

Linguistic landscape theory in language learning



Prof. Monica Barni

Prof. Sabrina Machetti

Università per Stranieri di Siena ,Italy

Dr Katerina Kolyva

EU Commission expert, United Kingdom

Reneta Palova

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Bulgaria

Linguistic landscape theory

The concept was first drawn by Landry and Bourhis (1997) in their seminal work on ethnolinguistic vitality and signage in Canada as

Visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a given territory



Linguistic landscape is seen as the scene where the public space is symbolically constructed (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006; Shohamy & Gorter, 2008)

The languages used in public signs indicate what languages are locally relevant, or give evidence of what languages are becoming locally relevant (Shohamy 2010; Kasanga 2012).

Linguistic landscape is becoming a useful method to understand the evolution of an urban space.

Linguistic landscape signs describe the identity of a city and almost 'speaks the language' of its inhabitants at a moment in time.

Collective identity theory, using the notion of space in its formation, is particularly relevant to the study of linguistic landscape.

Traditional and essentialist school of thought

Identity is static and bounded within specific borders in such a way that the self is usually identified as never changing



Rational constructivists

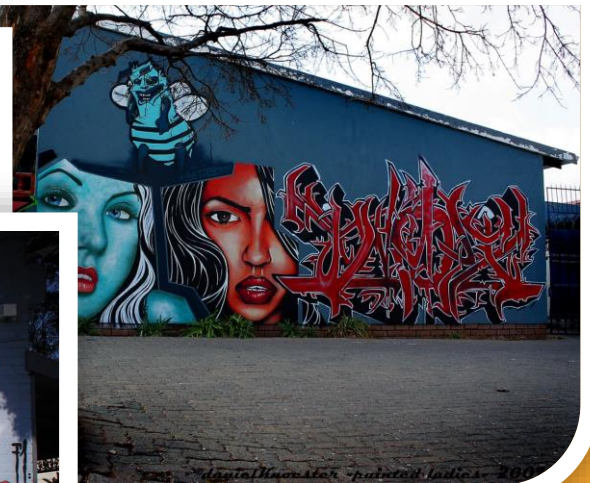
Identity with relation to power, which dictates collective identity; elites promote their interests via the construction of identity.



Postmodernism

Another perspective in LL and identity formation

Meaning becomes a fleeting phenomenon that evaporates almost as soon as it occurs in written language or keeps transforming itself into new meanings rather than something fixed



Predominant migrant communities in an urban setting settle in with their culture, customs and languages and influence significantly the Linguistic landscape of that city



“The study of linguistic landscape aims to add another view to our knowledge about societal multilingualism by focusing on language choices, hierarchies of languages, contact-phenomena, regulations, and aspects of literacy’ Gorter (2013: 191)

As identity evolves the Linguistic landscape evolves as well





Case study on how the theory of linguistic landscape can be applied to language awareness and language learning



(www.signsinthecity.net)



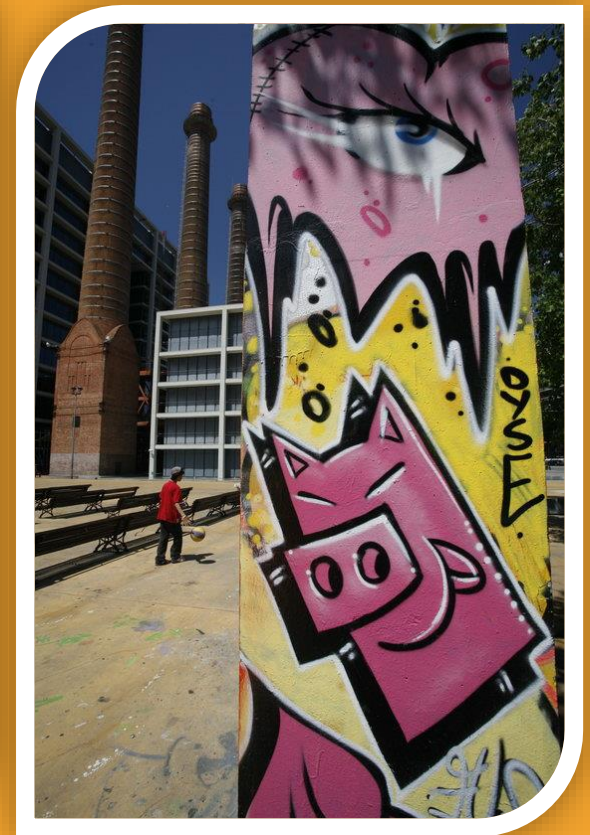
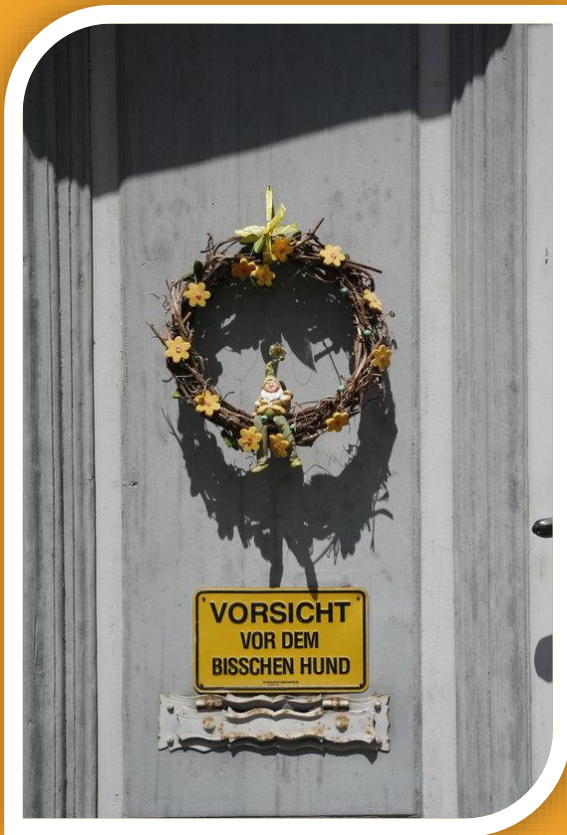
(www.tellmeastory.eu)

How the use of city signs and urban symbols could tell a lot more about the culture of a place than history ever could and could also be used as a means for language learning and language comparison

City signs provide an easy, visual and clear way to promote language and culture while they also provide excellent material for language learning in 'real life' situations and indeed for comparative linguistic analysis.

The concept

Use of photography of a city's signs as a means of learning about the city's language



The researched places

15 cities and towns in Europe – places with different historical and cultural backgrounds and languages that belonged to different language families

- from big cities like Izmir in Turkey to very small towns like Birgu in Malta,



The researched places

- from towns with very long and rich history like Alcalá de Henares in Spain and Gdańsk in Poland to 'younger' cities like Dobrich in Bulgaria.



The researched places

- cities where regional and minority languages are an important means of communication, as well as part of their personal, cultural and social identity like Barcelona,



The researched places

- towns with bilingual communities – Miercurea Ciuc in Romania
- cross-border regions – on the border of Austria and Slovenia



Similarity and difference of Linguistic landscape in European cities

Similarities pertaining to a common European cultural heritage

Similarities within geographical or political regions due to history and politics (particularly between east and west or north and south)

The history and size of every city played a crucial role in its LL profile.

In smaller towns the LL seemed quite static, while in big cities LL seemed much more dynamic.



Similarities were noted between cities that had recently undergone significant political change (in Poland and Bulgaria), where the Linguistic landscape pictured the political evolution.



Linguistic landscape and language learning

Materials in 14 languages - short videos and films in the same cities and towns, online games and printed publications (language learning and storytelling books).

Use of “written city language”- street signs, bar, restaurant, shop, banks, post office, graffiti and anything else ‘printed’ as part of a city

Promotion of creativity and respect of cultural and social difference

Specific 'chapters' as a guide for the city language:



- basic language words and structures
- great variety of events, products, and original expressions based on visualization of cultural specificities with relation to the linguistic aspects



to demonstrates that the acquaintance with the city signs vocabulary could be achieved in different ways and that everyone may make their own choice and a few of them may add their own approach

Language/city guides

- introduced in an amusing way the alphabet, pronunciation, basic vocabulary necessary for elementary communication that could be seen all over the city.

Story and language books



Quando la Borgogna invente le vin rouge

D'où vient le vin rouge? M. Latour, éminent spécialiste du vin et bien connu des Beaunois et des Bourguignons, assure que pour répondre à la question il faut trouver qui a laissé la peau des raisins noirs dans le jus de fermentation!

Hasard ou expérience, c'est vers le XIII^e siècle que les moines Cisterciens et les Duc de Bourgogne commencent à fabriquer du "vin vermeil". Ils ne pressent plus le raisin avant la fermentation mais le foulent pour créer le "moût" qu'ils mettent à fermenter. Ce sont les pigments présents dans la peau des cépages qui vont colorer le fameux breuvage. Sans la peau, même avec des raisins noirs, normalement, on obtient du vin blanc ou du Champagne!

Pour l'instant il n'existe pas de preuve de production de vin rouge ou vermeil antérieure ce qui fait de la Bourgogne un candidat très sérieux au titre d'inventeur des vins rouges!



When Burgundy discovers the red wine

Where does the red wine come from? According to M. Latour, eminent wine specialist well-known in Burgundy and in Beaune, in order to answer the question one has to know who left the skin of the black grapes into the must!

Either by coincidence or through experience, it is around the XIIIth century that the Cistercian monks and the Dukes of Burgundy started to elaborate the "vin vermeil" (vermillion wine). They do not press the wine anymore before the fermentation process but trample it to get the "moût" (must) and then let it ferment. Those pigments, in the skin, coloured the so famous beverage. Without the skin, even with black grapes, you normally get white wine or Champagne!

Until now, there is no evidence of red or vermillion wine production elsewhere prior to this date so Burgundy is a serious contender for the title of red wine's inventor!



Online language lessons and games



MONTEPULCIANO Italy

Un film che ha sconvolto Montepulciano

GO TO TELLMEASTORY WEBSITE

CATCH AND MATCH

Put the dialogue words in the corresponding column.

HINTS

Erano gli agriturismi
gli alberghi
una piazza bellissima pieni
l'atmosfera Era è speciale
Piazza Grande

DOER

ACTION/STATE

DATA

THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT IT LANGUAGE



MONTEPULCIANO Italy

I picci? Non sono dei semplici spaghetti!

GO TO TELLMEASTORY WEBSITE

LANGUAGE LESSON

Strutture importanti (Important structures)	
mi piace / non mi piace; mi piacciono/ non mi piacciono (like and dislike)	Aggettivi qualificativi del dialogo (adjectives into the dialogue)
Mi piace la pasta. Non mi piace la pasta. Mi piacciono i picci. Non mi piacciono i picci.	lunga buonissimi speciali spiritosa simpatica

THE STORY THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT IT LANGUAGE GAMES

CHANGE CITY AND LANGUAGE

Computer game

- suitable for younger audiences and was an innovative way to present the city signs vocabulary to those who prefer technology to book reading



The use and the potential

- Tourist and tourist guides
- Persons in mobility
- Schools
- Local authorities

Conclusions

- There is a clear link between identity theory, linguistic landscape theory and language learning.
- Similarity and diversity in identity building is indeed illustrated in linguistic landscape.
- City signs provide an easy, visual and clear way to promote language and culture while they also provide excellent material for language learning in 'real life' situations and indeed for comparative linguistic analysis.

Next steps

- Research with focus on comparing the European experience with that of other continents to argue (or not) the existence of a European identity and LL trend
- Development of business and training material for students, tourists and tour guides as well as promotional materials for local authorities and the tourism and language learning sectors in all European languages

Thank you...questions...

