

**LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE**  
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*This article focuses on a new branch of sociolinguistics, called linguistic landscape studies, which is understood as an attempt to investigate the publicly visible languages on billboards, road and safety signs, shop signs, graffiti and all sorts of other inscriptions in the public space. According to linguistic landscape studies, language is seen as the most immediate and direct identifier of people and the most immediately sensitive indicator of social change. Generally speaking, linguistic landscape is around us all the time, but we usually do not notice it, as we are probably not aware of the languages on the streets. A growing interest in this topic is the main theme of this article, which can be understood as an overview of the approaches to the linguistic landscape field presented by the various scholars.*

**Key words:** sociolinguistics; linguistic landscape; geographic space; social space; symbol.

**Overview of Linguistic Landscape Studies.** Generally said, linguistic landscape (LL) is around us all the time but we usually do not notice it because we are probably not aware of languages surrounding us on signs, in flashy advertisements, commercials, instructions, streets, shops and buildings. Growing interest in this topic can be seen in many interesting LL studies which have been published in the past decade, for instance in the study of language on signs in the Old City of Jerusalem (Spolsky – Cooper, 1991), in Israel (Ben-Rafael et al., 2004), on multilingual signs in Tokyo (Backhaus, 2005).

The concept of LL has been defined by several researchers. In order to understand the development in this field, we find it essential to focus on several definitions and approaches.

The first concept of LL was introduced at the end of 1970s in Belgium as a result of marking the geographical and linguistic boundaries between the French (Flanders)- and Flemish (Wallonia) speaking communities. Similarly, in the Canadian province of Quebec the boundaries of linguist territories were also marked through the regulation of language use on public signs (Backhaus, 2005).

As far as definitions of LL are concerned, Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 25) provided two complementary definitions of LL in their article: 1) «Linguistic landscape refers to the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region», 2) «The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration».

Apart from these definitions, Landry and Bourhis (1997) notice that LL can serve two functions: an informational and a symbolic. The first one can be understood as a marker of geographical territory and its language community. To put it differently, the diversity of languages on signs provides information about the sociolinguistic composition of a territory, relative power and status of a particular language group. The symbolic function refers to presence or absence of one's own language on public signs. This function implies that the presence of one's language on public signs (government signs in the domains such as road signs, street names, inscriptions on government buildings, town halls, etc.) and private signs (commercial signs on billboards, storefronts, etc.) can contribute to the feeling of the strength, value, status or vitality of one's own language group within the sociolinguistic settings.

Although many scholars follow the definition of Landry and Bourhis, nowadays, the term LL varies in scope from researcher to researcher. For Dailey et al. (2005), LL includes not only signs outside shops and businesses, but also a huge variety of other items such as advertisements sent to one's home, the languages heard when walking in one's neighbourhood, the languages one hears on TV, and the language spoken by teachers in the classroom.

Ben-Rafael et al. (2006, p. 14) define LL as: “a sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location”. This definition encompasses signs inside buildings, in contrast to Landry and Bourhis (1997).

Gorter (2006, p. 1) claims that LL is not only “the literal study of the languages as they are used in the signs,” but also “the representation of the languages”, of which the latter aspect can be related to “identity and cultural globalisation, to the growing presence of English and to revitalization of minority languages”.

According to Satinská (2013), LL is understood as a visual representation of language in public space, which is also created by official and commercial signs. She also adds that the presence of English on signs is a symbol of globalization of public space as well as of prestige.

A theoretical push to the LL field was made through Scollon and Scollon’s (2003) monograph dealing with the question of geosemiotics: how language and signs make meaning in relation to where (and when) they are physically placed in the world. According to them, the languages on a sign can index either the community in which they are used (geopolitical location), or sociocultural associations. In other words, a sign in English may index an English-speaking community, but also symbolize foreign taste and manner.

The other important input was made by the Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) work on the grammar of visual design, which can provide a starting point for the analysis of visual communication in order to bring to the forefront the various visual elements.

When dealing with semiotic place, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Holsanova et al. (2006) discuss the matter of composition, consisting of a) information value, which concerns the placement of elements within the triptych: left and right, top and bottom (from general to more specific), central and marginal (based on pragmatic distinction between given and new, ideal and real, central and ancillary); b) salience, determined on the basis of visual cues; c) framing, which refers to the presence or absence of framing devices, signifying that elements of the image belong together in some sense.

Backhaus (2007) offers the first comprehensive monograph entirely centred on LL. He also furnished a general framework that distinguishes among the source or origin of a sign, the reader of a sign, and the dynamics of the languages and scripts in contact.

**The Shaping of Linguistic Landscape.** As shown previously, a large number of research projects and publications indicate an increasing interest in the field of linguistic landscape studies. Some authors, for instance, Itagi and Singh (2002) distinguish between the noun «linguistic landscape» and the gerund «linguistic landscaping». Backhaus (2007, p. 10) explains that linguistic landscaping “refers to the planning and implementation of actions pertaining to language on signs [...], whereas linguistic landscape denotes the result of these actions”. Linguistic landscaping has also been taken up by more scholars, e. g. Backhaus (2009), Barni and Bagna (2009) and Coulmas (2009).

According to the construction of LL, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) criticise Landry and Bourhis (1997) for their understanding of LL as a given context of sociolinguistic processes and not paying attention to the dynamics of LL and the factors which shape it.

As far as the shaping of LL is concerned, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) deal with the linguistic landscape actors who concretely participate in the construction of the public space by “ordering from others or building by themselves linguistic landscape elements according to preferential tendencies, deliberate choices or policies” (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006, p. 27). Additionally, there is a great variety of actors, such as «public institutions, associations, firms, individuals that stem from most diverse strata and milieus» (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006, p. 8).

According to the LL actors, Edelman and Gorter (2010) mention five categories of actors who take part in the construction and perception of LL: 1) the businesses that put up signs and thus furnish the LL with linguistic items; 2) people responsible for the design, production and sale of signs; 3) private persons who place signs in order to announce an event by means of posters, for instance; 4) the authorities contributing to the LL; 5) the passers-by who walk by or drive along the streets and observe the signs, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Apart from the LL actors, Ben-Rafael (2006) makes an important distinction between top-down and bottom-up item of LL. Top-down group consists of units produced at the behest of authorities (it can be seen as an interference between language policy management and actual language practices), while the second one is created by individuals or private businesses. The linguistic composition of top-down signs can be regulated by law in some countries (ibid.)

The issue of authorship is also discussed by Malinowski (2009, In: Gorter et. al. 2012) who focuses on top-down items and he claims that the linguistic landscaping process includes the more evident role of state, regional and local authorities, but also political organization and individuals objecting to or influencing the top-down LL.

According to the fact that LL consists of signs, we find it essential to define a sign as well as to discuss the sign as a unit of analysis or the counting of the signs (when collecting data).

Cenoz and Gorter (2006) decided to count all visible signs, large and small, and they considered a shop front as one unit, but an individual street sign or a poster as one unit, too.

In contrast, Backhaus (2007) counted only signs (in Tokyo) that contained more than one language. He defined a sign as «any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame. The underlying definition is rather broad, including anything from handwritten stickers to huge commercial billboards. Also such items as «push» and «pull» stickers at entrance doors, lettered foot mats or botanic explanation plates on trees were considered to be signs. Each sign was counted as one item, irrespective of its size» (p. 55).

To sum up, both studies exclude moving signs such as advertisements on buses, texts on T-shirts, or thrown-away wrappers. Seba (2010) argued that «while fixed signage is undoubtedly of great interest ... it needs to be seen and analysed as a subset ... of all public texts, which also includes mobile or 'non-fixed' public texts» (p. 59).

Apart from the LL actors and signs, which play a role in the construction and perception of the LL, Ben-Rafael (2009, p. 47–48) also proposes four principles of the LL structuration:

1) **presentation of self** refers to actors expressing their identities through their linguistic choices. Generally, signs of the LL compete with one another for passers-by attention. Therefore, actors try to win by presenting advantageous images in order to show their uniqueness. Ben-Rafael (ibid.) claims that this principle leads to the hypothesis that languages carrying prestige in a particular setting will be present in the linguistic landscape;

2) **good reasons** as a principle is based on the hypothesis that positively valued languages by the public are consequently used in LL. It means that the LL actors try to influence the public by adapting to the values of the audience and focusing on the expected attractiveness of the signs;

3) **the principle of power relations** refers to the extent to which actors are able to impose patterns of behaviour on others. Dominant groups may impose the use of a given language on subordinate groups, for instance, which is the case when an official language is prescribed for signs. With regard to the composition of linguistic landscape, this principle leads to the hypothesis that languages of dominant groups are used more than languages of subordinate groups;

4) **the principle of collective identity** implies that actors assert their particular identities, exhibiting a commitment to a given group within the general public. This can be seen in the signs of food stores trying to attract potential clients on the basis of common fellowship. This principle is of special interest in multicultural societies as it signals regional, ethnic or religious particularisms differing from the mainstream identity. The principle is based on the hypothesis that the languages of minority groups are present in the linguistic landscape.

**The Study of Linguistic Landscape as a New Approach to Multilingualism.** In recent years, an increasing number of scholars have started to take a closer look at the languages in the signs of public space as well as they have discussed the concept of LL in several different ways. Without doubt, LL studies have been influenced by Landry and Bourhis' (1997) approach based on cataloguing language choice on signs, but some authors currently tend to reformulate some definitions and add «another view to our knowledge about societal multilingualism by focusing

on language choices, hierarchies of languages, contact-phenomena, regulations, and aspect of literacy» (Gorter, 2013, p. 191).

In 2015, a new peer reviewed journal, *Linguistic Landscape*. An international journal was published in order to emphasize that «the field of LL attempts to understand the motives, uses, ideologies, language varieties and contestations of multiple forms of ‘languages’ as they are displayed in public spaces» (in the aim and scope of Journal).

The present study of LL indicates that multilingualism and at the same time the process of globalisation (visible through the presence of English in LL) are very important aspects of LL studies. Next to globalisation researchers are also concentrated on a process of regionalisation or localisation as well as on a regional identity and language (glocalisation) (Gorter, 2006).

In this context, it is worthwhile to consider Jaworski and Thurlow’s (2010) contribution to LL which is based on the broader concept of semiotic landscape as an alternative to linguistic landscape. In connection to study of LL, Jaworski and Thurlow highlight that the study of tourism can help to better understanding of LL, as the study of tourism can tell us about the role of language and communication in order to understand the life of language under the globalisation.

According to them, tourism is established as one of the world’s largest international trades with people on tour and language on the move. In other words, tourism discourse is not only perceived as one of the largest economic activities, but also as a set of semiotics processes in which language lies along with other semiotic modes (ibid.).

As tourism has proved, it is an essential topic for studying of human communicative processes – most obviously with regard to intercultural contact and exchange.

As far as the study of tourism discourse is concerned, we concentrate on the way of how the visitors experience a place. Therefore, we deal with the Urry’s idea of Consuming Places through a visual gaze (Urry, 2005). His present study is focused on the relationships of actors of tourism, since «places are about relationships, about the placings of materials and the system of difference they perform» (Urry, 2005, p. 24). We agree with Urry (2005) that the consuming of place involves the consumption of services and goods that are considered to be specific to that place, e.g. cheeses in France, malt whisky in Scotland and so on.

An important and innovative contribution to the field of LL studies has been also made by Blommaert (2013) who takes among others geosemiotics as a central point of study of LL and as he emphasizes «according to geosemiotics, a better comprehension of the socio-cultural meaning of language material requires ethnographic understanding rather than numbers, and that signs are necessarily addressed as multimodal objects rather than as linguistic ones» (Blommaert, 2013, p. 41). He also believes that work on linguistic landscapes «can make the whole of sociolinguistics better, more useful, more comprehensive and more persuasive, and to offer some relevant things to other disciplines in addition» (Blommaert, 2013, p. 4).

As far as Blommaert’s approach to LL is concerned, it is very essential to highlight a notion such as ‘scale’ which is used as a metaphor for people and messages move through a space filled with codes, expectations and norms. In other words, “events and processes in globalization occur at different scale-levels, and we see interactions between the different scales as a core feature of understanding such events and processes” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 32).

In the context of LL, it is also worthwhile to consider Blommaert’s (2010) understanding of semiotic mobility, as it has all sorts of effects on signs that are involved in such mobility. Additionally, he (ibid.) also emphasizes that such processes need to be understood because they are «at the heart of globalization as a sociolinguistic phenomenon» (Blommaert, 2010, p. 32).

As far as mobility is discussed, LL can be analysed as a geographical and social space in which language as a social thing provides local meanings and frames for understanding the local environment (territorialized language), but on the other hand, in which other languages and lingua francas do not belong to one locality but organize translocal trajectories (deterritorialized language) (Blommaert, 2010). One would agree that these approaches have been based on the perspective of linguistic imperialism, the literature on linguistic rights (see Phillipson, 1992;

Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) as well as on assumption that wherever a ‘big’ and ‘powerful’ language such as English appears in a foreign territory, small indigenous languages will ‘die’. In addition, languages can create different sociolinguistic conditions for mutual influencing; on the one hand, English can threaten other languages, but on the other hand, sometimes the ‘threat’ to indigenous languages can come from dominant local languages (Blommaert, 2010). Consequently, linguistic landscape may serve as an indicator of changes of human language, which is no longer tied to stable and resident communities, it moves across the globe, and it changes in the age of globalization (Blommaert, 2010). That is why, it seems to be very essential to take into account Blommaert’s theory of changing language in a changing society, reconsidering locality, repertoires, competence, history and sociolinguistic inequality (Blommaert, 2010).

**Conclusion.** This article offered a brief outline of the approaches to the concept of linguistic landscape, which is generally understood as a study and investigation of the publicly visible languages on billboards, road and shop signs and all sorts of other inscriptions in the public space. We tried to put stress on the growing interest in this topic and the studies, which have been published during the past decade by a great variety of scholars, for instance Landry and Bourhis (1997), Spolsky and Cooper (1991), Backhaus (2005), Blommaert and Maly (2010) etc. According to the linguistic landscape studies, it can be concluded that the study of LL is seen as work in progress. It may be approached from different perspectives and related to different disciplines, e.g. sociolinguistics, psychology, social geography etc. Some of the main themes currently treated in LL studies are without doubt multilingualism, language policy and the spread of English (often associated with internationalism, modernity or technological advancements), which should be analysed in further research.

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### **С. ЧАЛОВКОВА. ЛІНГВІСТИЧНИЙ ЛАНДШАФТ**

**Вступ.** *Лінгвістичний ландшафт постійно існує навколо нас на вивісках, у рекламі, інструкціях, назвах вулиць, магазинів тощо. Посилений інтерес до цієї теми зумовив багато цікавих досліджень, зокрема мови на знаках у Старому місті Єрусалиму, в Ізраїлі, багатомовних знаків у Токіо тощо.*

**Мета.** *Стаття присвячена новій галузі соціолінгвістики – дослідженню лінгвістичного ландшафту, який розуміємо як спробу дослідити видимі для широкого загалу написи на білбордах, дорожніх знаках, рекламах магазинів, графіті та інших видах написів у громадському просторі.*

**Результати дослідження.** *Згідно з лінгвістичними ландшафтними дослідженнями, мова є найбільш безпосереднім і прямим ідентифікатором людей та найчутливішим показником соціальних змін. Мовний ландшафт навколо нас постійно, але ми зазвичай цього не помічаємо, тому що не знаємо мови вулиці. Посилений інтерес до цієї теми є основною темою статті, яку можна зрозуміти як огляд підходів до лінгвістичного ландшафту, представлених різними вченими.*

*Автор наголошує на тому, що в контексті мобільності лінгвістичний ландшафт можна проаналізувати як географічний та соціальний простір, де мова як соціальна річ надає значення та рамки для розуміння місцевого середовища (територіальна мова), але з іншого боку, деякі мови та lingua francas не належать до однієї місцевості, хоч організують транслокальні траєкторії (детериторіально). Ці підходи ґрунтувалися на перспективі лінгвістичного імперіалізму, а також на припущенні, що там, де «велика» і «потужна» мова, така як англійська, з'являється не на своїй території, малі мови корінних народів «вимірають».*

**Наукова новизна.** *Нинішнє дослідження лінгвістичного ландшафту вказує на те, що багатомовність та водночас процес глобалізації є дуже важливими аспектами його формування.*

**Висновки.** *У статті запропоновано короткий огляд підходів до поняття мовного пейзажу, яке розуміють як вивчення та дослідження написів на білбордах, дорожніх і торгових знаках та інших написів у публічному просторі. Лінгвістичний ландшафт розглядають у різних аспектах із позицій соціолінгвістики, психології, соціальної географії тощо. Особливо актуальними у вивченні мовного ландшафту є питання багатомовності, мовної політики та поширення англійської мови, що є перспективою подальших досліджень.*

**Ключові слова:** *соціолінгвістика; лінгвістичний ландшафт; географічний простір; соціальний простір; символ.*

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