

Linguistic Mapping Of Private And Public Signs In Lebanon

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the Linguistic Landscape (LL) in three geographical representative areas (Achrafieh, Bourj Hammoud, and Zahle) of Lebanon. The study investigates the state of multilingualism across the public and private signs in the selected geographical areas. The investigation is approached through a mixed design to unfold the bottom- up and top- down organization (Ben-Rafael et al., 2008) of the collected signs' images. The picturized items are arranged in accordance with Reh's (2004) framework into duplicating, overlapping, fragmentary, and complementary multilingual writings. The systematized pictures are accompanied with interviews, field notes, and participant observations to align with the Scollon and Scollon's (2003) qualitative study of discourses in place. A data quantification is followed to clarify the results at a computed state. The research concludes with disclosing the language choice in the selected areas, the ideology in each chosen area, and the reasons behind choosing the present versatile texts.

Keywords: Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, bottom-up, top-down, visible multilingualism, covert multilingualism, duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping, complementary.

1. Introduction

LL is a multidisciplinary field of study (Carr, 2019) that could be approached through linguistics, sociology, politics, law, economics, education, and geography. LL is a phenomenon that influences multilingualism within the same flow that allows the latter to be constrained by the former. LL is basically formulated by the interconnective force between language and other semiotic features in the symbolic structuring of multilingual spaces (Hult, 2014).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Despite the prominent analyses that some Lebanese LL studies contributed to the bulk of literature including Karam et al. (2018) and Wisley (2020), an application of either one or two of the approaches utilized in the current study appeared in the two previously traced studies. Pivotal as it is to have the geographical areas in the formerly traced studies under examination, a scheme of Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh, and Zahle ought to be traced as a representative image of the Lebanese LL. Hence, an inclusive study that implements an array of variables

across three different geographical areas enhances the Lebanese LL studies with advanced academic enlightenment.

1.2. Research Questions

This research tends to answer the following questions:

- What are the languages used in shop signs in Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh, and Zahle?
- How does the usage of specific languages in Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh and Zahle reflect the ideology of the shops?
- What are the reasons for choosing the specific shop signs and titles in Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh and Zahle?

2. Methodology

The current investigation is conducted through a mixed approach. The qualitative dimension to the study implies analysing the collected data based on three major approaches. The selected data include pictures of the private and public signs in the chosen geographical areas, interviews with the participants,

field notes, and participant observations. The examination of the chosen information is confirmed through data quantification that computes the data by numbers and percentages. 50 pictures and 10 interviews are collected from each geographical area, making 150 images and 30 interviews in total.

2.1. Procedure of Analysis

Tracing the Lebanese LL implies an implementation of three major approaches upon the qualitative and quantitative lengths. The qualitative dimension of application requires the collected images to be first assorted in terms of Reh's (2004) framework into 4 main levels. The classification allows the images to be distributed into duplicating, overlapping, fragmentary, and complementary multilingual writings. The dynamical data structuring is then followed by a functional qualitative examination. Revealing the ideological underpinnings within the present signs is achieved through the implementation of Scollon and Scollon's (2003) approach. The framework is applied in terms of three interrelated dimensions. The related dimensions are categorized into the interaction order, the visual semiotics, and the place semiotics as parts of the social action. The analysed data are then categorized into bottom- up versus top- down sampling of private versus public signs in a given region (Ben-Rafael et al., 2008). A data quantification is later organized at the level of separating the bottom- up signs from the top- down signs in each selected area. The signs are distributed according to the language or language combinations they carry in order to seek the numbers and percentages of the signs' occurrence.

3. Analysis and Findings

The LL investigation in Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh, and Zahle accompanies the traced signs with photographs, interviews, field notes, and participant observations. The bottom- up and top- down signs are divided into visible and covert multilingualism. Visible multilingualism is subdivided into duplicating, overlapping, fragmentary, and complementary multilingual writings. The code of

preference in each sign is highlighted in relation to the ideal, real, given, and new information upon each sign. A single illustration for every type of multilingual writing is demonstrated in this article within the chosen geographical area.

3.1. Bottom- Up Signs

Bottom- up signs are the type of signs that the locals place in a given geographical area (Landry, & Bourhis, 1997). This section presents a bottom- up sampling of the visible and covert multilingual signs in Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh, and Zahle according to Reh's (2004) and Scollon and Scollon's (2003) frameworks.

3.1.1. Visible Multilingualism

The encompassing of a material unit to multiple languages is termed as visible multilingual writing if the writings are identifiable by the reader across the same material unit. Observing the unit from the reader's spatial position contributes to the phenomenon's actualization (Reh, 2004). Each subcategory in Reh's (2004) framework is detailed through a single demonstration of the signs in the selected areas.

3.1.1.1. Duplicating

The naming in Figure 1 follows an abstract arrangement of the Arabic, Armenian, and English translations of the center's name, Centre Ani. By interviewing the center's owner, an explanation of the texts' arrangement is considered. The owner associated the signboard's design with the immigration of the Armenian people in the 1975 civil war in Lebanon. He states that the Armenian calligraphy accentuates the Armenian art by marking the lustrous print that the Armenians left behind. It is denoted that the center marks a global destination for the multinational consumers and most importantly the Arab consumers. That is, it was necessary for the owner to place the Arabic language at the top.

The owner explains that Armenians were a part of positive economic growth in Lebanon, so their

language was ought to emblemize their work. This, in return, favored the Armenian language to follow down the Arabic language for preserving the Armenians' identity. English in its British form is consequently the last language that the sign displays, as it provides convenience for international consumers to understand the center's name.

Figure 1 displays an equivalence in size among the three translations. The writings across the center's signboard are inscribed in goldenrod across a deep brown background. As for the font, it sparks an aesthetic essence from the elegantly written words, due to the quality of gold that the centers manufacture. Thus, unifying the color and size of the three translations prioritizes the code of preference to the ideal portion of the signboard, that is the Arabic language.



Fig. 1 Center Ani

3.1.1.2. Overlapping

A unique dimension of overlapping appears at a different linguistic and graphical composition in Figure 2. "She" pronoun is implemented along with a striking "Waw" expression as an English preference to the astonishing look that a lady would look like when "She- Waw" plans her outfit. The sign, nonetheless, implies an Arabizi exclamatory expression that one makes when a beautiful lady passes by, as the expression's tone is the Arabic equivalent to "that is fabulous". With a catchy font and burgundy writings, the code of preference is the Arabic language that is reflected through English letters.



Fig. 2 She Waw

3.1.1.3. Fragmentary

To the top and the bottom of the major signboard of Figure 3, a poetic elucidation is lettered as the shop's description. The upfront Armenian expression reveals a message about an association between the love of books, pens, and lovers all at once. The bottommost signboard to the left corner of the door shop contains an Armenian note in red script. It is Shiraz' greeting to all her customers as a message for them to keep elevating their dreams. The usage of the Arabic and English languages, in this case, is less likely intended to bilingual speakers. On the contrary, employing almost triple the amount of Arabic and English information in the Armenian language reflects a personal- intimate relationship between the shop owner and the Armenian speakers only.

Apart from these shop signs, a roadway sign is implemented afar from the shop. An arrow vector holds up the shop name in its three translations that are English, Arabic, and Armenian. The English translation is expressed in the upper case with a red color. Meanwhile, the Arabic and the Armenian translations appear in an orange color. The two colors are intermediated by a blue cylindrical background of a mixed announcement of the two languages Arabic and English. The Arabic phrase, that is an equivalent to the English phrase "we have", is complemented by an English expression that states "print out" in an uppercase. The arrow vector is not only aimed at directing random customers to the library but specifically the ones who care to reach print-out services. The roadway sign is undoubtedly indexable in place due to the geosemiotic meaning that it markedly delivers. The library's name is written in English for marketing purposes, whereas the Arabic language is utilized to reflect a sense of belonging to the Lebanese society. The solid Armenian employment within the personal depth that the sign reveals distinguishes the Armenian language from the rest to stand as the code of preference.



Fig. 3 Shiraz Library

3.1.1.4. Complementary

Adhering to Figure 4, a striking case in Bourj Hammoud exhibits distinct French usage upon the signboard's major entities. The interviewed owner explained the reason behind this naming process to originate back into a personal reflection of his famous sobriquet, "Chez Vicken, Le Magicien". The major large name at the top is the owner's epithet, and the minor smaller expression is a descriptive trait that the owner is known for around the neighborhood. Straight to the bottom is a further specifying description of the supermarket itself. The same signboard is evidently set in a different area, in a way that few would possibly understand the personal homing feeling the shop exhibits. The code of preference is, hence, the contextualized French language among the name and the shop's description. The shop sign remarkably reflects indexicality in social relationships in terms of revealing a personal-intimate relationship between the owner and the shoppers, as the distance separating them is narrowed. In addition, having a cheese brand advertisement in the Arabic language to the right side of the major signboard relinquishes the assumption that the owner could be opinionated about French.



Fig. 4 Chez Vicken

3.1.2. Covert Multilingualism

A covert multilingual sign implies a single language use across a given material unit, so the text may appear in some other languages at a distinct place (Reh, 2004).



Fig. 5 Salon Costy

The shop sign in Figure 5 includes the owner's name at the top along with a short description about the shop's service under. The name is notably stripped from any shop description while placed upon the signboard's middle spot. Both of the written portions are present in silver across a dark grey background. The higher portion, nevertheless, is inscribed in a larger font than the lower portion. Based on the interviewed owner's answers regarding the prices of the services sold at the salon, the salon's owner laughs during the interview, almost hesitant to answer the question being asked. Noticing the interviewee's body language when asked about the services' prices, the owner tries to go off topic in reach of skipping the prices' question. With the high prices of the salon's services, the owner is aware of the clients that are attempted to be attracted with the present shop sign, all through a style that the clients expect. The French language, by this manner, carries the utmost weight that the code of preference ought to hold.

3.2. Top- Down Signs

A unique top-down arrangement instance is reflected across the writings on the presented garbage truck in Figure 6. In spite of having the truck launched by a private company, the company operates in accordance with the municipality's assistance. The writings across the truck consist of an Arabic informal Beirut expression in a large size at the top, that means recycling is worth it. A formal Arabic expression follows with a smaller size as an invitation for society to collaborate together for a cleaner and a highly cultivated Beirut. Down to the corners of the expressions, illustrations of two trash cans that are specialized in recycling are drawn aside. To add, other details including the company's English name are randomly written in red upon

different spots of the truck. Therefore, the potential for action that the company calls for is ultimately originated in the first Arabic expression. A direct assurance of the municipality's message in the Lebanese community is, thus, implemented by using the Arabic language as the code of preference.



Fig. 6 Ramco

3.3. Data Quantification

A sample section on the data quantification process is enclosed as part of Zahle's LL analysis. Based on the bottom-up quantitative study of the signs in Zahle, a mixture of monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual language signboards appear. Starting with the monolingual language appearances, Arabic, English, French, Arabizi, and transliterated English solely arise across Zahle's private signs. The Arabic language makes for the highest percentage (20%), followed by the English, French, Arabizi, and

transliterated English forms, with a 2% difference between each of them in terms of 8%, 6%, 4%, and 2% respectively.

As for the bilingual language display in the area, Arabic- English, Arabic- French, Arabic- Arabizi, English- Arabizi, English- transliterated English and English- French are signposted. A remarkable percentage of 16% is indicated by the Arabic- English language mix. The percentage descends into its average regarding the Arabic- French appearance at 8%. Additionally, a sloping down by 2% at each of the three following forms stands at a range of 6% and 4%, and the English form, in this regard, is left to mark 2% of the total.

The trilingual language appearance is equivalently present across the Arabic- French- English, French- English- Arabizi, and French- Arabic- transliterated English forms in Zahle. The three structures are mainly displayed across a common minimum rate of 2% each.

Regarding the top-down signs in this area, the Arabic language arises at three instants. They are mainly displayed as Arabic only, Arabic- English, and Arabic- French forms. The percentage of the three forms' appearance makes for 4%, by the time that the French only stands out as 2%.

TABLE I: Zahle- Quantitative Data

	Bottom- up	Top- down
Arabic only	n= 10 (20%)	n= 2 (4%)
English only	n= 4 (8%)	
French only	n= 3 (6%)	n= 1 (2%)
Arabizi	n= 2 (4%)	
Transliterated English to Arabic	n= 1 (2%)	
Arabic- English	n= 8 (16%)	n= 2 (4%)
Arabic- French	n= 4 (8%)	n= 2 (4%)
Arabic- French- English	n= 1 (2%)	
Arabic- Arabizi	n= 3 (6%)	
English- Arabizi	n= 2 (4%)	
English- transliterated English to Arabic	n= 2 (4%)	
English- French	n= 1 (2%)	
French- English- Arabizi	n= 1 (2%)	
French-Arabic- Transliterated French to Arabic	n= 1 (2%)	
Total	n= 43 (86%)	n= 7 (14%)

4. Results

As proved by the gathered photographs, there exists substantial language diversity in the three investigated areas of Bourj Hammoud, Achrafieh, and Zahle. A major salience of the Armenian, Arabic, English, and French languages is notable in Bourj Hammoud in company with a minor distinction of the Ethiopian language. Referring to the obtained data in Achrafieh, the major exhibited languages are French, English, and Arabic. A slighter identifiable occurrence of the Spanish language, Arabizi, and transliterated English into the Arabic language is traced. By analysing Zahle's gathered data, the substantially detected languages are the Arabic, English, and French languages. The slightly salient language forms are Arabizi as well as transliterated English and French to the Arabic language.

The shops' ideology in Bourj Hammoud is shaped by the strong salience of the Armenian language across the signboards in the area. The Armenian language is intensively preferred regardless of the passers-by's knowledge of the Armenian language. The prices in Bourj Hammoud interestingly range from middle to low levels, making the services available for the majority of the area's citizens. As for Achrafieh, the predominant use of the French language across the area's signboards specifies French as the code of preference at the wider level of the area's LL. Moreover, the offered services in Achrafieh are afforded by customers whose financial levels range from middle to high. As regards to Zahle, the strong usage of the Arabic and English languages is elevated to technologizing the Arabic language into Arabizi and transliterating the English language into Arabic. High prices do occur in certain shops in Zahle, but the overall prices are of either low or average levels.

The reasons behind the intensive Armenian usage across the area's LL relate to the tense political circumstances that Armenia has faced throughout history. As a result, the Armenian citizens were

unluckily led to flee their country into different parts of the world. Therefore, with pride and prestige, the Armenian character urges the Armenian citizens to protect their ancestral roots, to be known for their learning capabilities, and to enhance the Lebanese economic growth. The Achrafieh community, meanwhile, carries the French language with pride in almost all of their language uses, regardless of the aggressive French mandate Lebanon has previously faced. The French culture is famous in Achrafieh up to a level that hardwires the citizens' mentality to stereotypically frame a person's educational level depending on their knowledge of the French language. The Zahle community considers the Arabic language as an invaluable heritage to be protected. Nevertheless, a wave of technology is empowering the language of the social media to be prominent in the city's LL. A prominent English language usage is also notable across Zahle's LL due to the English language adaptation as an international language. The reason for this assumption is built on assisting the tourists as well as the people coming from abroad as part of the marketing process.

5. Conclusion

The shops' ideology in Bourj Hammoud is reflected through the extensive usage of the Armenian language across the shop fronts. By peculiarly focusing on the interviews concerning the photographed collected material, the reasons behind the major Armenian usage get manifest. Referring to the Armenian's constant faced aggression along history, their country's fleeing played a major role in their identity's assertion. Escaping wars has undoubtedly created a defending individuality at the Armenian character in Lebanon, as to catalyse the Lebanese growth, to be known for their learning abilities, and to protect their ancestral roots along the way. In their community, using the Armenian language is the least thing they could do their country, to keep their heritage alive and to give them a sense of pride in being Armenian. Their solid attachment to their country of origin does not prevent

them from utilizing other languages as well. Although the Arabic language is scarcely present on its own, its idealization occurs throughout its mixing with other languages.

The French language emblemizes the shops' ideology in Achrafieh. By concentrating on the reasons behind Achrafieh's private and public signs' presentation, multiple social, political, and educational factors could be specified. The feeling of pride that Achrafieh's citizens link to their French usage plays a major role in the language choosing process. Additionally, many of the area's residents still associate their French constant use with the French mandate's days in Lebanon. Looking in Achrafieh at a glance, it is obvious that the majority of the community follows a Christian faith. They possess the occupiers' language as their own in a miniaturized French culture that they proudly inherited. Thus, according to them, being vastly affected by an occupation's language creates a sense of inevitability to speak the language. Most people in Achrafieh even reach an assumption that labels people's knowledge of the French language by their perceived education, as viewed from their expectations.

At the foundation of Zahle's LL, Arabic is in most cases, unfortunately, replaced by its technologized forms, such as Arabizi and transliterated English into Arabic. The reasons that allow for the city's signs to be chosen are referred to various factors. The citizens in Zahle consider the Arabic language as an important language to be protected. However, the current technological wave is leading them to prioritize the popular forms of the Arabic language that social media is proposing. This is due to that most of Zahle's citizens are interested in the sense of modernity that the trending ways of technology are offering. Moreover, the English language is encouraged by the citizens of Zahle because of their intent to reach and accommodate not only tourists but persons returning from abroad, who may not read or speak Arabic.

6. Recommendations and Limitations

Based on this LL study, future researchers can improve their tactics when launching any LL study. Future researchers can implement LL studies at a wider level. In other words, expanding the fields of study into a larger variety of places, especially in Lebanon, enriches the repertoire of sociolinguistic studies in the country. Thus, building a dense base of research that reaches most of the country's districts, assists the construction of an enhanced image of the country's LL.

The limitations that surrounded this study were majorly concerned with the data collection stage. The presence of a photographed electronic material (Gorter, 2018) definitely assists the gathering of the data, unless an experienced assistant in the streets of the fields of study is present throughout the data collection process.

Some of the exhibited languages were not spoken by the researcher, so a guidance from native speakers of these languages was initiated along the study. However, due to that, some of the perceived languages were considered minority languages in the country. Their writing system was, therefore, odd for comprehension.

Some interviewed participants may not provide the researcher with the exquisite answers. Here, the investigation process should be associated with the researcher's ability to unfold the participants' nonverbal language. In a more precise manner, a participant may say that the language choice is not linked to prestige, but the fillers, additional explanations, and facial expressions would prove the opposite. Hence, field notes and participant observations would be major keys to this dilemma.

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