription are to inform the public what inspires them and eventually resulted in their current state. For instance, with the written inscription like *Which one*, someone might interpret it as an interrogative statement that persuades an intended customer to make a choice out of the numerous delicious cuisine captioned in the inscription. However, in an interview with the shop owner, Mr. Forson, he gave a different interpretation to the inscription on his shop. According to him, *Which one* is a name of an elderly brother, who actually lent him a helping hand financially to establish himself. The shop owner further explained that, *My elder brother has really helped me and I have decided to show my appreciation to him by using his name for my shop*. He actually goes for the name *Which one* in order not to forget what his brother did for him and subsequently remembers his source of inspiration.

In addition, for the inscription, *Encounter Beauty Salon*, the owner of the shop actually stated upon interrogation with her that her inspiration is in only one phrase; *Encounter*. She actually explained that some people boast of their family treasure as the source of their success and inspiration but to her what inspired her most is one encounter with God.

Such encounter actually turned her life around for good in every aspect including fruit of the womb, good marriage, peace, and prosperity in her life, good health as well as long life with good health.

With respect to the inscription *Arise and build*, it is a typical inspired inscription used by a bread seller who is actually inspired by the Scripture *Nehemiah 2:20*, '*...We, his servants will arise and build*'. She also explained that even though she was already into the business of making and selling bread, she was not actually enthused to do the work properly. This continued until she heard the word of God that really inspired her to arise and shine from her indolent attitude and build the business. This is similar to Nehemiah purposing in his heart to build the wall of Jerusalem and prospered.

#### 4.1.8 Inscriptions that depict philosophy of life

The inscriptions under this category are 36 representing 10.3% of the data collected. These types of inscriptions are about an individual's overall vision or attitude towards life and the purpose of it. They are inscriptions that talk about how human activities are scheduled in connection with time and death. In other words, they are inscriptions that explain the shop owner'/keepers' own ideologies. Inscriptions in this category more or less shape and guide human life. In addition, some provide details for solving human problems, making improvement in life, caring for oneself and others and also providing general beliefs. Some of the inscriptions also deal with how one can find the right direction in life. They also explain how a strong sense of purpose in life fuels human motivation and how successful people in life demonstrate a definite sense of direction. Some of these shop signs can be found in Example 8:



Example 8. A sign on a shop depicting philosophy of life

Another interesting thing about these inscriptions is that most of them explain how things move in a stepwise manner and progressively with time. In addition, it explains how clarity of human purpose challenges you to do better and commit to actions that get you closer to the one thing you really want in life. With clarity, you can pull together resources, ideas and people for a common cause. Without it, there is wasted effort and even chaos. Hence, the

direction of a man defines what he does every day. The shop owners/keepers used this type of inscriptions to clarify their intention and purpose as well as reinforcing their ultimate purpose in life. This is in agreement with the finding of Mgbemena (2013) that inscriptions by persons do reveal their personal philosophies and ideologies in life. That notwithstanding, in life, certain things could not be possible unless one demonstrates a good sense of character and behaviour, hence, the saying *A good name is better than riches*.

Sometimes too, there are philosophies that confirm that one does not need to know the end results of a business or starting something before making an attempt to start it. One therefore needs to start it whole-heartedly and the rest could be left unto our maker (God) to decide. The shop owners/keepers have applied certain philosophies from time immemorial as they move on with their business. These philosophies in one way or the other have produced positive results, hence, their presence in the inscriptions. Some of the inscriptions that fall under this category are as follows: *To be a man, Step by step Character show, Little by little, Agenda,* and *Eye Mmere*.

Table 4.1.1 provides the analysis of the inscriptions and their corresponding frequency and percentage.

*Table 4.1.1. Themes emerging from inscriptions on shops*

<b><i>Themes of inscriptions</i></b>	<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage (%)</i></b>
<i>Self-identity</i>	40	13.3
<i>Declaration of Religious Faith/Affiliation</i>	70	23.3
<i>Life Philosophy</i>	36	12
<i>Advice to the general public</i>	31	10.3
<i>A call to duty/act</i>	20	6.7
<i>Declaration of inspiration</i>	15	5
<i>Declaration of academics</i>	5	1.7
<i>Classic professionalism</i>	24	8
<i>Declaration of ownership</i>	24	8
<i>Life Experience</i>	20	6.7
<i>Nickname</i>	10	3.3
<i>Figurative Expressions</i>	5	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on the table, it can be deduced that majority of the inscriptions in the research area fall under the theme of religious affiliation/faith. This is because it is evident that most shop keepers/owners are committed in worshipping their object of worship. This is followed by self-identity at a far distant. Life philosophy is recorded as a third position which is seen as clear evidence from the table. These themes are distributed according to the location they are found as illustrated in Table 4.1.2.

**Table 4.1.2. A cross tabulation of thematic areas and location of shops**

Thematic	Location of shop			Total
	<i>Kronom</i>	<i>Stretch of road</i>	<i>Kedjetia</i>	
<i>Self-identity</i>	10	10	20	40
<i>Declaration of religious faith/affiliation</i>	20	20	30	70
<i>Life Philosophy</i>	10	10	16	36
<i>Advice to the general public</i>	13	9	9	31
<i>A call to act/duty</i>	6	7	7	20
<i>Declaration of inspiration</i>	5	5	5	15
<i>Declaration of academics</i>	2	1	2	5
<i>Classic Professionalism</i>	7	10	7	24
<i>Declaration of ownership</i>	7	10	7	24
<i>Life Experience</i>	8	4	8	20
<i>Nickname themes</i>	2	5	3	10
<i>Figurative expressions</i>	2	5	3	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>300</b>

As can be seen from the table, Kedjetia central market recorded the dominant thematic areas with a total number of 116 themes. Declaration of Religious Affiliations/Faith is also seen as the highest number of written inscriptions on shops with a total number of 70. This

confirms the fact that people in this location do not joke with their objects of worship. It is therefore not surprising that a theme called Declaration of Religious Affiliation/Faith dominates in the area. This is followed in second position by self-identity, recording 40 inscriptions. This is a confirmation that shop owners/keepers want to be identified and known wherever they are located for high patronage of goods and services. The information in Table 4.1.2 has been presented in pictorial form in Figure 4.1.

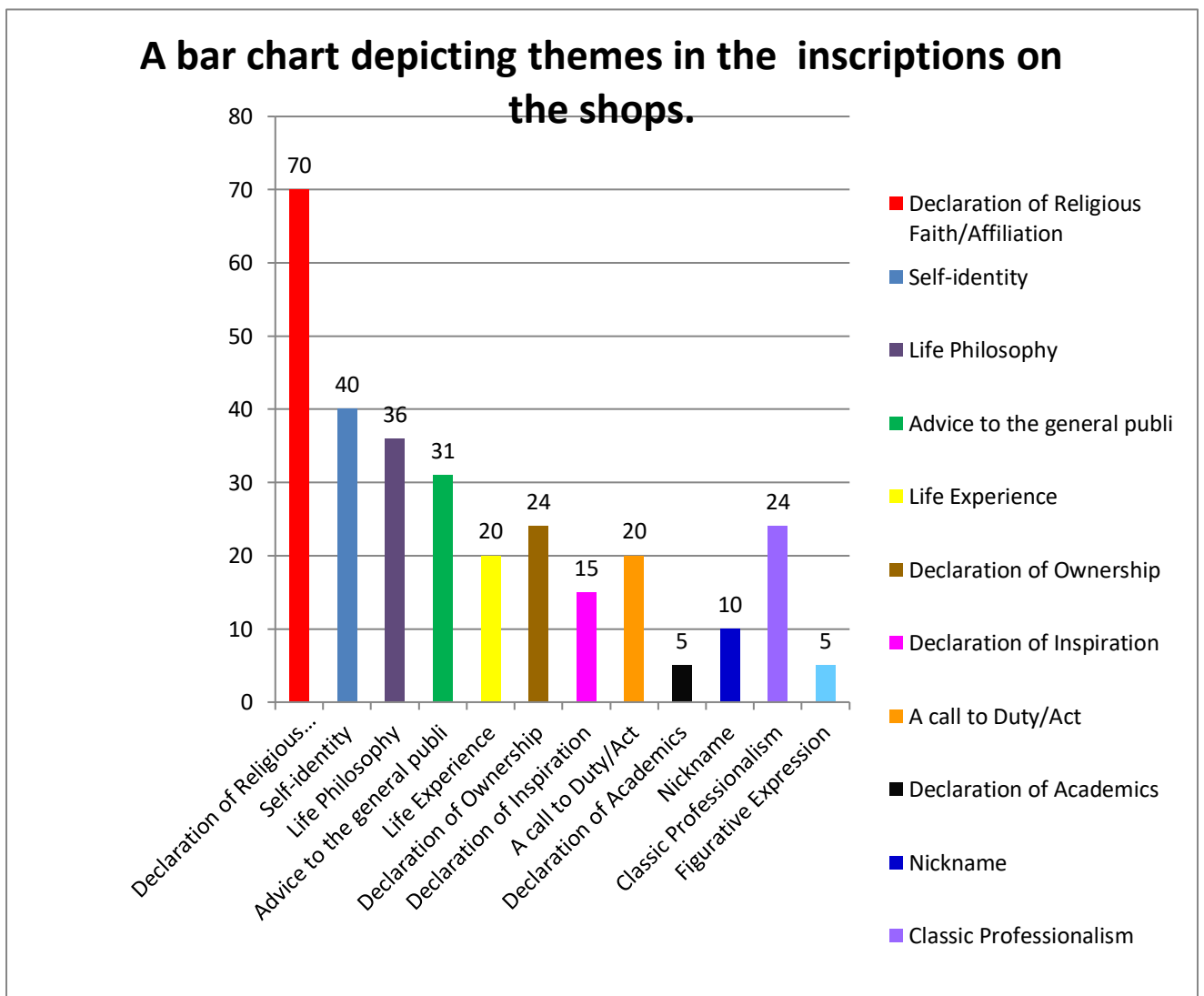


Figure 4.1. Themes emerging from inscriptions on shops

Figure 4.1 indicates that three hundred (300) shops were used. Out of these, 12 themes emerged from the inscriptions collected. We see that the theme of declaration of religious affiliation/faith has the highest with a frequency of 70. This is followed by self-identity with a frequency of 40. The theme of life philosophy is 36, then the theme of Advice to the general public is 31, personal experience is 20, declaration of ownership is 24, declaration of inspiration is 15, a call to duty/act is 20, academics is 5, and classic professionalism is 24. From this, it can be argued that the shop owners/keepers deem it fit to go for inscriptions that would advertise their goods and services because they are probably new in the market enterprise. That notwithstanding, this findings also confirms Trimble's assertion that inscriptions are writing with importance. It explains that inscriptions are used as a way to communicate to prospective customers. This study also established that life philosophy influences human life in diverse ways; it also affects the use of inscriptions on shops found along the stretch of the road, from Kronum to Kedjetia, Kumasi.

The shop owners deliberately put up the inscriptions on the shops with the intention to communicate certain messages to the entire public. In other words, these shop owners, through the inscriptions they put on their shops, express their feelings, desires and also question situations in the world or their environment. As the owners of these shops inscribe their shops, they seek to express themselves by adding their voices to the discussions of societal issues and also to engender readers to undertake certain actions when they read these inscriptions. In this regard, the shop owners tend to be cautious in the kind of messages they put on their shops as any form of misunderstanding of the intended message by the public may have a repercussion on the patronage of the goods and services these shops offer.

Shop owners' use of language for the inscriptions on their shops illustrates one of the unique characteristics of human language as through the use of language, humans (in this case the shop owners) are able to harness their innate ability to form lasting bonds with their

potential and actual customers. It is in this regard that these inscriptions on shops serve as identity for these shop owners/keepers. By that, they purposely communicate who they are and the kind of businesses they undertake to the general public and whom they may not have the opportunity to interact with. With this, inscriptions on shops constitute a form of advertisement that shop owners employ in communicating to the general public.

Considering inscriptions on shops as by which the owners communicate with their potential and actual clientele, it has become necessary that the analysis of the inscriptions be formalized in the theoretical perspective of Landry and Bourhis' (1997) Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory. According to Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory, every linguistic group has a vitality which is usually defined as "what makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations" and it is this vitality that influences the language behaviour of the members of this linguistic group in every given situation (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977, p. 308). Within this framework, it is believed that every speaking community has the ability to maintain and protect its existence in time as a collective entity with a distinctive identity, culture and language and speakers unintentionally do this every day in how they choose and use their language (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

The Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory was the most suitable for this study because it was not only used to capture the role of socio-structural variables that influence language use in a multilingual society like Kumasi, but was also used to explain interethnic relationships between different groups that face more or less favorable conditions for survival. It was also used to explain the language choices and behaviour of speakers with regards to the kind of inscriptions they displayed. Again, the theory was used in assessing the thematic components of the inscriptions that were collected and also the functional roles that these signs come with. This was possible because of the socio-cultural aspect of the theory. Language is closely tied to culture and a powerful tool used by humans to communicate their feelings, opinions and



thoughts. Like language, inscriptions in the public spaces too are used to communicate messages conveyed by people, which often have a deeper meaning than what is seen on the surface. According to Tajfel (1978, p. 63), a group's vitality is equivalent to the group's social identity and explains this social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". Thus, since every sign owner may belong to or identify him or herself to a particular speech community, it is believed that their every action (in this case the inscriptions they display) are influenced by the norms, culture, beliefs and ideologies that they have around them. This is because it was observed that many of the texts in the landscape are identity texts which provide indigenous sources of knowledge about the owners of the signs and the community they live in.

#### **4.2 Rationale for choice of signs by shop owners/keepers**

Here, the study seeks to answer the research question which is one of the objectives of this work. It is believed that these factors will not only show us the reasons why shop owners do what they do when it comes to the creation of their signs, but also help give an insight into the language phenomenon of the Kumasi community. Inscriptions in public spaces are not just mounted, but put up to inform and communicate some form of message to people in the community in which these signs occupy. These signs are created by humans who happen to be members of a community and therefore, have their lives, beliefs, perceptions, ideologies, and general way of life being influenced by the society and every element that comes with it. Therefore, these inscriptions are bound to be influenced by many factors. To assess the possible factors that affect the choices that shop owners make when creating their shop signs, the researcher employs the parameters of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality theory as mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter. The study adopts the four socio-structural variables of the

EVT for the analysis of the data that were collected. These variables are status, demographic, institutional support, and control factors.

#### **4.2.1 Status as a socio-structural factor**

One of the major socio-structural factors that tend to affect shop signage is status. The status variable involves the economic, social, socio-historical, and language status of the linguistic group within or outside the mainstream community. Thus, the status of the language in the society plays a big role in whether it will be featured in an inscription or not. Sign creators may have a message they may like to send across. However, these messages have a targeted audience. Therefore, these sign creators are likely to use the language that the targeted audience are conversant with and especially, one that has economic, social and socio-historical value in the society so as to get as many people as possible. This is because these signs are first of all, advertisements meant to draw people to come and purchase whatever they have to offer; a goal that shop owners do not leave out no matter the information they want to share. In that case, shop owners are often pushed to use languages with higher vitality; the ones spoken by majority of the populace. This agrees with one of the key tenets of the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory which states that community languages with high ethnolinguistic vitality are likely to be retained, hence appearing more while those with low EV will tend to be replaced by the mainstream language.

The research area for this study (*the road stretch from Kronom to Kedjetia*) happens to be one of the most densely populated multilingual areas in Ghana and therefore, this reflected in the shop signs; there were signs in so many languages. There were inscriptions in Akan (Twi, Fante, Akwapem, Bron), Ewe, Ga, English, Hausa, Arabic, Pidgin English and Dangme. However, amidst all this diversity, there were some languages such as Akan and English that tend to be frequent on the signs than some languages. This is because within this speaking community, these languages may have dominance and higher status than others. To assess the

impact of the vitality of the languages spoken in the community on the shop signs, let's take a look at the display patterns of the languages that were featured in the shops signs that were collected.

These languages featured on the shops at the chosen research areas. They include English, Arabic, Pidgin English, Hausa, as well as other indigenous Ghanaian languages that are spoken in Ghana, especially in Kumasi. The aforementioned languages as displayed on the shop inscriptions are detailed in Table 4.2.1.

*Table 4.2.1. Languages in the inscriptions*

<b>Languages found in the inscription</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	90	30
Akan	77	25.7
Ga	4	1.3
Ewe	4	1.3
Krobo	1	0.3
Pidgin	18	6
Arabic	20	6.7
Hausa	3	1
Hebrew	2	0.7
English & Akan	55	18.3
English & Arabic	15	5
English & Hausa	1	0.3
Arabic & Hausa	2	0.7
English & Jamaican	2	0.7
Unknown Language	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen from the table, nine (9) languages couple with an unknown one are used by the shop owners/keepers to write the inscriptions in the chosen research areas, specifically

Kronum to Kedjetia stretch of road, Kumasi. This is just a section of the many languages that are being spoken in the region and the country as a whole. More than 250 languages and dialects are spoken in Ghana. English is the country's official language and predominates government and business affairs. It is also the standard language used for educational instructions. This supports the assertion put forth by Landry and Bourhis (1997) that majority of the signs are always found in the dominant language in the linguistic landscape. Hence, it is therefore not surprising that majority of the inscriptions are inscribed in English.

Accordingly, it is directly followed by Akan and Pidgin. The rest of the languages that follow are very few ranging from one (1) up to twenty (20). The frequency table provided above gives a vivid description of the occurrence of the various languages that the shop owners/keepers used in their inscriptions. It also gives a credence that Ashanti region, specifically Kumasi is by nature multilingual, a place where variety of languages are being spoken to transact business and any other activities, day in and out. The table above shows that English appears in most of the inscriptions and it is expected, especially considering the fact that English is the official language in Ghana and also normally used more as a *lingua franca* these days. It is also the medium of instruction in the educational system; from the basic school up to the tertiary level and therefore it is highly predictable that it will surface more on the signs of shops in Ghana. This confirms the studies of Cenoz and Gorter (2008) and Dagenais et al (2009) that in a multilingual landscape, the language with more prestige and economic power features most in majority of the signs in the society.

It was also observed that Akan (Twi) appeared more often on the inscriptions of the shops in the area because it has high vitality. Its high vitality rests on the fact that it carries high economic, social and socio-historical importance in the community than other languages. Akan, especially the Twi dialect, was observed to have a high vitality in the community mainly because it is the dominant language spoken by majority of the people in Kronom and Kedjetia

and therefore, has some form of dominance over other languages. Aside that, the Akan (Twi) language is said to be intertwined with the culture, beliefs and norms of the Akan people.

The language has a long history with the people and since time immemorial, has been used as a tool in carrying out all the daily discourses of the people. It is the language used at the palace and in all cultural practices and rituals such as the pouring of libation and funeral rites of dead members of the society. Therefore, it is undeniable that it appears most times on the shop signs. Lastly, the Akan (Twi) language has a high economic status in the community because it is used more by members of the community for their business transactions. Kedjetia and its neighbouring settlements is one of the busiest trading centers in Kumasi. The Kedjetia market is said to be the biggest open air market in West Africa with about 10,000 stalls and numerous shops in and around the town. And, one of the dominant languages they use for their buying and selling activities is Akan (Twi), thereby making the language very powerful in that area.

From the table, it can also be seen that the use of some languages such as Ga, Ewe and Dangme were considerably low. This is because of their low vitality status, thus they being the weaker language groups in the community. They are said to be the weaker language group because their speakers are few as compared to the dominant language. They are also used for lower-status functions such as in the home and among friends in the community that also speak the language. One interesting thing the researcher found during the study is that some of these minority languages have a lot of speakers as well. However, because of the high relative power and status of the dominant language, these speakers often linguistically assimilate to the use of the dominant language which normally has high status and therefore, more likely to be found on public signs than other languages.

#### **4.2.2 Demographics as a socio-structural factor**

Demography is generally the statistical characteristics (such as age, sex, marital status, occupation, address) of a human population in a particular place which is often used as markers of correlation for any changes in some phenomenal issues of the place. The demography variable here, also include information about the location and territorial boundaries of the language. According to Yagmur (2011, p. 112), they are those variables “related to the number and distribution patterns of ethnolinguistic group members throughout a particular region or national territory. Demographic variables also include the birth rate, the group’s rate of mixed marriages, and the patterns of immigration and emigration”.

One of the basic claims of EVT is that the demographics of language speakers can also greatly affect the vitality of languages spoken in the community, hence reflecting in the linguistic landscape in the area. This is because the prevalence of the language of a particular linguistic group on public signs can symbolize the strength or vitality of the group in relation to other language groups within that speaking community and vice versa. And indeed, this assertion was seen during the course of this study. The shop inscriptions from Kronom to Kedjetia were observed to be largely influenced by the location of the shops, the ages of the shop owners/keepers, the ethnic groups of the shop owners and the audience in the research areas and the occupational information of both shop owners and the targeted clientele as illustrated in the sub-sections below.

##### **4.2.2.1 Shop owners/keepers ages**

Analysis of the demographic variables of the shop owners and the languages on the inscriptions showed that the age of the shop owners/keepers can affect the language choices of shop inscriptions. Thus, the age of the shop owners can influence the kind of languages he or she is likely to use for the shop sign. Let’s take a look at the impact of the ages of the shop owners on the shop signage that were collected. The shop owners/keepers’ ages were obtained

when these owners availed themselves for an interview to be conducted with them. They have been categorized into groups of then (10). Table 4.2.2.1 provides a detailed analysis of their frequency.

**Table 4.2.2.1. Age of the shop owners**

Age range of owners/keepers	Frequency range	Percentage
<b>10s-20s</b>	20	6.7
<b>20s-30s</b>	110	36.7
<b>30s-40s</b>	55	18.3
<b>40s-50s</b>	50	16.7
<b>50s-60</b>	32	10.7
<b>60s-70s</b>	18	6
<b>70s-80s</b>	10	3.3
<b>80s-90s</b>	5	1.7
<b>90s-100s</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen from the above table provided, many of the shop owners/keepers have ages which fall within the range of twenties (20s) and thirties (30s). This gives credence that majority of the inscriptions found in the chosen research areas were inscribed by shop owners/keepers who are within their twenties (20s) and thirties (30). This age group is followed closely by the participants whose ages fall within the range of thirties (30s) and forties (40s). Although the table shows the number and age range of the workforce who are engaged in some form of economic activity in the area, this information also throws more light on the results seen with regards to the languages used for the inscriptions. The study showed English and Akan to be the dominant languages used in the area and these age distribution gives a credence to that. The table shows that majority of these shop owners are in their youthful ages and are either schooling and at the same time engaging themselves in this economic activity when they are on holidays. It is therefore undeniable that English and Akan feature more in the inscriptions

collected in the area because they are the languages they interact with more than other languages.

#### 4.2.2.2 Location of the shops

The location of the shop is also one factor that influences the choice of language to be used for the inscription. For the collection of the shop signs, Kedjetia recorded the highest number of inscriptions in the research areas. This place is an open-air market in the city of Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti. This place recorded the highest number of inscriptions totaling one hundred and twenty (120). The other inscriptions were obtained along the stretch of the road and within Kronum constituting 100 and 80 inscriptions respectively. This is shown in the Table 4.2.2.2.

*Table 4.2.2.2. location of shops in the chosen research areas.*

<b>Location of shops</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
within Kronum	80	26.7
Along the stretch of the road	100	33.3
Within Kedjetia	120	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Studies on linguistic landscape have shown that the locational space of a sign also influences the kind of language that gets to appear on the sign (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). As a matter of fact, there is a direct relation between the location of the sign and the language used for the inscription. Therefore, each concept gives us knowledge about the other in any community, even in multilingual communities where language territories are rarely linguistically homogeneous. In this light, we look at the various locational spaces of the inscriptions that were collected for this study and how that affect the language choices that the shop owners/keepers take in the construction of their signs.



#### 4.2.2.3 Ethnic groups of the shop owners/keepers

The ethnic groups that the shop owners/keepers belong to was found to also influence their selection of languages for inscriptions. Language whether verbal or sign is used in communicating one's thoughts, feelings and knowledge about matters in life in general. Every human is born into an ethnic group and his or her life is shaped by the beliefs, culture and perceptions of this society that he or she belongs to. One major ability an individual picks from the society that he or she is born into is the ability to learn and use language. Most times, these languages are the first language of the speaker which he or she acquires with ease. Some researchers, including Agyekum (2011), assert that people tend to understand and explain themselves better in their languages. If that is the case, then shop owners' language choices for inscriptions may be influenced by the ethnic groups they may belong to. The interview conducted with the shop owners reviewed in detail the following ethnic groups in Table 4.2.2.2.

*Table 4.2.2.2. ethnic group of shop owners/keepers*

<b>Ethnic group of shop owners/keepers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Asante	210	70
Fante	30	10
Ga	10	3.3
Ewe	20	6.7
Gur	5	1.7
Dangme (Krobo, Ada, Ningo)	10	3.3
Akwapim	15	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.2.2.2 gives credence to the fact that Asantes are found to be engaged more in this economic activity in the research areas, recording the highest frequency of two hundred

and ten (210) hence, its high appearance in the shop inscriptions in the research area. The chosen research area and Kumasi as a whole is considered as a business and administrative center in Ghana and even the world with them being one of the ethnic groups known to be Akans. Therefore, it is highly expected that inscriptions in Akan be very high since that is the language of the people of the ethnic group who resides in that territorial area. Because it is one of the busiest trading centers in Ghana, it has attracted a lot of people (other ethnic groups) far and near into that community to engage themselves in this trading activity. The other ethnic groups apart from Asantes, including Fantes, Gas, Ewes, Gurs, Akwapim and Dangme in the region (research areas) who engage themselves in this economic activity in order to get their daily bread. Their numbers are not as much as the Asantes and that shows in the appearance of the languages in the inscriptions that are displayed in the area supporting the view that the ethnic group of sign creators can also affect language choices.

#### **4.2.2.4 Occupation of both shop owners and the target clientele**

The occupational information of both the shop owners and the targeted clientele can also influence the kind of language that is inscribed on the shop sign. Occupations are an important feature of a society and just like humans, any occupational institution cannot exist without language; it is used among colleagues as well as clients. Normally, some occupation come with their own specific language for interaction while others may be flexible. It was observed that some shop owners use a particular language because that is the language used in rendering the services they give while other shop owners are free to use any language of their choice. In analysing the themes of inscriptions, there were some inscriptions that depict academics and their signs mainly came with words in English like *Copy Shop*, *The Graduate* and many others.

During the interview sessions, the shop owners reveal that they only used English for their signs because they are into printing, editing and making of photocopies and therefore, that

is the language they work with every day. They also mentioned that customers would not come to them if they had their inscription written in other languages for fear that they are not competent in the English language. They also mentioned that they chose to use English because of the kind of people that come for their services. According to them, “your shop sign should tell the kind of people you work for. If you have students, lawyers, doctors, and people in big positions coming to your shop, then your shop sign, notices and every information in your school must be in English because that is the language they often use”.

#### **4.2.3 Institutional support as a socio-structural factor**

Institutional support is also one of the sociostructural factors that tend to affect shop owners' choice of language for the inscriptions that they put up. Institutional support factors refer to the extent to which a language group enjoys formal and informal representation in the various institutions of a community. Institutional support has to do with the degree to which an ethnolinguistic group receives formal and informal support in the various institutions: mass-media, education, government services, industry, religion, culture, and even politics. This may seem far fetched, however, government institutions, churches, mosques, media houses and state owned companies influence the language choices of other linguistic landscape every time. This is because, such signage are normally at the national level and therefore, the presence or absence of a language means a lot to members of the community and also people outside that community. Normally, the inscriptions of these institutions imply that the languages used on them are substantial enough in the community to have been displayed on the signs. It also means that those languages have obtained much importance in the economy, mass media and other equally important sectors. With this, all other signage will gradually assimilate into the use of whichever languages that are displayed by the signs of these institutions.

During the collection of the data, the researcher observed that all government signs, inscriptions of churches, schools, hospitals and state owned companies were all inscribed in English reflecting that English is the dominant language in the community. This automatically pushes sign creators to also use English in their signs. Another interesting observation by the researcher during the collection of the data was that most of the media houses in Kumasi broadcast in Akan and English with a few in other languages. This explains why most of the inscriptions of these shop owners are in English and Akan with just a few in other languages. Another thing that was seen was that most of the shop inscriptions in Arabic and Hausa are influenced by the use of the languages in the mosques which were scattered all over the two communities attesting to the fact that religion also plays an important role in the selection of languages by the shop owners. This is because all the shop owners/keepers who had inscriptions in Arabic and Hausa mentioned that they were in fact Muslims. Generally, it could be seen that shop owners with all the shop inscriptions under the theme of religious affiliation/faith, use the languages that are associated with their religion or languages that are used to deliver the sermons and teachings in their religion.

#### **4.2.4 Control factors that affect language choices in shop inscriptions**

Control factors are all the other possible factors that can also affect the language choices of shop owners when creating their signs. These are educational level of the shop owners, contact with other linguistic landscape and the cognitive-affectation disposition of the shop owners. These factors are further explained in the following sections.

##### **4.2.4.1 Educational level of shop owners/keepers**

Analysis of the data gathered showed that the level of education of the shop owners played a tremendous role in not only the kind of style they used for their shop inscriptions, but also affected the kind of languages they used for their signs. Most of them have had some form of basic education and this reflected in their higher choice of the English language for their

signage. Aside that, one could see that the shop owners who were literates had no problem with the structure and spelling of their inscriptions. The table below gives the breakdown of the shop owners educational information. Table 4.2.4.1 provides a description of the standard of education of the shop owners/keepers.

***Table 4.2.4.1. The level/standard of Education of the shop owners/keepers***

<b>Standard of Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Illiterate	10	3.3
Primary school leaver	40	13.3
JHS Leaver	110	36.7
SHS/SSS Leaver	111	37
Graduate/Form 4 Leaver	20	6.7
University Graduate	9	3
Total	300	100.0

The standard of education of the shop owners/keepers were obtained when I was conducting interviews with the shop owners/keepers. Most of the shop owners/keepers, in one way or the other have obtained some level of education. It can be observed from the above table that ten(10) of them are illiterates representing only 3.3%. During the interview sessions, most of the shop owners who have had some education mentioned how important that is and added that it has helped them a lot in managing their business. Mr Owusu, one of the respondents said “Yes, this job that earns us income and our daily bread is not a formal job and therefore it does not need any higher educational level before one can venture into it. But in one way or the other, it requires some standard of basic calculation and so one needs at least basic level of education to start it.

Therefore, it is advisable that people who are willing to enter into the business enterprise must obtain some level of education in order not to incur at a loss.” Another respondent, Mr Mensah said “This business is attracting a lot of people here because it needs

little capital for the start but if you don't have 'book knowledge', your business will collapse because you have to be able to read and write and also speak small English with your customers for them to keep coming". These comments and many other interesting ones reveal the influences that education has on their daily activities and how they view the use of English in their business transactions. This explains why many of their shops signs are in English.

#### **4.2.4.2 Contacts with other linguistic landscape**

As indicated under the factor 'institutional support', linguistic landscape is also influence by other public signs in the community. It is more of a social identity situation; the more a particular language features in inscriptions in the community, the more other signage follow the trend by using that same language. This is because both the sign creators and members of the community begin to assume that that language controls the financial and commercial sectors and therefore would want to also use this high-status language. Many shop owners during the interview sessions mentioned that they use Akan and English for their signs because they are the languages used by majority of the populace and therefore very important to the community.

### **4.3 Functions of signs on the shops**

This section seeks to highlight the functions of the shop inscriptions that were collected in Kronom, Kedjetia and the Kumasi community as a whole which happens to be one of the main objectives of this study. Here, a descriptive survey is given on the informative and symbolic uses of the shop signs when they are put up by the shop owners in Kronom, Kedjetia and Kumasi. The inscriptions on the shops play relevant roles for the creators and the entire public. Inscriptions give us a different sort of information from literary texts. They also depict identity in terms of names, nickname and place of origin and ethnicity. There are others that serve to inspire, aspire and showing ability, academics and affiliation. An inscription in a form of advertisement serves to communicate some form of information to the general public, the

kind of product or services they provide in that particular shop. More often than not, this advertisement earn them some income as they enjoy high patronage of goods and services to support their business transactions. Aside these, there are two major functions that every linguistic landscape perform. These are; informative function and symbolic function.

#### **4.3.1 Informative function**

The most basic function of a linguistic landscape is to give information. It first of all gives information about the services rendered by the shop, the location and time of operation. It is also used to give some vital information about issues that are of much importance to the community where these inscriptions are placed. The first basic information of shop signs is that they serve as a distinctive marker used to demarcate the geographical territories inhabited by a language in a given community (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Thus, through the shop signs, one is able to know the language boundaries in a community; for instance, where one language starts and ends and where another begins. This helps a lot because through this, one is able to know the kind of language to communicate in when approaching a particular community by viewing the inscriptions in that area.

Another important function of shop inscriptions is their ability to indicate the language diversity in a given speaking community. Language diversity is one language phenomenon that is so evident in bilingual and multilingual societies. The prevalence of different languages on inscriptions in a particular community suggest that the community has one than one language used for communication. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 26), “given that language territories are rarely linguistically homogeneous, the linguistic landscape can also provide information about the sociolinguistic composition of the language groups inhabiting the territory in question” which is most times different from what we have in the language policy. So generally, the research area for this study is said to be Akan speaking areas. However, a look into the inscriptions of shops shows that that speaking community does not only have

about nine different languages used there, but also has English as the language of the majority of the populace. From the data gathered, it was observed that Kronom and Kedjetia are bilingual/multilingual cities with signs that reflect the diversity of the language groups present in the given territory as shown as follows:

*Table 4.3.1. Classifying languages on the shops into monolingual or bilingual*

<b>Language classification/groupings</b>				
		Monolingual	Bilingual	Total
Location of shops	Within Kronum	60	40	100
	Along the stretch of the road	46	35	81
	Within Kedjetia	64	55	119
<b>Total</b>		<b>170</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>300</b>

As can be seen from the table, the inscriptions that are monolingual are more within Kedjetia, totaling sixty four (64) in number. This is directly followed by those found within Kronum and along the stretch of the road recording sixty (60) and forty six (46) inscriptions respectively.

#### **4.3.1.1 Monolingual inscriptions on the shops**

Table 4.3.1.1 gives a vivid description of the inscriptions that appear monolingual. Monolingual inscriptions are inscriptions that are inscribed using only one language. From the table, it appears that 56% of the inscriptions appeared monolingual. The official language of Ghana, English, featured predominantly than all the other languages. This is directly followed by Akan (Asante Twi), and Pidgin. The others appeared very few in number. The reason why most of the inscriptions are in English is that not everyone can read inscriptions in the local languages. Hence, with the inscribers wishing to carry their messages across to a great number of people, it is logical that they prefer using English to encode their messages.



*Table 4.3.1.1. inscriptions that appeared monolingual in the chosen research areas*

<b>Monolingual inscriptions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
English	130	43.0
Akan	102	34
Hausa	14	4.7
Hebrew	2	0.7
Arabic	5	1.7
Ewe	10	3.3
Ga	2	0.7
Pidgin English	25	8.3
Krobo	8	2.7
Unknown	2	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The unknown language is the monolingual language in the inscription with a frequency of two (2) which constitutes 0.7%. During the interview with my respondent, he could not explain the origin of that language.

#### **4.3.1.2 Inscriptions on shops that appeared bilingual**

The bilingual inscriptions are inscriptions that are written using two distinctive languages. Table 4.3.1.2 demonstrates languages that are used in the inscription bilingually in the chosen research areas.

**Table 4.3.1.2. bilingual use of language in the inscription at the chosen research areas**

<b>Bilingual inscriptions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
English & Akan	240	80
English & Arabic	10	3.3
English & Hausa	5	1.7
English & Ga	2	0.7
Arabic & Hausa	2	0.7
Total	259	86.3
An unknown combined languages	41	13.7
Total	300	100.0

From the table, it can be deduced that the total number of inscriptions featured as two languages is 259, representing 86.3% of the total number of inscriptions. This means that the bilingual inscriptions on the various shops at the chosen research areas out-number the monolingual inscriptions. As can be seen from the table above, for all bilingual inscriptions, the dominant and apparent language in contact with (combination) with the other language is English. The indigenous languages and African languages are in combination with English, being an official language in Ghana. This attests to the fact that most Ghanaians are bilinguals. Some Ghanaians even speak and understand three or more languages. The reason why the bilingual inscriptions outnumber the monolingual inscriptions explains the bilingual situation in Ghana.

#### **4.3.2 Symbolic functions**

As stated above, linguistic landscape can have both informational and symbolic functions. The inscriptions we see in public spaces every day functions in more ways than to simply communicate information; they are also used to reveal deeper symbolic meanings. The symbolic functions of public signage in particular tends to have an effect more on a language

community by addressing issues of concern about the community and its members, rather than the creator of the sign.

#### **4.3.2.1 Language of power and dominance**

For symbolic function, the presence and absence of a language on public sign shows the vitality level of the language group to members of the society. Language groups with high vitality normally have many speakers and the language is normally a dominant language spoken by the majority of the populace whereas language groups with low vitality have low number of speakers and the language does not have high-status in the community. According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), linguistic landscapes act as the most observable and immediate index that reveals the relative power and status of languages in bilingual and multilingual communities. It is explained that low vitality groups are most likely to go through linguistic assimilation and cease to exist as a distinctive collectivity. On the other hand, the high vitality groups are likely to maintain their language and distinctive cultural traits in multilingual settings.

In the previous sections, the study has shown that although the two towns are linguistically diverse. There are some languages used more frequently than others because they happen to have high vitalities. It was observed that English and Akan have so much power and dominance over other languages like Ga, Ewe, Hausa and Dangme. It was also revealed that the breakdown of the vitality outcomes of all the languages that featured in the inscriptions suggest that there is an ongoing language shift process where most of the minority language speakers have all assimilated into the use of English and Akan for high-status functions and have reduced their languages for communicating in the home and among friends in the community.

#### **4.3.2.2 Presence of minority languages**

Inscriptions also indicate the minority languages in a particular community based on how frequent the language gets featured in the inscriptions and whether it is used for high-status functions or not. In bilingual and multilingual societies, when a language is seen prominently in the landscape, the language will have a high ethnolinguistic vitality. In other words, this language will be seen as the main language for communicating in social situations, business transactions and government services. The people in this language group are seen as the dominant language group and given much importance and value. On the other hand, the languages not seen in the linguistic landscape are devalued, not recognized and have a low ethnolinguistic vitality. Speakers of these minority languages may feel pressure to use the predominant language and may use their home language less and depend on the majority language for survival in the community.

#### **4.3.2.3 Social issues**

Linguistic landscape is closely intertwined with culture, beliefs and sociocultural issues and as such the functions that these inscriptions perform in the day to day lives of members of the society cannot be overlooked. Inscriptions are used to perform a lot of functions in the society where they are placed. Huebner (2009), in categorizing signs, points out the different genre or socio-cultural functions of inscriptions. According to Huebner (2009), inscriptions are used to express one's emotions or feelings, offer recommendations, advice, or attempt to persuade, report or describe an information or create and maintain and firm relation between the addresser and addressee or used to communicate meanings that would not otherwise be communicated. These are further explained in the followifg sections:

#### 4.3.2.3.1 Inscriptions used as expressives

This type of inscriptions express the mental state of the speaker about an event presumed to be true. In other words, it can be described as inscriptions on shops that show the creator's of the sign mood, mental and state of being at a particular point in time. These expressive signs were specifically expressed using variety of forms such as; welcoming, apologizing, sympathizing, praising as well as regretting. Through the inscriptions, the shop owners/keepers welcome everybody far and near into the shop to patronize his goods. In addition to that, they also apologise to the customers for any wrong doing in the course of their transactions.

That notwithstanding, they also sympathize with people, customers from far and near who found themselves in problems in one way or the other and advise them that all shall be well. The shop owners/keepers further use the inscriptions as a means to praise people who over the years transacted business with them and continuously transacting business with them. They also one way or the other praising the Creator, God for the great things He has done for them. Furthermore, the shop owners/keepers use the inscriptions to show either how regretful or grateful they are in terms of their positive and negative actions towards the general public. The underlisted are typical examples of expressives inscriptions and their interpretations are given by the shop owners/keepers as indicated in the given bracket.

- **Nhyira nka deɛ ɔdidi na ɔkae ne nua** - 'God blesses those who eats and remembers his or her brother'. (This inscription serves as an advice to the general public especially those who are not generous enough to others like the vulnerable ones. We receive blessings from given something either in kind or cash to people especially the poor and vulnerable ones.

- **Nyame yɛ ahene mu hene** - ‘God is the King of kings’. (We should have in mind that we have only one king here on earth and in heaven. That God who created heaven and earth as well as everything in it using just six days. He deserves to be praised and worshipped without comparing any other king and person with Him).
- **Don’t worry, all shall be well** - (Life became unbearable as patronage reduced drastically. Gang of robbers broke into the shop and made away about seventy percent (70%) of the goods in stock. The inscription is a source of encouragement to me and that I know for sure, one day the troubles I am going through shall be over).
- **Good wife** (This big shop was established by my dear wife. The amount given to her for the start was not all that much, yet she has been able to manage with that meager amount and now we are running a big time shop full of all kinds of goods in this locality).

#### 4.3.2.3.2 Inscriptions used as declarations

Declaration inscriptions are signs which bring into existence the state of affairs to which it refers. Examples are blessings, firing, baptizing, bidding, passing sentence and excommunicating. It is a category of inscriptions which serves as a means by which shop owners or keepers coin and construct words or passing sentence that serve as names and subsequently metamorphoses into names that they are identified. The inscriptions of this nature are found on the shops in the afore-mention stretch of road. With time, people in and around will start to identify these shop owners or keepers by the inscriptions on their shops. In simple terms, they are identified by the inscriptions inscribed on their shops. Typical examples of inscriptions considered as declaratives are listed below. They are followed by their interpretations in the brackets:

- **Chance** (It is a nickname that I'm being identified with. I was not financially sound and I entered into galamsey job. My shop is full of all kinds of good due to the huge amount of money I had from it.
- **Owner** (It is a nickname that I'm being identified with by my customers because I'm the managing director of these group of companies.
- **Time** (This name was given to me by my customers in and around this area. This is because I measure time with money and so my shop is full of goods because of my presence in opening the shop all the time.
- **Adom** (This name was coined by my customers due to how generous I'm to them. I always show some sort of kind gestures to them by allowing them to buy my items on credit if they don't have money on them.
- **Blessing** (This is a name coined by my customers due to how I have been attracted by people far and near to come and shop in here. People in and around come here to shop day in and out, hence the identified name "Blessing".

#### 4.3.2.3.3 Inscriptions used as directives

A directive inscription gets an addressee to do something. Examples of these include commanding, ordering, daring, defying and challenging. Stated differently, directive inscriptions aim at getting the addressee, reader or the general public to do something. It also serves to order people by giving directives to the general public as to when and how to shop. This serves to intervene on behalf of the shop owners/keepers. Shop signs categorized as directives and their interpretations given by the shop owners/keepers are provided in brackets after the inscriptions listed below:

- **Let's worship and serve God** (The giver of life is God. He created human beings and everything in this universe. So we have to worship and serve him every day). According to the owner of this shop, God is the creator of every human being. Additionally, every

blessings that man obtains is part of God's provision for mankind. In this regard, it is important that we recognise these blessings and serve God. He therefore entreats his clientele to acknowledge God's hand in their lives and serve Him with all their hearts.

- **Love Jesus** (Jesus came unto this world to die in order to save us from our sins. So we must show our appreciation to him by loving him).
- **Arise and shine** (This inscription serves as words of encouragement. I'm being motivated whenever I read it or remember it. I don't get discouraged whenever I encounter any problem in life).

#### 4.3.2.3.4 Inscriptions used as commissives

This type of shop inscriptions gets the speaker, the one performing the act to do something. Examples of such acts include promising, threatening, intending or vowing to do or to refrain from something. The shop owners/keepers use this speech act in a form of inscription on their shops to promise the general public of future cause of action. It is an act in a form of inscription that serves to promise the general public or the reader of a positive end to any activity the owner of the shop is undertaking. It also serves as a protection from Almighty God to the general public or readers since everything that concerns them is under the care of God. Speech acts in a form of inscription that seek to promise and guarantee the general public and readers of future actions and their interpretations given by shop owners/keepers are put into brackets after the inscriptions.

- **One man no chop** (I have about four shop attenders who help me in running this shop. I make sure that they are being paid regularly. I also feed, clothed and shelter them. Because of that they are always motivated to give out their best in running the business.) This inscription sought to admonish the readers that whatever blessings God gives to you, you must understand that it is not meant for you alone to enjoy. When God blesses us we must extend our hands to reach out to those who are in need.



- **God is king** (God, the creator of this universe is the king of all kings. He deserves to be accorded with that respect.
- **Your blessing is in the hands of God.** (The blessing of every human being is in the hands of Almighty God as it is said in the Scripture, Proverb 10:22 that the blessing of the Lord makes man rich. So, whether you become rich or not depends on God.
- **All shall be well** (I was having a lot of challenges in my shop. Patronage of goods were not moving as expected but I have the belief that it shall be well one day. The inscribed inscription is a source of my motivation and the entire public.

#### 4.3.2.3.5 Inscriptions used as representatives

This type of speech act represents a state of affairs. In other words, it shows how shop owners demonstrate their belief in the Lord that they serve. These representative acts were expressed in a form of inscriptions using forms such as describing, suggesting, claiming and or swearing that something is the case. These inscriptions demonstrate something to the general public that without God, there wouldn't be any blessings from man as found in the scripture, Proverb 10:22. The inscriptions on the shops serve as a means of telling the general public their experience of getting their daily bread day in and out from God in life. That notwithstanding, it confirms certain realities in life, that are not avoidable as human beings interact with people day and night. The inscriptions also seek to confirm that the general public should not always have to react to every situation they face in life. Some situations should be left alone without commenting or reacting. Typical examples of speech act that are representative and their interpretations given by the shop owners/keepers are enclosed in a bracket after the given inscriptions.

- **God with us** (We always live without problems when God is with us ).
- **Still strong** (I have gone through a lot of challenges ever since I started operating this shop but the Lord God that we serve has been faithful to me. As you can see, the Lord

had seen me through because things are changing positively in the operation of the shop.

- **Yene wo sere kwa** ‘They just laugh with you’. (I have a wife who never shows appreciation to whatever I do for her. Even though I am kind and also generous to her but she will never show her appreciation. Above all she has been cheating on me in the marriage and she pretends everything is normal.
- **Gift of God** (I use this inscription to show appreciation, thanks and gratefulness by telling God that this business enterprise was given to me as a gift from him and not my own strength and might.

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997), when a language is seen prominently in the landscape, the language will have a high ethnolinguistic vitality. In other words, this language will be seen as the main language for communication in social situations, business transactions and government services. The people in this language group will be seen favourably and feel included and valued. Conversely, the languages not seen in the linguistic landscape are devalued, not recognized and have a low ethnolinguistic vitality.

English as a language is being used in so many domains including business transactions, in education as well as in media. It is in this context that the English Language has rapidly grown to become a formidable force in social and community interaction, cross-ethnic communication, and in the dialogues relating to democratic practices and governance, as well as a source of debate among academics, policy makers and politicians in its usage as the medium of instruction in early primary schools up to the university level in Ghana and the world as a whole. English as a dominant language in the linguistic landscape in the chosen research areas is not something new to many linguists. For example, Akindele (2001) and Mgbemena (2013) consider English to be the dominant language in Gaborone, Botswana, and Nigeria respectively.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The research questions sought to identify the themes that emerge from the inscriptions on the shops in Kumasi, at the three chosen research areas. It was revealed that some of the themes are the theme of self-identity, life experience, declaration of faith/religion, life philosophy, advice, potential warnings, a call to act/duty, academics, inspiration among others. In addition, the description of the selected inscriptions on the shops in Kumasi, the capital city of Ashanti Region, notably at three chosen research areas were vividly described. The study also discovered that there are various ways shop owners communicate to the general public and these are based on their own perspectives in life as well as their creative and marketing abilities. In addition, it was discovered that, far from using inscriptions as a form of communication, the use of certain inscriptions on shops sometimes shows the shop owners' status in terms of market domain. For instance, the use of the theme of identity shows that the owner(s) are unknown in the market domain or has a lot of competitors around them and therefore need to selected inscriptions that easily identify them.

The different languages that have been inscribed on the shops include English, Hausa, Arabic and the indigenous Ghanaian languages. These inscriptions come in different font sizes, colours and cases of letters (upper and lower cases). There are instances where the shop owners/keepers inscribe images of people they admire so much like world champion footballers, flags of countries, intra-sentential code switching and multimodal use of codes. The dominant language observed is English while Akan and Pidgin English recorded the second and third positions respectively. It was also noted that more than 86% of the inscriptions are bilingual. Those featured to be bilingual are more often than not to be inscribed in English which often merges with other language. For clarifications of the dominant and prevalent visibility of English, Akan and pidgin in the capital city of Kumasi, a full detailed tabulation has been provided to buttress the explanation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This study examined inscriptions on shops on the Kronom to Kedjetia stretch of road, Kumasi, and the language choices that accompany these public signages. The study also investigated the themes that emerged from the 300 signs on the shops that were collected for this study and the functions that are featured when these signs are mounted. The study employed qualitative approach to analyse the data and this allowed the issues that emerged from the study to be described thoroughly with evidence from the data collected from the interviews, observation and photography. Data were initially collected from the Kedjetia township which recorded the highest number of inscriptions in the research areas; a total of one hundred and twenty (120) inscriptions in all. The other inscriptions were obtained along the stretch of the road and within Kronum, comprising 100 and 80 inscriptions respectively. These shop inscriptions were analysed using content analysis. After the analysis of the data, semi-structured interviews were conducted on one-on-one basis with the shop owners to find out the reasons for their choices. This chapter presents a summary of the findings that consist of the current language situation at the research areas at the moment and the place of the English language in a linguistically-diverse setting like Kumasi, which happens to be densely populated with people from different ethnicities and cultures. The chapter also highlights the recommendations and suggestions for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of findings

The major findings of this study need to be brought to fore in a way that will adequately reveal what the study's main objectives were. It is no denying the fact that public inscriptions are not just signs, but are tools used to communicate important information that creators of

these signs want the world to know. One inferring generalization about linguistic landscape that was captured in this study is that inscriptions are closely intertwined with cultural issues and as such reflect the culture of the people in the community. This is because their culture and their views of the world around and outside them greatly influenced the choices of words and language that are displayed on the signs. According to Hult (2009), linguistic landscapes carry crucial socio-symbolic importance as they actually identify and serve as emblem of societies, communities and regions. Similarly, every single shop inscription that was collected from the research areas showcased some form of cultural issues, beliefs, notions, ideologies or general way of life of the people in the community.

### **5.1.1 Themes that emerge from shop inscriptions**

The study demonstrated that most shop signs come with some important themes that the shop owners try to send across. This is because majority of the signs that were collected for the study did not only contain vital information about something or the place they occupy, but also carry important messages and ideas on issues of concern to the members of community (Puzey 2007; Yagmur, 2011). It was found that these themes emerged as a result of the owners' perspective in life, personal experiences, personal life slogans and philosophies, religious affiliation and faith as well as their profession and academics. These themes were categorised under self-identity, personal experiences, life philosophy, and advice to the general public, declaration of religious affiliation and faith, a call to action or duty, warning to potential threats, ownership, inspiration, classic professionalism, and academic.

From the 300 signs that were collected, majority of them fell under the theme of religious affiliation or faith, showing that most of the populace are religious. This is because it is evident that most shop keepers/owners are committed to showing reverence to their object of worship, with regards to the signs they mounted. Most of the signs of this nature gave reverence to their object of worship and express their gratitude to their object of worship (God).

From the analysis, it can be argued that majority of the people in the community are Christians as most of the inscriptions were salvation messages, Bible Scriptures and appreciation messages to our maker (God), Jesus, and power of God. This is followed by self-identity; where the signs were made up of 13.3% of the data collected.

Here, the intention behind this kind of inscription is to show the identity of the shop owners/keepers. This is because being able to bear a name and be identified in a society is very important as it is one of the acceptable practices in every society. Life philosophy is recorded as the third with 12% out of the whole percentage of the data collected. There were equally other inspiring themes which revealed that the shop signs were not just used to inform customers of the products and services they had on offer, but used to voice out opinions, experiences and advice as well as present to the audience how they view life in general.

### **5.1.2 Rationale for choice of shop signs**

The findings showed that generally, shop owners do not just mount signs, but rather found that a lot come into play before a shop owner displays a sign. It was also shown that even the language choices displayed on signs do not just happen, but are influenced by a whole lot of socio-structural factors. Using the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory, *status*, *demography*, *institutional support* and *control factors* were seen as the socio-structural variables responsible for the writings we see on the shop signs. These factors thus delineate what is referred to as *objective vitality* as they are what trigger the speaker to behave the way he or she does. It was found that these variables also influence what we see on shop signs in Kronom and Kedjetia.

For the status variable, it was observed that the status of the languages spoken in the society plays a big role in whether it will be featured in an inscription or not. Sign creators may have a message they may like to send across, however, these messages have a targeted audience. Therefore, these sign creators are likely to use the language that the targeted audience is conversant with and especially, one that has economic, social and socio-historical value in

the society so as to get as many people as possible. This is because these signs are first of all, advertisements meant to draw people to come and purchase whatever they have to offer; a goal that shop owners do not leave out no matter the information they want to share. In that case, shop owners are often pushed to use languages with higher vitality; the ones spoken by majority of the populace. With this, it was seen that English was largely used on the signs because of its economic importance in Ghana as a lingua franca and also a language considered very important as a global and prestigious in the world. Asante Twi dialect of Akan was the second most used language for the signs in the research areas and it was observed that this is so because the language originally spoken by the natives in that area happens to be Asante Twi therefore it is the language used for all cultural activities and traditions. Other languages that were featured in the signs were neighbouring Ghanaian languages which are used by speakers of those languages who have come to settle there and it was observed that they tend to use their languages to serve as a form of identity.

Demography was also found to be one of the major factors responsible for the language choices and themes that appear on the shop signs. Demography here refers to the age, sex, marital status, occupation, and address of a human population in a particular place and “often deals with the number and distribution patterns of ethnolinguistic group members throughout a particular region or national territory” (Yagmur, 2011, p. 112). In terms of demographics, it was found that location of the shops, the ages of the shop owners/keepers, the ethnic groups of the shop owners, the audience in the research areas, and the occupational information of both shop owners and the targeted clientele greatly influence the shop signs that gets to be mounted. From the study, it was found that many of the shop owners/keepers had ages within thirties (30s) and this gives credence as to why majority of the inscriptions were either in English and Akan. This is because many of them have had some level of education and so very conversant with the English language and also because most of them have Akan as their mother tongue.

Interview sessions with these shop owners also reveal the higher use of English and Akan because these two languages happens to be the high-status languages used by people in that age bracket within the area.

Location of the signs were also identified as a demographic factor that tends to influence shop signs. It was observed that most of the inscriptions were in the Asante Twi dialect of Akan. This is because in that territorial region, the dialect originally spoken is Asante Twi. It was found that anytime other languages were featured in the shop signs, it implied that one had to move to small settings where these languages were used largely by the people around. For instance, inscriptions in Hausa were seen mostly in the 'Zongo' neighbourhoods in the research areas where most of the populace are Muslims. The occupational information of both the shop owners and the targeted clientele were found to also influence the kind of language that is inscribed on the shop signs and the type of themes that were featured in the signs.

Normally, some occupation come with their own specific language for interaction while others may be flexible. And with English and Akan being the languages used for trade and almost all economic activities, it was no doubt that many of the shop signs were in these languages. The formal and informal support in the various institutions such as mass-media, education, government services, industry, religion, culture, and even politics also contributed greatly to the higher use of English and Akan (Asante Twi) in the research areas. It was observed that these languages were used often by public institutions and the media and therefore, explains why many shops signs were in these languages. There were other control factors like the educational level of the shop owners and their contact with other linguistic landscape and they all showed incredible impact on the choices that shop owners make when making signs for their shops.



### 5.1.3 Functions of the signs on shops

The inscriptions on shops that were collected for this study were found to play important roles for the creators and the entire people in the Kumasi community. The shop inscriptions were observed to be used to perform informative functions and symbolic functions just like seen in most of the studies that were reviewed in the Chapter 2 of this study. The analysis showed that aside giving information about the products and services that the shop offers, the signs were also used as distinctive markers to demarcate the geographical territories inhabited by a language in the Kronom and Kedjetia communities, thus giving clear information about the languages present in Kumasi. The shop signs often told one the language that is spoken in a particular area as soon as one enters into it. The shop signs were also seen to give information about the language diversity in the area. Because Kumasi is a bilingual/multilingual society, the languages on the shop signs reveal the different languages spoken in the community and showed one where a language starts and ends.

For symbolic function, it was observed that the presence and absence of a language on the shop signs reflected the vitality level of the language group to members of the society. Language groups with high vitality normally have many speakers and the language is normally a dominant language spoken by the majority of the populace whereas language groups with low vitality have low number of speakers and the language does not have high status in the community. Analysis of the data collected showed that English and Akan have so much power and dominance over other languages like Ga, Ewe, Hausa and Dangme in the research area, hence having a much larger speakers than other languages. Also, it was realized that the shop signs in Kronom and Kedjetia (Kumasi) are used to also perform other genres or socio-cultural functions such as expressing one's emotions or feelings and offering recommendations. They were also used to give advice, or even persuade the audience to do something or take a particular decision. It was observed that mostly these functions are determined by the kind of

inscriptions on the shops which are also influenced by the life experiences of the shop owners, as well as how they view life and the world in general.

## **5.2 The significance of shop inscriptions in the Linguistic Landscape of Kumasi**

From the results of the study, it was found that English language and the Asante Twi dialect are the languages widely used in the research areas. These two languages were frequent in the shop signs than any of the other languages. They were also observed to be the languages used for every day communication and business transactions. However, in all, English was the most dominant language in the research area and it is expected considering the fact that it is a very prestigious language and one of the important mediums of communication in Ghana today due to the multilingual nature of the country. Ghana has about 70 different indigenous languages and therefore English is normally used, not only as a lingua franca by Ghanaians, but also, as an official language since independence to enable free communication with the international world (Agyekum, 2001; Asamoah, 2009; Kropp-Dakubu, 1988). This has made English very requisite and significant for effective communication as everyone is highly expected to be able to read, write and freely use English, even sometimes at the expense of Ghanaian languages.

English language was observed to be the language spoken by the elite class of people in the region which also happens to be the ethnolinguistic group with high vitality. Therefore, all other groups are forced to use the language so much that the uneducated employ the use of the Ghanaian Pidgin English to identify themselves with this ethnolinguistic group with high vitality. It was observed that the English language hold so much importance in the region because of the institutional support it get from public institutions and its use as both the language of instruction as well as for communication in the classroom setting. This means that a large mass of the people who have had some form of education or are still in school can speak English and therefore the reason for its frequent display on the shop signs. Another reason for

the higher use of English language in the country is because many societies have begun to crave to learn the English language because of its global status, and Ghana is no exception (Agyekum, 2001; Kropp-Dakubu, 1988). Also, because Kumasi is one of the business centers in Ghana for the trading of arts, beads, kente, and ancient and modern traditional items, there is always frequent visitation of tourists from all walks of life and therefore shop owners see it as advisable to display their signs in English, a global language to communicate with prospective clients.

The Asante Twi dialect of Akan was the second most dominante language in the research areas. It was found on a large number of the shop signs that were collected and observed to be the language that almost all the people used for their everyday communication with family and friends. It was realized that this language was used by even speakers of other languages who due to some reasons have moved to settle in Kronom and Kedjetia. This shows how Asante Twi is gradually becoming indigeneous *lingua franca* among citizens of this country. In Ghana, Akan is the native language of the people of Ashanti, Eastern, Brong Ahafo, Western as well as Central regions however, the Asante Twi dialect seems to be predominant in the every day conversation of a large mass of the population of Ghana. The widespread of this native language is as a result of its high visibility in the linguistic landscape and the way the speakers in the country attribute it to be. It is a language that has a rich literature in proverbs, folktales and traditional drama, as well as a new literature in drama, short stories and novels that entertain people, young and old. That notwithstanding, it is a language used by the mass media and in business transactions. The three research areas are very dominant in terms of trade and administrative activities. These activities attract people from all walks. And anytime these people come into contact with this language, even though they have their own language, but the language in question (Akan) overshadows their language and as such they are forced to switch to it. It is something that has been prevailing in Ashanti Region, specifically Kumasi to find people of different ethnic group using Akan as a *lingua franca*. Sometimes, it happens that

interlocutors of the same ethnic group interact in Akan to the extent of sidelining or ignoring their native language.

### **5.3 Suggestions for future research**

This research has shed light on the themes that emerged from shop signs, the language choices that come with signs and the functions that are expressed by these signs that are displayed. In spite of these findings, it is important to note that this research did not look at the morpho-syntactic aspects of the signs. Therefore, future research works could examine the morpho-syntactic features that are associated with these shop signs. Also, the socio-structural variables of the ethnolinguistic groups were not measured to find the exact level of impact that the groups' vitalities have on the choices that these shop owners as well as members of the community make. Therefore, further research can be conducted to find out that.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

This study has explored the shop signs from Kronom to Kedjetia Central market of Kumasi and the language choices that are showcased by these signs. The study also looked at the themes that come with these shop signs and also the functional roles that these inscriptions express in the society. The findings have brought to light the fact that shop signs do not only give information about the products and services that a shop renders, but also used to communicate one's feelings, emotions, opinions and general knowledge about the societal issues we face every day in our communities. The findings have also shown that language behaviours of speakers and language choices used for the inscriptions do not just happen but tend to be largely influenced by some socio-structural factors such as status, demography, institutional support, and other control factors present in the society. These socio-structural variables often show the vitality levels of ethnolinguistic groups such that an ethnolinguistic group with high vitality will have its language dominate the languages of other groups which have low vitalities. In general, the study has shown that within the Kronom and Kedjetia

Central market, the English language and the Asante Twi dialect of Akan are the dominant languages with Ga, Dangme, Hausa, Ewe, and other languages as the minority languages. The study also shows the presence of language diversity in the region with about 8 different languages spoken by inhabitants. From the analysis, it was seen that majority of the citizens are bilinguals and normally use Asante Twi for trading activities and use it as the *lingua franca*, especially for informal conversations. English is also first of all used as the formal language for all formal and economic transactions. It is also used as the lingua franca among the elite group with the uneducated group using pidgin as the variant form. From the results, it is argued that shop signs reflect the culture of the people and give a picture of the language situation in that particular society with ease.



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## APPENDIX

The Inscriptions Found at the Research Areas, their Glosses as well as their Interpretations.

### 1. *Inscriptions on shops depicting self-identity*



### 2. *Inscriptions on shops depicting faith/religious affiliations*



3. Inscriptions on shops depicting advice



(“*suro nipa eda wanim*” meaning ‘*Fear Human being – it is ahead of you*’)



(“*di asem pa*” meaning ‘*Follow worthy case*’)

4. Inscriptions on shops depicting ownership



5. Inscriptions on shops depicting Nicknames





6. Inscriptions on shops depicting life experiences



(“*Kae me brɛ*” meaning ‘remember my labour’)



(“*Nyame akwan*” meaning ‘God’s way’)

7. Inscriptions on shops depicting inspiration



8. Inscriptions on shops that depict a call to act or duty



(“*Suro nipa eda wanim*” meaning ‘Fear Human Being – it is ahead of you’)

9. Inscriptions on shops that show punctuation errors







10. Inscriptions that show incorrect spellings





**Inscriptions that shows grammatical errors**





**Inscriptions that show intra-sentential code-switching**



**Inscriptions that show images that are unrelated**



11. Inscription on shops that depict Figurative Expression

