The place of Tamil in the Linguistic Landscape of Singapore's Little India

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Abstract

As an official mother tongue and a heritage language, Tamil occupies a special place in the linguistic landscape (LL) of Singapore's Little India. Using Landry and Bourhis' (1997) LL approach, a LL refers to the geographical territory of a language community marked by languages on public and commercial signs. Resistance against the use of this minority language (Tamil) by the wider Singapore community is evident in its low visibility in the nation's wider LL. In contrast, Tamil is featured most prominently in Singapore's 'Indian' ethnic enclave and tourist attraction of Little India – where 'Indian' used in this paper refers to the 'Indian' component of the Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others ethnic policy of Singapore. This article aims to examine how the Singaporean Tamil identity is preserved and re-created through Tamil language representation in Little India's LL.

A two-pronged methodology was used to study the representation of the Tamil language - a LL analysis of a 272-image corpus of shop signs in Little India, and a nexus analysis conducted through a scene survey of 63 ethnically 'Indian' youth participants. While the LL analysis quantitatively evaluates translated and transliterated Tamil on shop signs (signage at shop entrances) the scene survey qualitatively investigates the relationship of the 'Indian' youth with the Tamil language and their ideologies surrounding Tamil identity in Little India.
The findings demonstrate how the Tamil identity in Singapore is preserved through Tamil translations and re-created through practices of transliteration of Tamil on signs. Firstly, the instrumental use of Tamil translations in a space characterised by the 'Indian' ethnicity perpetuates the preservation of the 'Indian' identity as exclusively Tamil. Secondly, the symbolic use of the Tamil script and English transliterations of Tamil on signs reveal a fetishization of the Tamil identity in the tourist context of Little India. Consequentially, this article posits that the Tamil language is manipulated to preserve a specific Singaporean Tamil identity, and reimagine an authentic brand identity of Tamil that appeals to the tourist gaze, thus, resisting the representation of the evolving Tamil identity in Singapore.

Introduction
Originating from the seminal work of Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 23), the linguistic landscape (LL) refers to 'the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs'. The ethnolinguistic vitality of a language is a socio-structural factor. This factor depends on the LL for the survivability and growth of the language and identity of the ethnolinguistic group in multilingual settings (Landry & Bourhis 1997). The low visibility of the Tamil language in the wider LL of Singapore's public spaces, mark its weakened ethnolinguistic vitality (Shang & Guo 2017; Tang 2018). This is an indication of resistance against the Tamil language in Singapore. In contrast, less resistance toward the language is reflected in the high visibility of Tamil signs concentrated in the ethnic enclave of Little India.

Singapore's multilingual landscape forms an arena for contested language use and representation among the four official languages: English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. Little India is branded as an 'Indian' ethnic neighbourhood and a tourist attraction where the 'Indian' identity is celebrated and represented by an overwhelming use of the Tamil language (see section 2.2.2). The commercial site is painted as a shopping district where one can purchase affordable goods and services such as food, textiles and jewellery that are traditionally 'Indian'. While almost all Hindus are 'Indians' and though not all 'Indians' are Hindu, Little India is the main 'Indian' space celebrating Hindu festivities such as the festival of lights, Deepavali. Unlike foreign enclaves such as Little Burma and Little Thailand which formed naturally without intervention from the authorities, Little India is an officially assigned ethnic enclave which represents the minority ethnic Tamil population in Singapore (see section 2.2.2). Hence, Little India has a special place for Tamil where one would expect the language to reflect the area's vibrant 'Indian' heritage.

In light of Little India representing the Tamil ethnicity, a few questions on the representation of Tamil as a minority language are in order. How is the Singaporean Tamil identity represented and resisted in Little India's LL? In what ways would the presentation of Tamil on shop signs mark Little India as 'Indian'? How does the representation of the Tamil language in Little India's LL preserve and re-create the Tamil identity in Singapore? The research aims of this study can thus be constructed as seen below:

1) To examine the representation of Tamil on shop signs through translation and transliteration practices.
2) To analyse how Tamil identity is preserved and recreated through Tamil language representation.

Through LL analysis, this paper will detail how the Tamil identity is represented through the Tamil language in Little India. This study will also use nexus analysis to offer an ethnographic perspective of LL through the responses of research participants to a scene survey that will uncover the relationship of the 'Indian' youth with the Tamil language and identity in the context of little India.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Global LL Research on Tourist Contexts
Ample research on the LL of tourism have brought to surface the commodification of minority languages, which are represented symbolically, to index the authenticity of a space for tourists, which turn these dynamic spaces into stabilised, distinct places (Pietikäinen, et al. 2011; Moriarty 2014; Heller, Jaworski & Thurlow 2014). As distinguished by De Certeau (1984) and Higgins (2017), *places* refer to the fixed and orderly configurations of physical elements, while *spaces* constitutes an unstable and changing intersection of activities. While the LL frames fluid spaces as static places, performing an authenticity that is shaped by national ideologies and the tourist gaze, there lies a tension between the economic need to capitalise on languages by accessing the global market for tourism and the need to claim 'authenticity, ownership and legitimacy' of these languages (Heller, Jaworski & Thurlow 2014, p. 426). The branding and differentiation of tourist attractions strategically convert cultural and linguistic capital into symbolic and economic capital (Heller, Pujolar & Duchêne 2014). Thereby, obscuring issues of language and evolving identity. An underlying factor to such linguistic commodification is the linguistic fetishization of languages which are used for their symbolic rather than communicative value, which is based on the cultural stereotype of the ethnic group's associated language (Kelly-Holmes 2000, 2014). Following the research trend of commodified and fetishized languages in the tourist context, this study aims to highlight how the LL of Little India positions Tamil in a similar light.

2.2 Singapore's Linguistic Landscape

b2.2.1 Singapore's Linguistic Tension
Significant research reflects linguistic tensions in Singapore's LL. Due to the national language policy of four official languages, linguistic tensions arise with difficulties in representing these languages equally (Tan 2011, 2014). While English is most frequently spoken at home by 36.9% of the total population, Mandarin is the second most frequent at 34.9%, leaving Malay at 10.7% and Tamil at 3.3% of the total population (Department of Statistics Singapore 2019). The state's conflicting interests of internationalising the LL through the predominant use of English – which also serves as a lingua franca for inter-ethnic communication – and the need for mother tongue representation to preserve local cultural identities, also presents an instability in Singapore's LL (Tang 2018).

2.2.2 Essentialism between Language and Ethnic Identity
The state's essentialising attitude which associates English with neutrality – as an inter-ethnic lingua franca – and the mother tongues with cultural heritage – aiding intra-ethnic communication – is testament to the compartmentalisation of languages in Singapore's LL (Tan, 2014; Rappa & Wee, 2006). Such proclivity to assign languages based on ethnic identities rests on the state's interest in racial harmony despite the evolving demographic blurring ethnic and linguistic lines. Research trends highlight the homogenising effect of the state's bilingual policy and Chinese-Malay-Indian-Others (CMIO) ethnic policy on the 'Indian' ethnic group and

ethnolinguistic communities throughout Singapore's history (Mani 2006; Jain & Wee 2019; PuruShotam 2016). The CMIO model; developed for over 50 years since Singapore's independence to institutionalise and make common-sense of Singapore's multiracial and multi-ethnic character, has reinforced the 'I' component of the model – standing for 'Indian' – as a common term to refer to the average Singaporean 'Indian' born and raised in Singapore as 'South' Indian, Tamil speaking, Hindu and middle class; a bias that is based on the core clientele of Singapore's Little India (PuruShotam 2016). However, contemporary Singapore has since embraced immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and a global diaspora that previously constituted British India – a process which has markedly reconfigured the 'Indian' label which is not reflected in the CMIO model that continues to reproduce the Singaporean historical context of being and acting 'Indian' (PuruShotam 2016). This paper uses the term 'Indian' to refer to residents in Singapore who have been classified under the CMIO model, highlighting the current diversity of the 'I' component, despite its limited definition in the model.

In reality, the 'Indian' ethnic group is the most linguistically diverse (Mani & Gopinathan 1983; Jain & Wee 2019), with 45.7% literate in English and Tamil only, 14% in English and Malay only and 23.8% in other languages (Department of Statistics Singapore 2019), including non-Tamil Indian languages (NTIL) such as Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu (Jain & Wee 2019). Tan (2011, 2014) pointed out that a significant number of 'Indians' in Singapore come from non-Tamil areas, illustrating that a Tamil signboard in Little India targeted at South Asian foreign workers assumes that all workers frequenting the area understand Tamil. Such reductive categorisation of major ethnic groups to a singular language erases intra-ethnic linguistic diversity, which Rappa and Wee (2006) identify as impeding the state's interest in uniting different ethnicities for nation-building. Hence, while the LL is strategically used to influence public acceptance of the state's mother tongue language policies, it conceals linguistic complexities of Singapore's ethnolinguistic population (Tan 2011, 2014).

The imposition of the Tamil mother tongue onto the 'Indian' ethnic group has always proved problematic and irrelevant to non-Tamil Indians. The 'Indian' ethnic group constitutes 9.0% of the total population in Singapore and numerically, Tamil language users dominate the 'Indian' community, followed by Malayalees and Punjabis – with 51.1% of 'Indians' in Singapore literate in Tamil while 23.8% are literate in NTIL (Mani 2006; Department of Statistics Singapore 2019). Without shared linguistic commonalities between South Indian Dravidian languages and North Indian Indo-European languages (Saravanan 1993), Tamil did not play a role as an intra-ethnic lingua franca (Mani & Gopinathan 1983). Despite the hierarchy of Tamil over NTIL, English still functions as the intra-ethnic lingua franca among Tamil and Non-Tamil 'Indians' (Mani & Gopinathan 1983). Thus, assigning Tamil as the language of the 'Indian' majority not only diminishes intra-ethnic diversity, but also marginalises NTIL and other Indian languages that have not been granted the NTIL status.

2.3 Tamil in Singapore's Linguistic Landscape

2.3.1 Low visibility of Tamil
According to previous research on Singapore's LL, Tamil occupies a very limited space in the local LL despite its status as an official language (Shang & Guo 2017; Tang 2018). Tamil featured on 3.6% of shop signs in neighbourhood shopping centres in other parts of Singapore located outside the Little India district (Shang & Zhao 2017; Shang & Guo 2017). Moreover, the font sizes of Tamil on shop signs are relatively small and Tamil occupies the final position in the four-language formulaic sign in MRT stations (Shang & Guo, 2017; Tang, 2018). Tan (2011, 2014) noted the replacement of Tamil with Japanese on white-on-brown signboards by the Singapore Tourism Board and white-on-green signboards by National Parks Board. Additionally, the mixed treatment of Tamil names on signs are evident, where some are translated and others transliterated from English and Malay (Tan 2014). While official signs display Tamil most frequently, corporations and private companies rarely display them (Tang 2018). Such inconsistent representation of Tamil, or rather, the lack thereof, reflects its weakening position in Singapore's LL (Tan 2011).

2.3.2 Reasons for Lack of Tamil Representation
The main reasons for the lack of Tamil representation are twofold – language shift and language maintenance. Research trends show a decline in Tamil language use among Singaporeans (Mani & Gopinathan 1983). According to the General Household Survey 2015, there is an increasing shift toward English among the Tamil ethnic group as English is the most frequently spoken language in 'Indian' households (Department of Statistics Singapore 2019). This language shift to English is prevalent among Tamils who face social and economic pressures to assimilate to an English dominant society and end up dissociating their ethnic identity from their linguistic identity (Saravanan 1993). Though Tamil is a highly diglossic language with a high variety of literary Tamil and low variety of spoken Tamil (Schiffman, 2003), Vaish (2007) classifies Singapore's Tamil-English bilingual community as non-diglossic, where the language of power (English) obscures the different Tamil varieties and displaces Tamil. Additionally, Schiffman (2003) attributes this language shift to the lack of language maintenance caused by the state's hyperpuristic language planning, where the high variety of hyperarchaic literary Tamil is promoted while shunning the low variety of colloquial Tamil. Though colloquial Tamil is a more direct translation of English, the literary variety prescriptively taught as 'pure' Tamil lacks communicative value (Schiffman 2003; Mani & Gopinathan 1983; Saravanan 1993). Hence, such hyperpuristic language planning only serves to widen the gap between prescriptivism and actual use, which resultantly builds a resistance toward Tamil language usage among Tamil youth in Singapore.

2.3.3 High visibility of Tamil in Little India
Little India is set up as a tourist attraction where its LL has been manipulated to enhance the 'Indian' ethnic identity by accentuating the symbolic function of Tamil. This has turned the LL into a site of ethnic commodification and linguistic instrumentalism which reflects the state's language ideologies (Hult & Kelly-Holmes 2019; Tan 2014). The geographical space of Little

India is an area where the 'Indian' of the CMIO paradigm is markedly visible. It is a powerful symbol for the 'Indian' in the Singaporean model of multiracialism where 'Indian' makes up one of the nation's major 'races' (PuruShotam 2016). Correspondingly, Little India exemplifies the imposition of the Tamil mother tongue onto the 'Indian' ethnic group through the high visibility of Tamil in the area. Since the 1990s, the influx of Tamil and Bengali speaking foreign workers who immigrate from Bangladesh and present-day Indian states such as Tamil Nadu and Bengal, reflect the shifting demographics of Little India (PuruShotam 2016). Tamil's dual role as a local minority language and a less internationalised language globally marks it as a more distinctive reminder of location, leading to its ethnically commodified usage as a token of authenticity (Tan 2011, 2014). Hence, the unique position of Tamil as a heritage and minority language renders it commodifiable only in cultural contexts where the 'Indian' identity narrative is reimagined to market the context as authentic.

Accordingly, this study will address the research gap on the ideological struggle between language, identity and culture in the context of Singapore's Little India through a linguistic analysis of the Tamil language on shop signs and an ethnographic analysis on the 'Indian' youth's reactions to Tamil representation in Little India. In line with the tourist discourse circulating in Little India, this study anticipates the preservation of the Tamil identity through the heightened representation of Tamil language in the LL and the renovation of the Tamil identity through linguistic fetishization of the language.

LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE METHODOLOGY AND NEXUS ANALYSIS

3.1 Linguistic Landscape Analysis
Landry and Bourhis (1997) define the LL as a 'marker of geographical territory occupied by distinctive language communities within multilingual settings' (p. 24). LL research, which principally relies on the photography of signage, have been developed to analyse the positions of minority languages in multilingual settings (Cenoz & Gorter 2006; Pietikäinen et al. 2011). Landry and Bourhis' (1997) concept of the dualistic informational and symbolic functions of LL informs this study on the representation of Tamil translations and transliterations. As previously mentioned, the state identifies language as the most salient part of ethnic identity. Accordingly, the inclusion of a heritage language in an ethnic enclave's LL accords the language symbolic value and status which builds upon the positive social identity of the language group (Landry & Bourhis 1997).

3.1.1 Place Semiotic Analysis
Drawing upon Scollon and Scollon's (2003) work on visual semiotics, this study analyses languages on shop signs, through the visual representation of the interaction order on signs, and the influence of the placement of visual symbols on the interpretation of signs.
The interaction order on signs is evident in the code preferences on signs. As an extension of Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) information value systems, Scollon and Scollon's (2003) code preference system analyses how the placement of linguistic codes signifies the social relationships between languages in the LL. In the case of multiple language codes within a shop sign, the preferred code is on the top, on the left or in the centre. Whereas the secondary codes

are on the bottom, on the right or in the periphery (Scollon & Scollon 2003). Singapore's multilingual context warrants code preference a salient analytical tool for shop signs where there are two or more languages used. The languages used in shop signs, index the language group and can symbolise ideas about the marketed product brand, that are not necessarily connected to the targeted language groups.

Borrowing Scollon and Scollon's (2003) inscription framework, the salience of languages on shop signs are analysed according to the typeface used, including font size and colour. The stylisation of fonts according to the brands of particular shops, produce different effects with regard to the aesthetic interpretation of the shop's identity situated within the particular LL. Figure 1. below illustrates a typical sign of an 'Indian' restaurant in Little India where the preferred code in English is placed above the secondary code in Tamil. The bolded red fonts of the English code contrasts with the bright yellow background more than the green fonts of the Tamil code. The non-central element of the restaurant's year of establishment is placed on the peripheral right-hand corner of the sign. Despite cultural differences in encoding information, shop signs generally follow these systematic arrangements to communicate their brands in a universally understood manner.

3.1.2 Image Data Collection
Serangoon Road in Little India was chosen as the site for LL analysis as it is corroborated by PuruShotam (2016) for its abundance of shops characterised by the Hindu-'Indian' ethnicity. Figure 2. illustrates Little India's main area of commercial activity along Serangoon Road spanning 1.5 kilometres. It runs from the junction of Bukit Timah Road and Sungei Road to the intersection between Balestier Road and Lavender Street (Street Directory n.d.).

Figure 1: A typical bilingual Tamil and English shop sign in Little India.
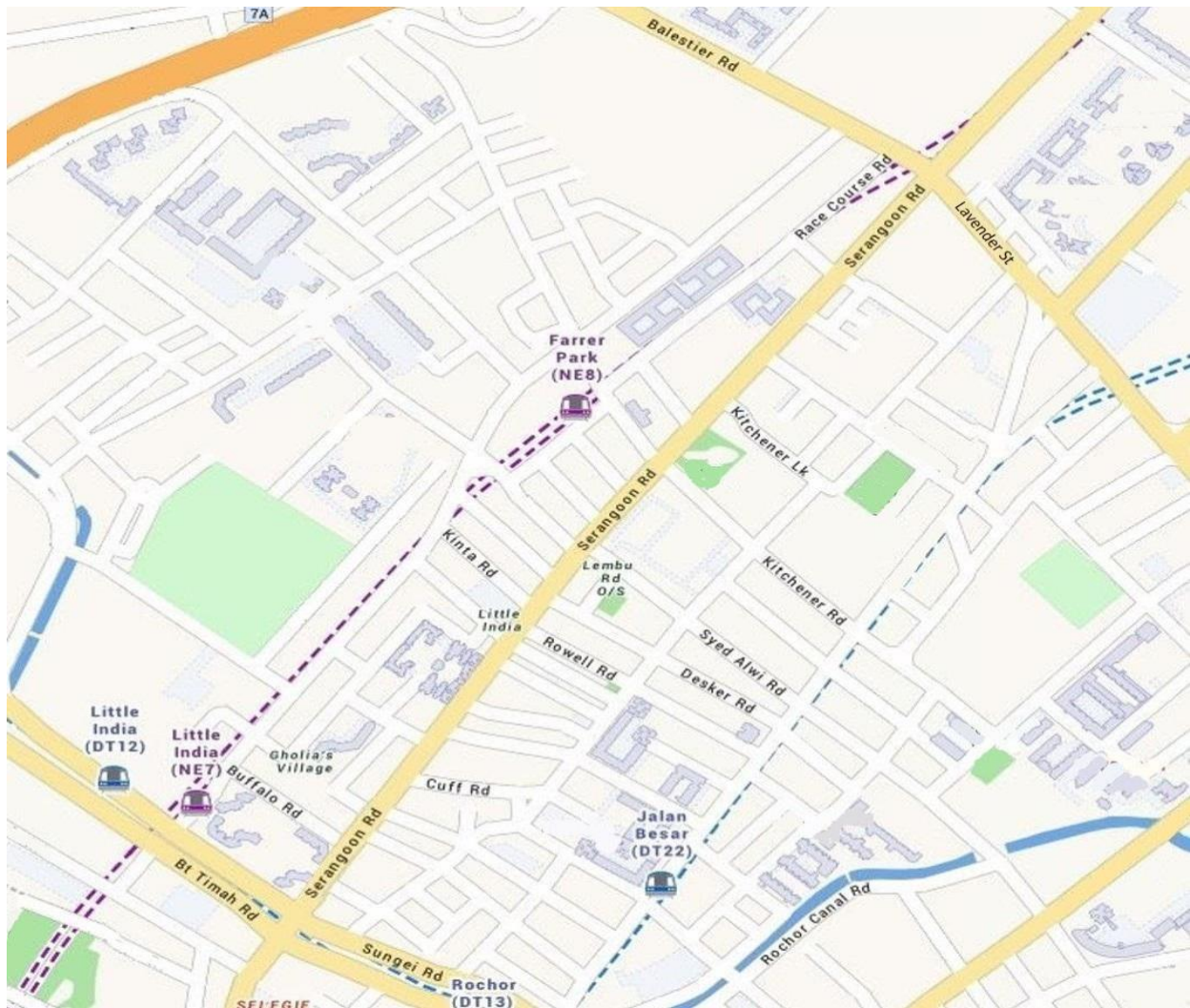
Figure 2: Map of Serangoon Road.

Clear photographic images of all physical shop signs visible on both sides of Serangoon Road were captured using a mobile camera of 23 mega pixels as illustrated by Figure 2. A total of 272 images were collected from 259 shops. The images were coded numerically, and the contents of the image data were classified according to the total number of shop signs using each specific language. Transliteration and translation practices of the shop names and descriptions were enumerated to track the trends in language representation via another language.

3.2 Nexus Analysis

As an extension of LL research, LL practitioners such as Hult (2009, 2014) and Pietikäinen et al. (2011) have developed Scollon and Scollon's (2004) nexus analysis approach to supplement Landry and Bourhis' (1997) LL analysis. This ethnographic approach studies language use on signs in relation to individuals who occupy the LL and their social actions which construct LL, strategically informing the microanalysis of an LL with a broader socio-political cultural analysis (Hult 2009; Scollon & Scollon 2004). Individual interpretation of language use on signs complement the visual analysis of LL as their discourse contextualises this study in contemporary society more comprehensively.

Nexus analysis examines the relationship between the LL discourse and social actions in a threefold manner – through discourses in place, the interaction order and the historical body (Hult 2009). Firstly, discourses in place include state ideologies about the intersections between ethnicity and language, and discourses about language and identity which are reflected on shop signs. Secondly, LL can be analysed through the interaction order which involve social norms about language choice on signs. Such norms are informed by the intended audience of the signs, the type of shop sign, language policies controlling language use in public spaces and relationships between language users and their languages (Hult 2009). Thirdly, LL can be analysed through the historical body which comprises 'internalised habits' of individuals, including a history of personal beliefs and experiences that influence their responses to the social circumstances of an LL (Scollon & Scollon 2004; Hult 2009).

This study aims to bridge the gap in existing LL research by informing the LL analysis of Singapore's Little India, with the stimulated reactions of 'Indian' youth in Singapore, towards the representation of Tamil on shop signs. The survey responses will thus be used in the nexus analysis, which will provide rich insights into the discourse of Singapore's Tamil identity.

3.2.1 Survey Data Collection

Nexus analysis can be conducted through a scene survey with specific questions that concretises the study by locating and identifying the participants of the LL, their interaction order with other individuals in that LL and the discourses circulating that LL (Scollon & Scollon 2004). As such, a scene survey was conducted with a focus group of 'Indian' youth in Singapore that elicited their insights, informed by existing discourses on Little India.

Though the participants of Little India's LL involve different ethnic groups, this study selects the 'Indian' ethnic group – as indicated by the CMIO model in Singapore – to participate in the scene survey, as their experience of belonging to this ethnic category constitutes a historical body necessary to this nexus analysis. The participants include Singaporeans and mixed-raced individuals whose race is classified as 'Indian' on their Singaporean National Registration Identity Card, and citizens from South Asian countries living in Singapore. These participants are selected based on whether they use or have learnt Indian language(s) (see section 4.2.1). This sample size of 63 participants is representative of the contemporary age of cosmopolitan Singapore where there is a rise of South Asian immigrants and an increase in racial intermarriages. The participants chosen are from the age group of 21 to 30 years old as the

younger generation of 'Indians' are more linguistically diverse. Therefore, this sample size is specific to the research aims of this study; which is to investigate the evolving relationship with the Tamil language among 'Indian' youth in contemporary Singapore.

The participants were chosen based on their willingness to respond to 15 questions in an online Google survey lasting 15 minutes (see Appendix). They were recruited anonymously through social media. The questions were kept open-ended so that the participants could formulate honest responses without being influenced by preconceived categories.

This study chose this scene survey method to perform a nexus analysis-inspired investigation as it is a faster and more sensible approach to provide a snapshot of Little India's LL situation. In contrast to studies by Hult (2009, 2014), and Pietikäinen et al. (2011), which thoroughly follows nexus analysis by closely considering the interaction order and involving private signs in data collection, this study develops the approach by enhancing the historical body through the scene survey with stimulated response questions to images inserted in the survey that engender a new discourse in place about Little India's LL in an academic context (F Hult 2019, pers. comm., 21 January). The next section will detail the results of both LL analysis and nexus analysis.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results from the data collection are organised into the image data analysis (section 4.1) and survey data analysis (section 4.2). Section 4.1 quantitatively analyses the translation and transliteration practices of Tamil. Section 4.2 details the survey participants' ethnic and linguistic background, salient discussion points from their responses including the association of Tamil with Little India, and translation and transliteration practices.

4.1 Image Data Analysis

4.1.1 Quantitative Representation of Tamil language
The languages represented and the percentage of each language represented on all photographed shop signs are recorded in Figure 3. English is the ambient language of Little India as it is included on most signs. In line with previous research, while Tamil is more apparent in Little India than in Singapore's other public spaces, it is less visible than English and Mandarin.
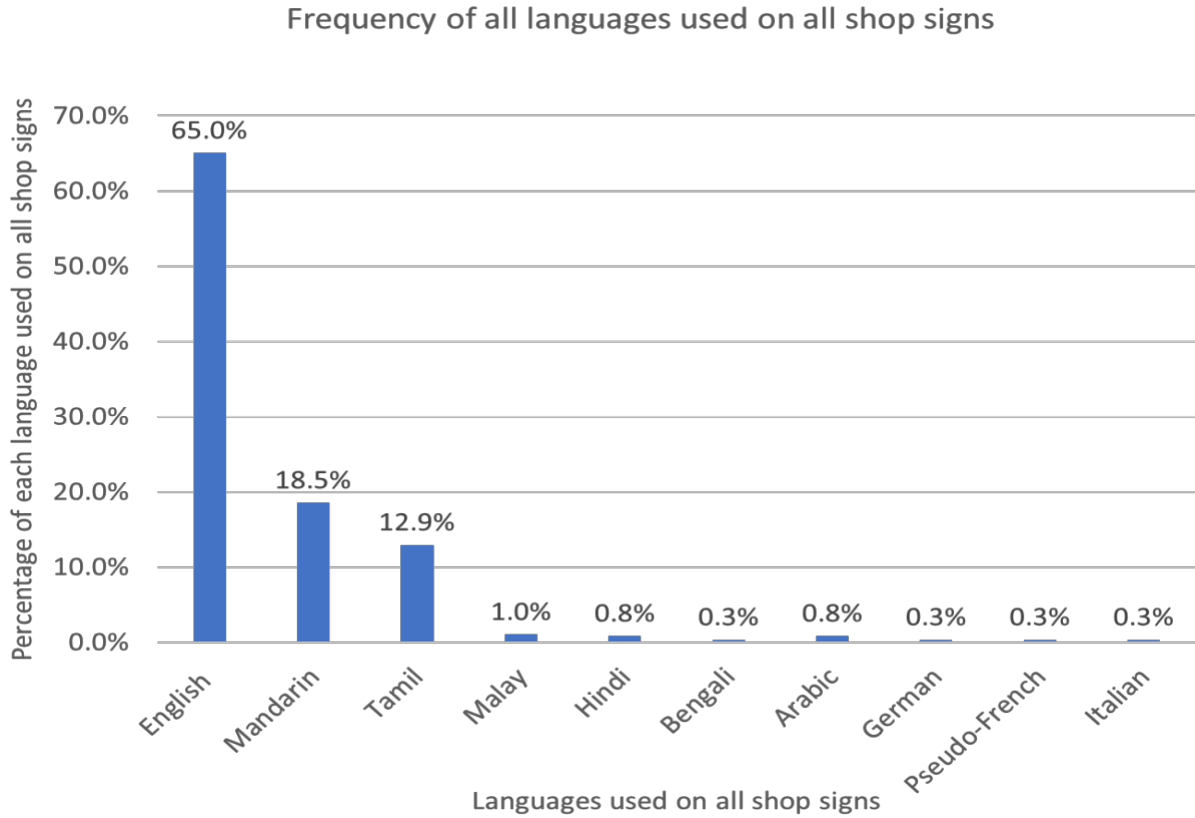
Frequency of all languages used on all shop signs

Figure 3: Languages used and percentage of each language used on all shop signs.
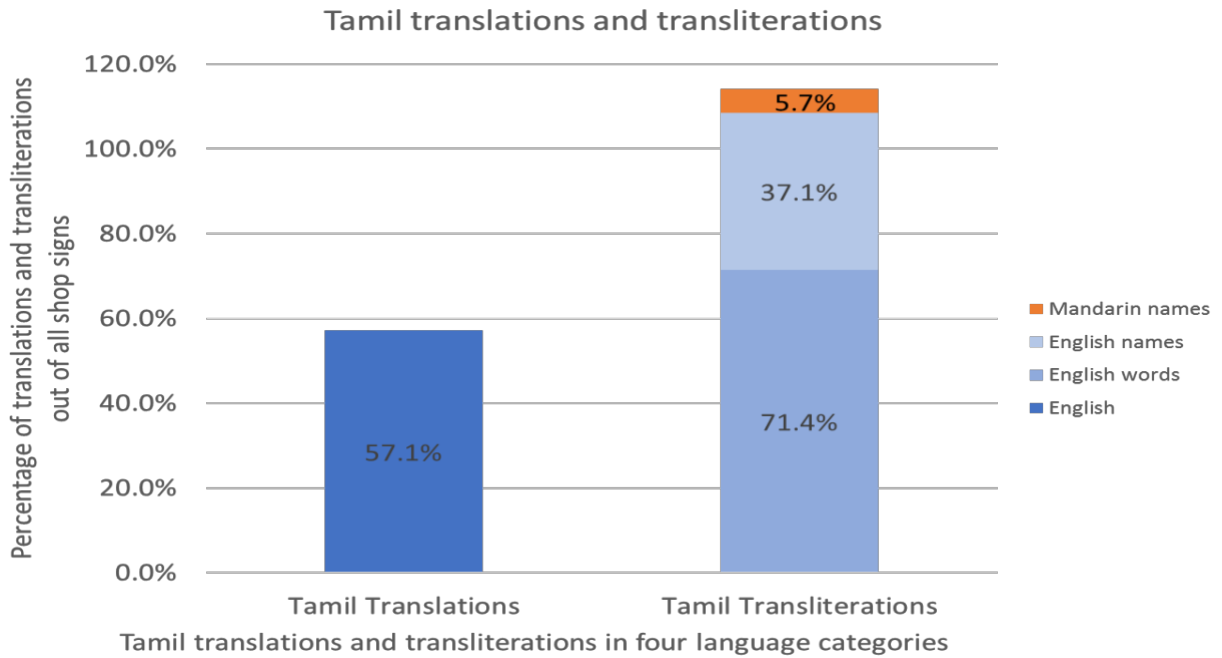
Tamil translations and transliterations

Figure 4: Tamil translations of English and Tamil transliterations of English and Mandarin.

Figure 4 depicts that out of the 12.9% of all signs containing the Tamil language, Tamil translations of English and Tamil transliterations of English and Mandarin were found to overlap on most signs. There are more Tamil transliterations of English and Mandarin than Tamil translations of English. 57.1% of all Tamil signs contain Tamil translations of English. The Tamil transliterations of English words amount to 71.4%, English names 37.1% and Mandarin names 5.7% of all Tamil signs.

4.1.2 Code Preference

It is interesting to note the order of the languages on the multilingual signs where the language in the first position indicates its preference. The language order of the multilingual signs are classified according to the languages that begin first in the Appendix. Out of all 259 signs, bilingual Mandarin to English signs are the most frequently occurring at 43.5%, followed by English to Tamil signs at 18.5% as the second most frequent patterning. There are almost twice as many English to Tamil signs as there are Tamil to English signs. The English to Tamil signs predominantly follow a top to bottom orientation, where English is written on top 80% of the time. While Tamil occupies the first position in two thirds of trilingual signs, it occupies the last position in the only quadrilingual sign. Hence, while Mandarin is the preferred code in bilingual English and Mandarin signs, English is the preferred code in bilingual English and Tamil signs.

Figure 5: Tamil language used on Malayalee clinic.

The high vitality of Tamil and relatively lower vitality of NTIL and other Indian languages not granted NTIL status such as Malayalam and Bengali, reveal the imposition of Tamil onto these Indian languages. Figure 5, pointed out by a survey response, illustrates the higher rank of Tamil over other Indian languages not accorded the NTIL status. The absence of Malayalam from a shop sign characterised as a Malayalee Ayurvedic clinic, paired with the use of Tamil instead, spotlights the powerful role of Tamil in representing the non-Tamil Malayalee language group, which inadvertently erases Malayalam from Little India's LL.

Additionally, the large number of foreign workers who frequently visit Little India that do not belong to the Tamil language group, but understand other languages such as Bengali, are backgrounded in Little India. Despite the existence of the lesser-known Little Bangladesh which formed along Desker Road nestled within the larger Little India (Raffles Press 2020), Bengali appeared on 0.77% of all signs along Serangoon Road, Little India's main thoroughfare. Figure 6 below evince the backgrounding of Bengali on an advertising text placed along the periphery of its monolingual English sign of a telecommunication retail shop selling mobile data plans that are in high demand among the foreign worker population. The code preference for the Tamil placed on the left of Bengali underlines the stratified social relationships between the Tamil and

Bengali language groups. Here, Bengali is subordinated, despite its significance in this context, where the demand for such telecommunication services among foreign workers is expected to be high.

Figure 6: Bengali used in a shop advertisement placed in front of an electronic shop sign in English.

Such reversal in the position of Tamil in the Indian language context reflects the relations between 'Indian'-Tamils as in-group members and non-Tamil Indians as out-group members of this constitutionally imposed ethnolinguistic group. Thus, though the position of Tamil is diminished by its subordinate placement to other majority languages, it appears more powerful when placed with NTIL and other Indian languages on shop signs.

4.1.2 Tamil Translations of English
Of the 57.1% of the Tamil translations of English, 96% of them appeared on jewellery and pawn shops. Figures 7 and 8 demonstrate the Tamil translation of 'jewellery shop' into 'தங்கநகைக்கடை' and 'pawn shop' into 'அடகுக்கடை' which are consistent across most jewellery and pawn shops.

Figure 7: Tamil translation on jewellery shop.

Figure 8: Tamil translation on pawn shop.

Figure 9: Spelling variation of Tamil translation of 'pawn shop'.

Though there are minor spelling variations in the translation of jewellery and pawn shops which sometimes exclude the connecting letter 'க்' as in 'அடகு கடை' , this colloquial variety of Tamil is more prevalent as it is widely understood by Tamil users.

4.1.3 Tamil Transliterations
Tamil transliterations of English words and names abound on most shop signs containing Tamil. Figure 10 and the corresponding phonetic gloss[68] illustrates how the Tamil transliteration of the English shop name 'GRT Jewellers' is transposed onto the Tamil scripts. The aspirated 't' in 'GRT' and approximant 'w' in 'jewellers' in the original name have been replaced with the retroflex 'ḍ' and fricative 'v' sounds in the Tamil transliteration.

Figure 10: Tamil transliteration of English on an 'Indian' jewellery shop.

Figure 11: Stylisation of letter 'R'.

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[68] The Roman alphabet and some special characters from IPA extensions are used to gloss the Tamil transliteration of English words. This simplified Tamil to English glossary system is borrowed from Asher and Annamalai's (2002, p.275) *Colloquial Tamil.*

As shown in Figure 11, the stylisation of the English letter 'R' is also transposed onto the 'R' equivalent of the Tamil transliterated script, thereby shaping the transliterated name with the aesthetic of the English lettering.

Figure 12: Tamil transliteration of English on textile shop.

டைலரிங்   டிஸைனிங்
deilering   disaining
Tailoring   Designing

Figure 12 and the phonetic gloss above depict a frequent Tamil transliteration of English words such as 'tailoring' and 'designing' that is uncommon in the colloquial Tamil variety of Singapore. Interestingly, the inclusion of the ampersand, '&', into the Tamil transliteration – which is ungrammatical in standard Tamil where addition is inflected morphologically only – masks the transliterated name as English. The transliteration and use of the ampersand also conveys sophistication and a more globalised sense to the shop name, as English is the main language for commerce in Singapore.

Figure 13: Tamil transliteration of an English name.

பிரைவேட்   லிமிட்டெட்
piraived   limided
Private   Limited

Figure 14: Tamil transliteration of a Mandarin name.

While the Tamil transliterations of the English name 'Merlin' (see Figure 13), and the Mandarin name 'Soon Huat' (see Figure 14), demonstrate the regularity in the Tamil transliteration practice, the transliteration of the English words 'private limited' is inconsistent. The initial Tamil letters of each transliterated word in the phonetic gloss above are taken to represent the whole word, as shown in Figure 14, which is an inconsistent convention to transliterate 'private limited'. Hence, the interaction order – which involve social norms about language choice on signs – reflects that the Tamil transliterations of English and Mandarin words and names reconfigure the Tamil language as adaptable to the original shop names in the non-Tamil languages without translating them directly.

4.1.4 English transliterations of Tamil

English transliterations of Tamil words appear in 19.5% of all shop signs containing English throughout Little India. Figure 15 portrays the English transliteration of the Tamil words 'பொடி' (podi) referring to 'spiced powder' and 'பொறியல்' (poriyal) referring to the infinitive of 'frying' which are unique to South 'Indian' cuisine.
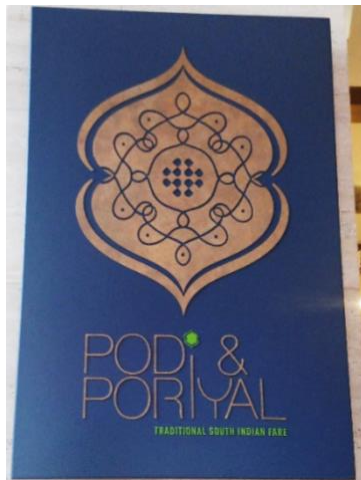

Figure 15: English transliteration of Tamil on an 'Indian' restaurant sign.

Figure 16: English transliteration of a Tamil name.

The English transliteration of Tamil names include the phonetic spelling of Tamil names on shop signs as exhibited in Figure 16. Though the Tamil name is transliterated using the voiceless plosive 'k' in 'Kuna', the name would be more accurately transliterated as 'Guna' in English using the voiced plosive 'g' according to the phonological pattern of the Tamil name. The pronunciation of 'Guna' also sounds more anglicised than 'Kuna' – of which the latter is the accurate pronunciation in Tamil. Additionally, the apostrophe 's' is used in the Tamil name, following the English rather than Tamil grammar. Thus, the English transliteration practice of Tamil words and names tends to influence the Tamil language representation largely through the phonological and grammatical lens of the English language.

4.2 Survey Data Analysis

4.2.1 Characteristics of Survey Participants
The list of questions addressing the historical body in the scene survey categorized: the type of 'Indian' ethnicity, linguistic affiliation(s) of Indian languages and familiarity with Singapore's Little India among all 63 research participants. Figure 17 details the distribution of participants' ethnicities into 18 different sub-ethnic groups which are identified by the participants themselves in a fill-in-the-blank question to 'What is your ethnicity'. A majority of 62% of the participants self-identified as "ethnic Tamils", including "Indian"[69], while 38% identified as non-Tamils.

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[69] The 'Indian' category was chosen by some participants as a general category that assumes the mainstream 'Tamil' ethnicity.
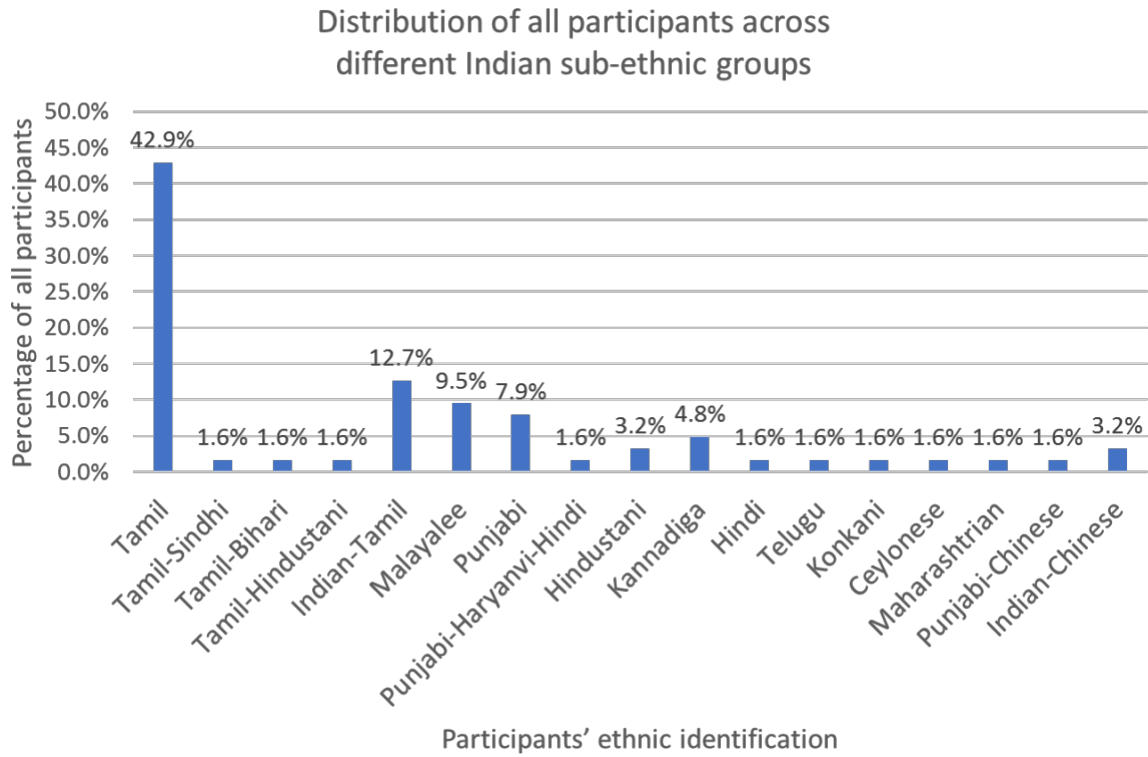
Distribution of all participants across different Indian sub-ethnic groups

Figure 17: Distribution of participants' ethnicities.

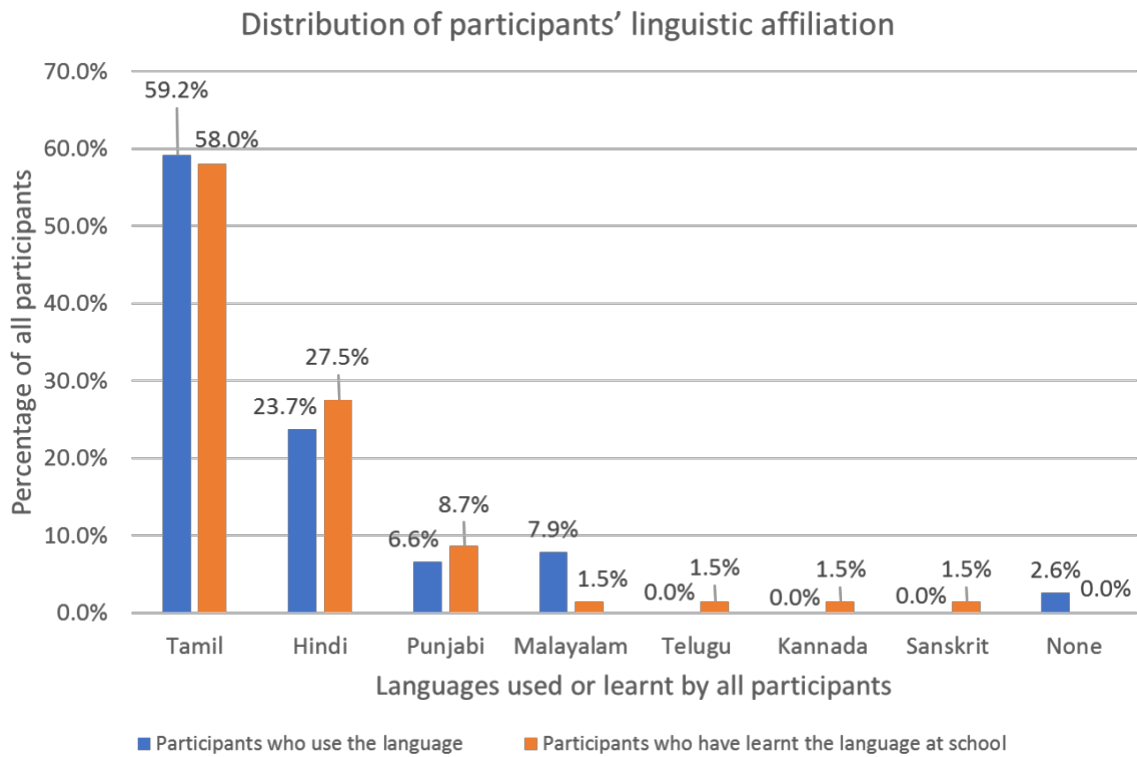## Distribution of participants' linguistic affiliation

Figure 18: Indian languages used and learnt by participants.

The Indian languages used and learnt were predominantly Tamil, with a significant percentage of Hindi users and small percentages of Punjabi and Malayalam users, as shown in Figure 18. A large majority of 71% of the participants lived in Singapore since birth, whereas only 19% had immigrated, having lived in Singapore for 8 to 18 years. Thus, the lived experiences of the 'Indian' youth reflect the shifting demographic of 'Indian' Singaporeans from 'Indian'-Tamil to a wider range of 'Indian' sub-ethnicities.

4.2.2 Reactions to Tamil in Little India
The responses to Tamil language representation among 'Indian' youth varies according to how the Tamil identity is preserved and re-created through the encoding of Tamil language on shop signs. These evaluated responses are in answer to the questions designed for discussing discourses in place, which include state ideologies about the intersections between ethnicity and language, discourses about language and identity, and the interaction order which involves social norms about language choice on signs. While the participants' positive relationship with Tamil as their mother tongue and their reflection on their essentialist notions between language and identity – where English is the assigned neutral inter-ethnic lingua franca and Tamil the cultural tongue of the 'Indian' ethnic group – highlight the preservation of the Tamil ethnolinguistic identity, they expressed concerns regarding the relevance of Tamil translations. Similarly, participants' insights into the reconstruction of the Tamil identity through the transliteration practices were rife with anxieties about the comprehensibility of shop signs, revealing their internalised weak relationship with the Tamil language and the LL's lack of representativeness of the 'Indian' community in Singapore.

Firstly, the participants' ideologies about the essentialism between the 'Indian' ethnicity and the Tamil language position Little India's 'Indian' identity as largely Tamil. Of all, 36.5% describe the Tamil language representation as 'appropriate' and 'unsurprising' due to their three-way equation of the language with the Tamil ethnicity and Little India: 'many signs in Singapore usually have English and Chinese and being in Little India I would expect them to have Tamil'. Their identification of Tamil shop signs belonging to shops selling 'traditional Indian goods and services' reinforce their expectations of Little India's preservation of an authentic Tamil identity through the language.

Unsurprisingly, of all participants, 38.1% remarked on the ironic lack of Tamil representation on shop signs which aligned with their expectations of the lack of minority language representation in Singapore, despite Little India's status as an 'Indian' heritage area. One respondent found it 'surprising that most of these famous shops with Tamil backgrounds do not use Tamil as the main language on the sign boards at Little India'. Another participant was also 'surprised by those who don't include the Indian languages, especially because it's Little India and it should reflect its heritage and the place's identity'. In particular, two of the responses indicated surprise toward the shop signs featured in the survey. They noted the dominance of English through the larger number of monolingual English signs, the larger font size of English than Tamil on bilingual signs, and the anglicised representation of Tamil through the English transliteration of Tamil names on shops selling traditional 'Indian' goods such as 'Gokulam' (see Figure 19).

Figure 19: English transliteration of a Tamil shop selling 'Indian' goods.

While the use of the cursive English transliteration appeals to tourists and other Singaporeans, the backgrounding of the Tamil language on these signs is ironic as it surfaces the effacement of Tamil language representation in Little India. Hence, the code preference for English and the small font size of the Tamil translation of this shop name as pointed out by the participant reflect the normalisation of Tamil as a subordinated language in the broader LL in Singapore. Little India's preservation of the Tamil identity is also supported by 22.2% of all participants who expressed a comforting sense of belonging to the local Tamil community when they identified Tamil as their mother tongue:

> 'Since Little India is a place that represents Indians in Singapore, Indian languages should be given more importance in order to make the Indians feel that this place is part of their identity. Signboards do play an important role in this, as it gives people the sense of belonging when Indian languages are used.'

Interestingly, in response to question 14, 30.1% of all participants highlighted that because they themselves associate Little India with Tamil, they admit their narrow perspective of the exclusivity of the area to the Tamil identity and the lack of representativeness of NTIL groups: 'I associate Little India with Tamilness so it doesn't seem very representative of the whole [Indian] community [in Singapore]'. The survey generated a discourse which resists a wholly "Tamil" labelling of the 'Indian' ethnicity. From the responses across all questions, Tamil was identified in relation to other Indian languages by 54% of all participants, who remarked on the lack of representation of NTIL and other Indian languages to cater to non-Tamil users: 'The Indian community in Singapore is extremely diverse (…) but the signs do not reflect that'. Their identification of the non-Tamil population such as 'Bangladeshi migrant workers', 'non-English educated Indians' and 'Indian expatriates' indicate their changing ideologies about the linguistic diversity of Little India's inhabitants. Hence, the participants' responses displayed a resistance toward the South-'Indian' Tamil profile that the CMIO policy has perpetuated.

Despite a general appreciation for Tamil translations among all participants, 6.3% found certain Tamil translations strange as the shop names are encoded in literary Tamil, which they perceive to obfuscate meaning:

'Some of these words are hard to translate, i.e. Joyalukas. Some of these shops lose their meaning and branding in translation i.e. Indian Jewellers becomes இந்திய(ர்) நகைக்காரர்கள். Ultimately, for business owners the branding is important.'

For instance, Figure 20 illustrates the formal usage of the literary Tamil word 'முடிதிருத்தகம்' referring to 'hair salon' and the verbatim translation of 'new star' into 'புதிய நட்சத்திர' which 2 participants found unusual, citing that 'It's just the first time I saw "Mudi thiruththagam" used for saloon' and that 'I do get amused by the translation of the shop. New Star sounds fine but the Tamil translation puthiya nakshatram sounds kind of weird'.

Figure 20: Formal Tamil translation of a hair saloon sign.

Though the preservation of the Tamil language on signs reinforces participants' positive relationship with their Tamil identity, the use of literary Tamil on shop signs confuses them as this archaic variety is uncommon in their everyday speech.

Secondly, the participants' negative reactions to the Tamil transliterations of English indicates their difficulty in embracing the reconstruction of the Tamil identity through the transliteration practice. As the participants use English rather than Tamil as a lingua franca among Tamils and non-Tamils, they preferred signs using the English or Tamil directly instead of Tamil transliterations: 'It would also help if ppl [sic] were to give their shops Tamil names or translate it rather than transliterate. It wouldn't [sic] look weird in other languages then.'

Figure 21: Tamil transliteration of English on an 'Indian' jewellery shop sign.

For instance, 'gold' is transliterated into 'கோல்டு' in the Tamil script and pronounced as 'goldu' in English as Figure 21 demonstrates. Among the participants, 9.5% who noted living in Singapore since birth and being literate in both Tamil and English, found such Tamil transliterations of English less readable by Tamil speakers. These participants noted that they would 'rather have English on the signs because [they] read English faster than Tamil', hence relying on the English script instead of the Tamil for meaning. The Tamil transliterated form 'goldu' does not directly convey the meaning in English as it is merely a form of pronunciation of the English word 'gold' in the Tamil accent that adds the syllable 'du' at the end of the word.

Hence, those who found it difficult to read and understand the Tamil transliterations offered the suggestion that 'Tamil signs can be more informative' through the use of 'proper Tamil word[s]' instead.

Furthermore, 17.4% of all respondents noted that the dominance of English in the anglicised representation of Tamil through the English transliteration of Tamil names on shops selling religious 'Indian' goods such as 'Gokulam' in Figure 22.

'There are signs in Tamil and their English translation, which is okay. But there are some with Tamil words that are phonetically written out in English, which seems very unnecessary. (...) That to me really seems like a whitewashing of Indian culture and makes it seem really inauthentic and commercial.'

Figure 22: English transliteration of the Tamil name of a shop selling Hindu religious goods.

The symbolic use of Tamil is also apparent in the symbolic patterns of colourful fonts and cursive typeface. These are characteristics of 'Indian' shop signs in Little India, as well as the country itself, that index the 'Indian' ethnicity. Most survey responses surfaced their met expectations of the bright contrasting font colours and cursive orthography of English fonts that are reminiscent of the cursive Tamil script.

Figure 23: English transliteration of Tamil on an 'Indian' jewellery shop sign.

However, 2 participants welcome the English transliterations due to their usefulness to non-Tamils who can learn to articulate Tamil words syllabically in English, explaining that '[the transliterations show non-Tamil speakers how the words are pronounced, which is interesting to some non-Tamils'. For instance, the English transliteration 'Arthesdam' in Figure 23 above helps non-Tamil users to enunciate the original Tamil word, 'அதிர்ஷ்டம்', more accurately pronounced as 'Athirshḍam'. They highlighted that this particular transliteration practice increases the accessibility to the Tamil language among non-Tamil users, thereby recreating the Tamil identity as more 'open' and inclusive of non-Tamils.

Therefore, through nexus analysis, the reactions to the shop signs among 'Indian' youth reflect: their awareness of the interaction order involving the social norms of Tamil language

representation choices on signs, their internalised habits of associating Little India with the Tamil language due to their history of personal beliefs and experiences that influence their responses to the social circumstances of the LL, and their changing ideologies of the 'Indian' ethnicity being represented by Tamil. The next section will discuss findings from the image data and the survey data collectively.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Manipulation of the Tamil Identity through Tamil Translations

The incongruence between the low vitality of Tamil in Singapore's wider LL and its high vitality in Little India's LL – as confirmed by both the LL and nexus analyses – signal the manipulation of Tamil identity through Tamil translations that construct and identify ever-changing spaces as static and institutionalised 'Indian'-Tamil places. The stereotype of Little India as distinctly Tamil is exemplified by the survey's findings about the appropriateness of Tamil language representation as the majority language of 'Indian' Singaporeans. Such normalisation of the Tamil language in Little India's LL reinforces the essentialism between language and ethnic identity, where the Tamil language is instrumentally used to preserve an imagined concept of a homogenous 'Indian' identity. The Tamil language is accordingly assigned the 'Indian'-Tamil ethnic identity, which is presented as filling the 'Indian' position of the 'CMIO' classification of Singapore's ethnic demographic. This is problematic as it simplifies the diversity of this evolving community, confirming PuruShotam's (2016) argument about the preservation of Little India as distinctly South 'Indian' Tamil, perpetuating the stereotype of all 'Indians' being exclusively Tamil. Hence, the greater Tamil language representation in Little India's LL freezes the 'Indian' identity as entirely Tamil and vice versa.

Building upon the maintenance of a specific Tamil identity, the preservation of Tamil translations in the literary variety reinforces the Singaporean Tamil community's valorisation of the literary Tamil – vis-à-vis Tamil transliterations of English – as the bona fide variety that shapes an imagined, true Tamil identity. In contrast, the nexus analysis of the survey responses indicates an opposition to this archaic variety. The survey responses highlight the variety lacking communicative value in today's commercial marketing and stunting the informational function of Tamil. Nevertheless, the conservation of the literary Tamil translations in the historic shopping district sustains the linguistic origins of Singapore's Tamil identity symbolically to serve Little India's claim to ethnic authenticity.

Strikingly, the position of Tamil shifts from being a minority language in Singapore's wider LL to a majority language among Indian languages in Little India's LL, as demonstrated by the LL analysis. The hierarchical dominance of Tamil over other Indian languages erases the diversity of contemporary 'Indian' society in Singapore, and resists the image of a heterogenous 'Indian' community. Through the dominance of the Tamil language onto a space characterised by a diversified 'Indian' identity, the role of Tamil as a conservation language presents a sweeping representation of the Singaporean 'Indian' identity as a specifically 'Indian'-Tamil one. While literary Tamil translations frozen on signs keeps alive Little India's historical Tamil identity and 'Indian'-Tamil youths' nostalgic relationship with the written Tamil variety taught in school, the nexus analysis reveal that the relevance of the literary translations to the ordinary Singaporean

Tamil who uses colloquial Tamil is obsolete. Hence, while the LL analysis quantitatively displays how Tamil is represented in the LL, the nexus analysis verifies the findings and adds a more qualitative understanding to how the Tamil identity is manipulated and is perceived in the current sociolinguistic context. Consequently, the Tamil language continues to serve as a figurehead for Singapore's 'Indian' identity, despite perpetuating an antiquated Tamil identity that displaces 'Indian'-Tamil youth.

5.2 Rebranding the Tamil Identity through Transliteration Practices
Although the Tamil identity in Little India is frozen in Singapore's national ideologies, it is re-created differently through transliteration practices. On one hand, the nexus analysis testifies to how the Tamil transliterations of English shop names and descriptions re-creates the Tamil identity as an Englishized Tamil version of an international lingua franca with access to the global market. On the other hand, the Tamil transliteration practice subordinates the Tamil language into a dependent relationship with English, as the Tamil word is stripped off from its original meaning and relies on the English word for meaning. To this end, the Tamil identity is redefined phonetically, grammatically and graphologically through the lens of the English language, despite superficially indexing the Tamil identity on shops to attract the tourist gaze. This transliteration practice is problematic to the Singaporean Tamil identity as Singaporean Tamils dissociate the Tamil pronunciation of English words. Not only is this discouraged in the prescriptivist educational setting, but is also a negative stereotype in Singapore's multilingual setting.

The exoticisation of the Tamil language through the lack of informative value accorded to Tamil on shop signs and the exploitation of its symbolic function exemplify the fetishisation of the Tamil language and by extension, Tamil ethnicity in Little India's LL. Tamil transliterations of English do not serve their informative function but are symbolically used to convey an 'Indian'-Tamil ambient setting of Little India. Despite the decorative use of Tamil transliterations of English shop names, which lends rhetorical and semiotic meaning to non-Tamils and tourists frequenting Little India, these transliterations reduce the informational value of the Tamil language and diminishes the role of the Tamil identity in the LL. The decorative use of the Tamil script evident in the LL analysis of the English transliteration of Tamil and the semiotic patterning of the presentation of Tamil on shop signs, also reinforce the accentuation of the symbolic function of Tamil exploited for its cultural capital that intrigues and attracts the tourist gaze. The economic need to access the global market by using Tamil instrumentally without meaning, conflicts with a commitment to a genuine representation of Tamil that would legitimise its role in the landscape.

Moreover, results from the nexus analysis debunks the popular belief that the Tamil language can be understood by all Tamil Singaporeans. The difficulty of reading Tamil transliterations among participants who identified as Tamil and having lived in Singapore since birth, reflect that their linguistic identities of Tamil and English are mutually exclusive as they prefer to directly use the English word rather than its Tamil transliteration. Their shift away from Tamil transliterations not only reflect their internalisation of the bilingual education that perpetuates distinct linguistic identities, but also underscores their difficulties in embracing this evolving

Tamil identity. At the same time, the nexus analysis validates that Tamil transliterations of English positively expands the Tamil lexicon to include more English words which legitimises Tamil's status as a growing language which can survive in a multilingual setting. However, perceptions of Tamil transliterations as impure versions of Tamil propagated by the prescriptivist education system perpetuates the rejection of the evolution of Tamil, stunting growth opportunities of the Singaporean Tamil identity.

In comparison, the nexus analysis signals that the English transliterations of Tamil, through romanised spelling, reinvents Tamil as an inclusive language accessible to non-Tamils who can pronounce Tamil words through English. The English transliterations of Tamil might also exemplify the shift among Singaporean Tamils from Tamil to English. Yet, the absence of the Tamil script, as evident from the LL analysis, undermines the construction of a seemingly inclusive Tamil identity as the Tamil language meaning is used without its script. In effect, the Tamil language is exploited for its informational and symbolic function separately to strategically accommodate the tourist gaze and reach a wider consumer market, thereby erasing the original Tamil language identity from the LL.

Through the transliteration practices, the Tamil identity is rebranded to enhance its cultural capital that promotes a touristic imagination of the Tamil ethnicity. The economic need to access the global market by using Tamil instrumentally and without meaning, conflicts with a commitment to a genuine representation of the language that would legitimise its role in the landscape. While the tourist context of Little India revives the legitimacy of the Tamil identity, it simultaneously replaces it with an exoticised identity that is fetishized for its cultural entrenchments without accurately and comprehensively representing the evolving Singaporean Tamil identity that represents a creolized diaspora. The reinforcing interactions between both LL and nexus analyses therefore informs the research aims of how Tamil is represented via transliterations and translations and in doing so, how the Tamil identity preserved and recreated.

Conclusion
The position Tamil occupies in a LL distinctly marked by the 'Indian' ethnicity is clearly disputed along linguistic lines. As proposed in the introduction, a few questions consider the place of Tamil in Little India as special. How does Tamil mark Little India as more 'Indian'? How is the Tamil identity sustained and remodelled by the Tamil language in the LL? Several conclusions from the LL and nexus analyses answer these questions and the research aims of this study. This study has shown that the exclusivity of greater Tamil representation to Little India, and the area's role as a conservation site of the 'Indian' heritage, mark an essentialism between the Tamil language and the 'Indian' ethnicity; preserving and simplifying the 'Indian' identity as exclusively Tamil. While the historic Tamil identity is frozen through archaic Tamil translations which displace contemporary Singaporean Tamils, the language is instrumentally manipulated as an object to index the area as more 'Indian', specifically 'Indian'-Tamil.

Even though the remodelling of the Tamil identity through Tamil transliterations of English both dilutes and reinvents the Tamil identity through English, the Tamil language is exploited for its

symbolic value, to index the 'Indian' component of the CMIO model in place of its informational function. The instrumental use of the Tamil script to accentuate the Tamil branding of Little India for the tourist gaze undermines the genuineness in representing the Singaporean Tamil identity accurately. Though the English transliteration practice refreshes the Tamil identity to accommodate non-Tamils, the exoticisation of this minority language that is normalised in the tourist site of Little India exemplify the ethnic and linguistic commodification of the Tamil identity. Hence, the resistance among Singaporean Tamils toward this evolution of Tamil language stagnates the growth of the Singaporean Tamil identity that represents a diasporic creolization.

Perhaps a more descriptive as opposed to prescriptive view toward the evolving Tamil language in Singapore would pave the way for the growth of the language via its mixture with other languages, and by extension, the Tamil identity. The evolving 'Indian' demographic of Singapore and their linguistic experiences clearly point to the disconnect between language, people and identity. These suggest a need to move away from state ideologies positing essentialised notions of language, ethnic identity and the territorialisation of language to facilitate the evolvement of the Tamil identity, rather than attempting to stabilise the inherently unstable identity.

From the above, it is clear that the LL and nexus analysis perspectives are useful in mapping the representation of the Tamil language, how the 'Indian' culture is marketed in Singapore, and the evolving Tamil identity. Informed by discourse generated by 'Indian' youth in Singapore, this LL study acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between Little India, the Tamil language and Tamil identity.

Disclaimer
The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Tamil Academic Journal.

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APPENDIX

Question Type	Survey Questions
Historical Body	What is your ethnicity? What Indian languages do you use? What Indian languages have you learnt? How many years have you lived in Singapore? How often do you visit Little India? Have you noticed the shop signs in Little India?
Interaction Order	What kind of people do you think frequent Little India and what languages do they speak?
Discourse in Place	What are your impressions of the language(s) used on the shop signs? What language(s) do you think are used on shop signs in Little India in general? Here 10 images of popular shop signs along Serangoon Road in Little India. Scroll down to answer question 10. After looking at these images, are you surprised by how the language(s) are represented in these signs? Why or why not? Here are 10 images of less popular shop signs along Serangoon Road in Little India. Scroll down to answer question 11. After looking at these images, are you surprised by how the language(s) are represented in these signs? Why or why not? In terms of readability and informative value, how do the language(s) used in the shop signs affect your experience of Little India? In terms of the (1) typeface, (2) layout, (3) font colours and (4) font size, how else do the language(s) on the shop signs affect your experience of Little India? How representative do you feel the Indian language(s) on Little India's shop signs are of the Indian community in Singapore? How do you think the shop signs can be edited to improve your experience of Little India?

Table 1: Survey question categories

Language order	Number of signs	Orientation of language ordering	
		Top to bottom	Left to right
English-Mandarin	14	9	5
English-Tamil	20	16	4
English-Malay	1	0	1
English-Hindi	1	1	0
English-Mandarin-Malay-Tamil	1	0	1
English-Malay-Tamil-Mandarin	1	1	0

Mandarin-English	47	41	6
Mandarin-Tamil	1	1	0
Mandarin-Hindi	1	0	1
Mandarin-English-Tamil	2	2	0
Tamil-English	9	7	2
Tamil-Mandarin	3	1	2
Tamil-Bengali	1	0	1
Tamil-Hindi-English	1	0	1
Tamil-English-Malay	1	0	1
Tamil-English-Mandarin	2	1	1
Arabic-English	2	0	2
Bengali-English	1	1	0

Table 2: Language order and orientation used in multilingual signs.