

# Language Contact in the Linguistic Landscape of Honolulu Chinatown: A GIS-Based Multimodal Analysis

## Abstract

This presentation examines patterns of multilingual language contact in the linguistic landscape of Honolulu Chinatown through an analysis of GIS-based linguistic landscape data. Since the nineteenth century, Honolulu Chinatown has gradually developed into a linguistically complex urban space centered on Chinese, while also incorporating English, Hawaiian, Japanese, and other Asian languages in sustained interaction and coexistence. This distinctive linguistic landscape reflects the historical trajectories and cultural continuities of Chinese and other Asian immigrant communities, as well as broader processes of language contact and exchange within Hawai'i's multiethnic society.

Drawing on systematically collected street-level videos and photographs, the study integrates geospatial positioning and GIS-based annotation to categorize and map signage data. Within a multimodal analytical framework, the analysis investigates how language interacts with visual design, color, symbols, and spatial organization to jointly convey identity, historical memory, and communicative intent. The findings demonstrate that the linguistic landscape of Honolulu Chinatown not only displays multilingual coexistence, but also strategically mobilizes multimodal resources to reinforce cultural identity, historical continuity, and social functionality.

By highlighting the methodological affordances of GIS for linguistic landscape and language contact research, this study offers new perspectives on multilingual interaction and identity construction in Honolulu, while also underscoring the relevance of linguistic landscape research for language education, cultural studies, and interdisciplinary collaboration.