



Book review

Rowlett, B. J. L., Saisuwan, P., Go, C., Chen, L.-C., & Hiramoto, M. (2025). *Pride in Asia: Negotiating Ideologies, Localness, and Alternative Futures*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009415804>

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The *Cambridge Elements* special series on *Language, Gender, and Sexuality* makes a significant contribution to the study of queer theory and LGBTQIA+ discourse in Asia. This volume is notable for its balanced integration of in-depth case studies with rigorous academic analysis. The editor creates a cohesive thematic thread throughout the chapters, although the case studies differ in context and analytical focus. The volume offers a nuanced understanding of queer identities and insightful perspectives on how global LGBTQIA+ discourses are reinterpreted and localized.

The book highlights Pride Month as a platform for engaging with social issues and promoting rights-based activism. Although many Pride celebrations take inspiration from Western movements, particularly the Stonewall Riots in the United States and similar events in Western countries, the authors argue that Pride movements in Asia have distinct characteristics shaped by local socio-political conditions and cultural values. The chapters demonstrate that these movements express emancipatory potential and foster dynamic activism, showing unique local manifestations while advancing shared values such as diversity, inclusivity, and equity.

Methodologically, the volume applies analytical frameworks, including *Linguistic Landscape (LL)* and *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*, to examine how LGBTQIA+ communities use language, symbols, and public space to articulate identity, resistance, and solidarity in countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. These contributions reveal the intricate relationship between gender, sexuality, and identity. The introduction invites readers to understand Pride not as a fixed or monolithic celebration but as a fluid, localized, and adaptive phenomenon.

In Chapter 1, Professor Saisuwan, a linguist at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, explores “Male femininity, citizenship, and democracy in the linguistic landscape of a ‘Pride’ protest in Bangkok.” In response to Thailand’s political climate following the rise of the junta, transgender women, known locally as *kathoey*, emerged as outspoken critics of the regime. Through flamboyant linguistic performances, drawing from LU language, humor, and Thai pop culture, this group creatively challenged state authority. By applying the semiotic processes of iconization, fractal recursion, and erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000), the chapter shows how queer expression became a vital element of democratic discourse in Thailand. The analysis suggests that these non-normative voices are crucial for fostering social critiques and civic accountability.

Chapter 2, authored by Go from the University of the Philippines, examines “Spatializing the interactions of sexuality and class in the Metro Manila Pride march.” Using Du Bois’s (2017) concept of stance, the chapter investigates how LGBTQIA+ activism intersects with labor rights and social justice. Through a critical discourse analysis of placards, signs, and spatial arrangements, Go demonstrates how Pride in the Philippines has transformed from a festive celebration into a political platform that addresses class inequality, marginalization, and resistance. The chapter positions Pride within broader narratives of activism, illustrating its potential to challenge cultural norms and entrenched economic hierarchies.

In Chapter 3, Chen, from Kazimierz Wielki University, offers a diachronic study titled “Challenging heteronormativity and reifying Tai-ness: the linguistic landscape of Taiwan LGBT+ pride.” The chapter focuses on Taiwan’s Pride events between 2010 and 2020 and explores how participants negotiate both sexual and national identities. Emphasizing a dual narrative of resisting heteronormativity while reinforcing a distinctive Taiwanese identity, Chen shows how local symbols, Confucian values, and progressive politics are incorporated into the parades. The findings illustrate that LGBTQIA+ identities are globally recognizable and deeply embedded in local political discourse.

Chapter 4, authored by Hiramoto from the National University of Singapore, investigates the 2023 Hong Kong Gay Games in a chapter titled “Asia’s world city as homotopia? Surveying tensions in the linguistic landscape of the Hong Kong Gay Games.” This chapter critically analyzes media portrayals and public discourse related to the event. While the Games were intended to promote inclusivity and global unity, they also exposed tensions between LGBTQIA+ visibility and nationalist sentiment. The chapter argues that geopolitical factors shape queer expressions in Hong Kong, and even celebratory events may become contested arenas involving debates over identity, sovereignty, and state power.

The chapters affirm that Pride movements in Asia should not be interpreted as replicas of Western traditions. Instead, they emerge from distinct local, cultural, social, and political

conditions, resulting in diverse and context-specific expressions of LGBTQIA+ identity and activism.

By employing interdisciplinary methods from linguistic landscape studies, sociolinguistics, and critical discourse analysis, the volume offers a compelling and timely examination of the socio-semiotic dimensions of queer life in Asia. Notably, its use of linguistic landscape analysis offers an innovative and nuanced perspective on how language and space shape LGBTQIA+ visibility. As a result, this volume represents a significant scholarly contribution to the fields of language, gender studies, and queer theory.

About the Reviewer

Asst. Prof. Dr. Kosin Panyaatisin is a lecturer at the School of Language and Communication, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand. He teaches and supervises postgraduate students in the areas of sociophonetics, ethnolinguistics, corpus linguistics, as well as health communication and festival management. His interdisciplinary research explores how language and culture shape public understanding and participation in health and celebratory events.