Enquiring the Linguistic Landscape of Oran City Centre in an Era of Globalization

دراسة المشهد اللغوي لوسط مدينة وهران في عصر العولمة

Analyse du paysage linguistique du centre-ville d'Oran à l'ère de la mondialisation

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Initial statement

Linguistic landscape study is a field that is blossoming in sociolinguistics these days. The great importance it has is what prompted the researcher to tackle this subject. Yet, linguistic landscapes reflect the globalised world in which one lives. Signs are everywhere, especially in urban centres that are characterized by their density. Hence, signboards are designed for the purpose of communicating or conveying information, identifying places or recognising parts of a city. However, the languages used while referring to certain types of information are not chosen randomly and thus should not be taken for granted. These signs are issued by either the authorities or various citizens owning stores, restaurants and businesses. In other words, any linguistic landscape is made of both top-down and bottom-up signs: issued by a given authority or by an individual. These two types of signs are, sometimes incompatible in terms of language use. That is, government signboards display some codes whereas private ones depict language preferences even whims. In Oran, public institutions focus most of the time on the use of Modern Standard Arabic and French while, in addition to these two tongues, private shops and restaurants show other codes in particular English and Spanish. Interestingly enough, what prompts those people, for example, to differ from their government in terms of language use is the impact of globalization. Because of the quick progress in both technological and scientific fields, people learn about others languages and cultures and start using them.

1. Linguistic Landscape: A tentative definition

Linguistic landscape (henceforth LL) is a term that is referred to by a number of scholars such as Landry and Bourhis (1997) who believe that it is the language(s) used in the public space. One may be surrounded by different words and texts that provide people with useful information or have a significant symbolic role in a given region. In this respect, these two authors elucidate that LL is:

> The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration. The linguistic landscape of a territory can serve two basic functions: an informational function and a symbolic function. (Landry and Bourhis, 1997, p. 25)

Similarly, Shoamy and Gorter (2009) corroborate the aforementioned idea. This is why they posit that "*it is the attention to language in the environment, words and images displayed and exposed in public spaces, that is the center of attention in this rapidly growing area referred to as* Linguistic Landscape (LL)" (Shoamy and Gorter, 2009, p.1). These two definitions demonstrate if need be that LL is the written language that is publicly surrounding people including words, phrases and texts exhibited in the public sphere. In the definition given by Landry and Bourhis' (1997), one can essentially notice the existence of two different types of signs, viz. private and governmental ones. Interestingly enough, instances of private signs consist of non-official ones including names of shops and restaurants, graffiti and food advertisements. Per contra, names of streets or schools, as well as phrases found on governmental institutions' signage like hospitals' fronts constitute examples of official government signboards. In the same vein, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006, p.14) point to LL as "any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location". In this sense, they distinguish between two sorts of linguistic landscape items they label "top-down" and "bottom-up" signs. The former is designed by the authorities whereas the second type indicates private signs made by any individual having a shop, a restaurant or a business concern of any sort. In this respect, Ben-Rafael et al. (ibid) explain that:

> The 'top-down' LL items included those issued by national and public bureaucracies– public institutions, signs on public sites, public announcement and street names. 'Bottom-up' items, on the other hand, included those which were issued by individual social actors- shop owners and companies– like names of shops, signs on businesses and personal announcements.

Besides, according to Shohamy and Gorter (2009), specialists interested in the field of LL emphasise the importance of scrutinising the language(s) existing in the public space. They believe that there are reasons lying behind the use or rejection of some codes instead of others. In other words, choices of certain languages on signs, be they private or governmental, are made on purpose (regulatory, personal or institutional), i.e. they are not used at random. What is worth mentioning is that, in any public sphere, there is an interaction,

not always for the better, between the two types of signs mentioned above. In this sense, Landry and Bourhis (1997, p.27) discuss these instances of this interaction by stating that sometimes the languages employed on private and governmental signs are so similar that they depict a consistent and cohesive linguistic landscape. This explains that sometimes the languages displayed on non-official signs may be congruent with those issued by the government. Yet, this indicates that speech community members are contented with the languages wanted by the authorities. Contrarily, by looking at some regions, one may notice a clear-cut inconsistency in terms of language use. It is due to the discordance between the two aforementioned types of signs. Indeed, unlike the tongues shown on governmental signboards, those that are visible on private ones are more diverse and varying. This refers to the fact that the two language profiles within this linguistic landscape are not in agreement, if not culturally opposed. In short, LL is to be considered as an arena where various languages appear in textual forms and interact with one another, when they do not oppose one another sending hidden messages, even unspoken political stands and visions.

2. Language Planning vs. Language Policy

In any organised country, languages planning and language policy are viewed as crucial processes for the making of nations. This is why scholars debate about them for they carry ideological and scientific loads. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), for instance, consider them as two different concepts with real impacts on societies and individuals. Indeed, they describe language planning as an apparent governmental and political activity that brings about changes in terms of language use within a certain speech community. In this sense, they state that "language planning is an activity, most visibly undertaken by government [...], intended to promote systematic linguistic change in some community of speakers" (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997, p. xi). One can add that the change is even systemic. Language Policy is, on the other hand, seen as "a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group or system" (ibid). Therefore, language planning leads to what is called language policy which itself represents the goals and objectives of the first process. From the vantage point of Kaplan and Baldauf (1997), it is clear that the way in which a community speaks can be influenced and even be altered by both state regulations and citizen's beliefs.

Interestingly enough, despite the different views provided by scholars like Kaplan and Baldauf who distinguished between these two concepts, they are most of the time used indiscriminately and one can be chosen to refer to the other. Sometimes they are even used interchangeably as Language Planning and

Language Policy (LPLP) or Language Planning and Policy (LPP). Accordingly, Weinstein (1980) argues that it is the political authority that undertakes language planning deliberately for the purpose of making changes in terms of language use and linguistic behaviours. This process aspires to promote communication between people living within the same country. It occurs in nations where there are language problems like those related to communication difficulties between different people living in a certain country, new word coinages and the like. This generally happens in newly independent countries searching authenticity in building their cultural identity. Weinstein describes this activity as "a government-authorized, long-term, sustained and conscious effort to alter a language's function in a society for the purpose of solving communication problems" (Weinstein, 1980, p.56). In a similar vein, Fishman (1974, p.79) limits language planning to "the organised pursuit of solutions to a language problem". For this author, it aims at solving nations' linguistic problems. Besides, Cooper (1989, p.45) reveals that language planning is a "deliberate efforts to influence the behaviour of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language orders". Indeed, this displays that language planning has an impact on citizens' conducts or government institutions' language undertakings and decision makers' behaviours as it intends to persuade them to alter a certain language's construct or status, its uses (e.g. French '*écriture inclusive*') and usages (their grammaticality) and even the way it is learned.

Jernudd and Das Gupta keep language planning away from the linguistic realm, as an activity on its own. They believe that it has to do with politics while they describe it as "a political and administrative activity" (Jernudd and Das Gupta, 1971, p.211) undertaken by authorities and people in power who attempt to find solutions to their nations' language problems and modernisation. By reading these different definitions, one can realize in broad terms that certain countries go overtly through LPLP in order to sidestep linguistic issues, to improve communication and social interactions. This process is also emphasized so as to elaborate and favour some languages or language varieties over others within the same country. That is to say that such activity intends to make linguistic and social changes at a national level.

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) believe that while implementing language planning, two opposing analyses can be followed, vis. top-down and bottom-up planning. The former refers to the decisions that come from the upper side, i.e. the authorities and people holding power. The latter, on the other hand, has to do with people who are hierarchically low or less powerful than the state representatives, like shop/business owners.

3. Globalization: views and debates

Globalization is a common concept that caught the interest of a number of scholars around the world such as Giddens (1990), McGrew (1992), Netland (2001) and Hamilton (2009). Along the same vein, Hamilton (2009, p.10) suggests that globalization is "the worldwide integration of economic, technological, political, cultural, and social aspects between countries". This means that people from different nations co-operate with each other and live, supposedly, alike. It is thus hypothesised that this could lead them to do likewise and have the same mind-set despite the long distances separating between them physically, politically and culturally. This gave the impression that the world looked smaller than it was before. Like knowledge, beliefs and traditions, some languages have gradually become commonly used by appearing in various places around the globe. In the same manner, and according to Giddens (1990, p.64), Globalization is described as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa". This implies that different nations have become intertwined with one another because of extreme interdependence at different levels. What happens in one place can be felt nearly everywhere and can have an impact on people living in other regions. Indeed, what facilitates contact between countries is the rapid means of transportation as well as advancements in technology that enabled the rise of television, the radio, the satellite, the camera, the computer and the internet in conveying information from a given part of the globe to far off locations. This allows people to be in touch with a number of languages without crossing the political borders. A further change concerns language use whether it is for personal, social and societal accommodation.

4. Algeria's Linguistic Profile

Because of the colonial past of Algeria, its linguistic situation is considered as a complicated one characterised by its Arabic diaglossic situation, the coexistence of a number of languages, of which two mother-tongues, namely Arabic and Berber with its regional dialectal varieties and a foreign language, viz. French. According to a number of Algerian linguists (Morsly, D. 1991, Taleb-Ibrahimi, K. 1995, Miliani, M. 1997, Cherrad, Y. 1998), Algeria is a multilingual country where these languages coexist; compete against one another. Both Arabic and Berber are used as official and national languages whereas French is used as a main foreign language owing to the colonial influence. Taleb-Ibrahimi (1995) summarises the Algerian linguistic situation by stating that:

> Algerian speakers live and evolve in a multilingual society where the languages which are spoken, written and used, namely dialectal Arabic, Berber, standard Arabic and French, live a difficult cohabitation which is marked by the relationship of competition and conflict between the two dominant norms (one by the constitutionality of its status as an official language, the other foreign but legitimized by its preeminence in economic life) on the one hand. On the other hand, there is a constant and stubborn stigmatization of popular speech. (Taleb-Ibrahimi, 1995, p.22)

In a similar vein, Chachou (2013, p.196) believes that there are stereotypical images tying classical Arabic to the Holy Qur'an, sacredness and the Arab identity. In addition, Algerian Arabic refers to the dialect used in everyday informal communication and Berber, which is used among the Berber speech communities, is a language with regional dialects that remind Algerians of their origin, whereas French is viewed negatively closely linked to the colonial period. Sometimes it is even associated with modernity because used in scientific domains (medical and technological studies), while continuing to be used for administrative purposes. Against such a background, the aforementioned languages have found a new competitor in a world language, English that has emerged in a number of domains because of globalization and other economic projects. This does not spell good news for the other two national languages but surely it is the French language that is feeling strongly the backlash from different sectors of the Algerian, not least is the political sphere where adverse voices are asking for a new approach to ranking foreign languages.

5. Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of enquiring the linguistic landscape of Oran, the researcher relied on photography of all types of signage. In fact, the focus is on its city centre where there is a higher density of signs, hoardings and display panels. Hence, this LL comprises various types of top-down and bottom-up signs, viz. monolingual, bilingual, hybrid and multilingual ones. These may be designed by either the authorities or private shop/business owners. The total number of signs that has been captured in this particular area is 220, among them 180 are private ones whereas 40 others ones belong to governmental institutions. The difference is that the public sector is strongly controlled whereas the private one is based on people's perceptions, artistic taste or likes. Yet, it is significant to mention that by looking at these specific numbers, one may notice that the top-down signs predominate this particular public sphere in comparison with

bottom-up ones. Details about the number of signs photographed are displayed in table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of top-down and bottom-up signs photographed in Oran city centre.

	The number of top-down signs	(%)	The number of bottom-up signs	(%)
Oran city centre	40	18.18	180	81.81

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

After collecting data, the researcher has found certain discrepancies between public signs and private ones in terms of language use in the public space of Oran city centre. Hence, the various languages displayed on these different types of signs are detailed in table 2 below. As far as top-down signs are concerned, the linguistic landscape is made of both monolingual and bilingual ones. Yet, out of 40 signs gathered, 12 signs display Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), while 12 others use the French language. There are also 26 MSA-French bilingual visible signboards. This importantly depicts the great emphasis on both Modern Standard Arabic and French by the authorities.

Table 2. The different types of signs in Oran city centre and the diverse languages displayed.

	Monolingual signs	Bilingual signs	Hybrid signs	Multilingual signs
Top-down signs	MSA 12 French 2	MSA – French 25		MSA – Berber – French 1
Bottom-up signs	MSA 12 French 68 English 19 Spanish 8 Turkish 1 AA 1 Italian 1	MSA – French 24 French – English 4 MSA – English 3 MSA – Spanish 1 MSA – AA 1 CA – MSA 1 AA – French 2	French – English 13 MSA – French 9 French – Spanish 2 English – Spanish 1 AA – French 1	MSA – French -English 3 MSA – AA –French 3 MSA – French – Spanish – Italian 1 AA – Berber – French 1

Interestingly enough figure 1 is an instance of a monolingual traffic sign issued by the government that sheds light on the presence of MSA. It displays the sentence /xɑ:s bɪ ʻsɪɑ:rɑ:t el mdʒlɪs ə'ʃeʕbɪ el beledɪ/ meaning "For the Cars of the Municipal People's Council". In this case, Arabic is the only language to be emphasised by the state without any other competitor. This is somehow expected. The use of this code is displayed in figure 2 below. This is a picture of a woman's clothes shop whose name is /hemset ə'ʃerq/ meaning "Whisper of the East". Indeed, the only appearing language here is MSA. These words thus occur in a decorative large type and an alluring golden colour in order to catch people's eyes. But one wonders whether colour and text go together to provide a planned effect, or is randomness the initiator of the same effect.

Figure 1. Traffic sign

Figure 2. Women's clothing shop signboard

The second language appearing on a number of monolingual signs is French. Yet, this is obviously illustrated by figure 3 that represents a shop selling cosmetics and other beauty products. It is called "Le Petit prince", which means "The Little Prince." This phrase is transcribed in white colour and placed on a predominant pink background to depict femininity. Isn't there an opposition between the word prince and the pink colour usually associated with feminity? Of course, the owner's intentionality is to be questioned. What is also worth mentioning is that French is employed deliberately. In this sense, it is considered as a prestigious language that may express softness and tenderness as it alludes to women and beauty. For this shop designer, the way that phrase is written may attract more customers, i.e. women and young girls, if not their curiosity driven by the opposition colour-text.

Figure 3. Cosmetic and beauty store sign

In a similar vein, some government signs emphasise the use of this specific foreign language. Indeed, this may be displayed by figure4 below that represents a no-parking signage. It also contains an extra message which reads "Reservé Véhicules SARL Sanitherm". In English, it implies that this area is reserved for LLC (Limited Liability Company) Sanitherm vehicles. This one is located next to a company specialised in industrial and professional tools and equipment. Nothing seems off-line, on the contrary, highly norm-driven, calling for no fancies even with a stern uniform sign.

Figure 4. Governmental traffic sign

English is the second foreign language that the researcher has encountered in the Oran city centre's public sphere. This is what figure 5 below reflects. It shows a shop-front with a big English lettering that is used as a name to attract as many customers as possible. It displays the word "Jewels". Yet, in this area, this code is focused on for naming classy clothing stores so as to looks fashionable. But one may ask if that is the message any passer-by will catch. Or will this trigger off sceptical or even sarcastic remarks?

Figure 5. Sign for young women's clothing store

Then, language use in downtown's linguistic landscape is not only restricted to Arabic being the official and national language of Algeria, but also French, despite its lingering image of   language of the colonizer, and English vested with a new highly prestigious status of first international language utilised worldwide, nearly a lingua franca. On the other side of the spectrum, Spanish has also its place in this public sphere since Oran was first occupied by the Spanish military forces that left traces of their culture and language. This can effectively be illustrated by figure 6 below, which stands at the front of a shop where women's shoes, boots and sandals are sold. Indeed, when facing it, one can read the phrase "Zapatos Hispanitas" whose meaning is "Hispanic Shoes." In order to look shining and to attract the attention of passers-by, this golden large decorative writing has been put on a black background. It essentially highlights the shoe brand "Hispanita" that comes from Spain. This is also to remind visitors of such heritage and reclaim it. This is a view that is shared between the older generations.

Figure 6. Front of shoes' store for young girls

In addition to the aforementioned codes, Italian is considered as part of this particular LL though it has been seen on very few façades in the city centre. It is because this language has nothing to do with the Algerian history, culture and identity. This may be confirmed by figure 7 below. In this regard, this picture depicts a catching shop sign with the phrase "Casa Mia" meaning "My House". In this shop, people can purchase linens, pillows and suitcases, i.e. it is the destination of various individuals and couples who intend to equip their homes with any type of tissue, duvet, bed sheet, curtain and even suitcases or other items used for carrying clothes during their trips. The signboard's colour is beige. It stands for calmness, relaxation, and elegance often associated with Italians. It is a way to make customers trust in the sold products and feel safe, comfortable and satisfied. Besides the written text, there is the drawing of a home used as an illustration to show people that this store has to do with household items and decor, especially those who cannot understand Italian but who like the exotic flavour that comes with the language.

Figure 7. Sign for shop trading in linens and suitcases

Besides, LL witnesses the presence of some other languages just like Turkish and Algerian Arabic (AA), though they are very rare. For instance, the researcher has found that AA, which is the mother tongue of a majority of Algerians, can only be visible on one monolingual sign owing to the fact that it is first a spoken language. The way it is used is illustrated by figure 8 below

that depicts a shop selling women's clothes and lingerie. Indeed, its front shows the lettering "griffa" that slips from the French word "une griffe" into spoken Arabic with a slight modification; the vowel /ʌ/ is added to its end in order to refer to its grammatical gender. This term is commonly used among Algerians especially the youth during informal daily conversations. Yet, the word "griffa" means a brand or a designer label. It is used so as to refer to the high-quality products that one can find in this shop, i.e. the brand-name garments. What may be noticed here is that Latin characters are preferred for transcribing this word. It is because most of the customers targeted by this sign are young women and even young couples who are supposed to be able to communicate in Algerian Arabic and text one another using these specific letters. This language is therefore considered to be understood by the targeted customers as it is their mother tongue. Such a lexical borrowing is a technique to enter the world of the youth. The use of such a calque is a phenomenon that is not rare in the LL.

Figure 8. Sign for boutique selling women's clothes and lingerie

As far as bilingual signs are concerned, only Modern Standard Arabic-French bilingualism is preferred by the state. Indeed, it represents 62.5% of top-down signage. This may be felt by standing in front of the façade of a governmental institution like the bank. The phrase that is visible on its wall occurs in both MSA and French. It reads as "the National Bank of Algeria" (see figure 9 below). It is worth mentioning that one may notice that both MSA and French are considered by the state since they are used side by side so as to provide laypeople, with some useful information about this specific institution. However, what is clearly observable is that Arabic is emphasised by the Algerian authorities as it is used at the top of this type of signboard while French is written at its bottom. That is, these two codes are used and understood by almost all Algerians but Arabic is considered to be of gigantic importance in comparison with French. This is so because a number of reforms have targeted Arabic as the main language to be taught and learned (in particular the 1991 law on the generalisation of the national language).

Figure 9. Algerian bank's signboard

Along the same lines, this particular kind of bilingualism is preferred by a number of shop/business owners and restaurant proprietors surely for natives but also tourists. In this region, there are 24 private bilingual signs. They represent 13.33% of the private signs photographed. Figure 10, for example, sheds light on a restaurant named "The Bosphorus Restaurant." This name appears in Modern Standard Arabic at the top of this sign and in French at its bottom. Hence, unlike French, the higher position of Arabic on this board indicates the great importance this language has among Algerians in general. The percentage of French-speaking people has diminished over the years but is still spoken widely, whether by education or even for prestige.

Figure N° 10. Restaurant's sign

Oran city centre is also rife with other bilingual private signs displaying other codes, viz. French-English 4 (2.22%), MSA–English 3 (1.66%), French–English 4 (2.22%), AA–French 2 (1.11%), MSA–Spanish 1 (0.55%), MSA–AA 1 (0.55%) and CA–MSA 1 (0.55%). Out of 180 private signs, there are 26 hybrid ones (14.44%). They consist of French–English 13 (7.22%), MSA–French 9

(5%), French–Spanish 2 (1.11%), English–Spanish 1 (0.55%) and AA–French 1 (0.55%).

An instance of hybrid signs exhibiting Algerian Arabic and French is shown in figure 11 below. This is a boutique where women's shoes, high heels, garments and bags are sold with the name "Prix fou مهبول". The two French words here may be translated into Crazy price. By the way, "Prix" is written at the top in bold style owing to the fact that it is also used by Algerians in Colloquial Arabic and "مهبول" signifies "crazy" or "mad" too. What this shop owner wants to explain is that the prices are low cheap to the point that it is unbelievable. Even the writing does not follow the normalcy one expects in a shop sign. Its reading is not made easy either with the miw of language and the different combinations

Figure 11. Sign for shop selling women's shoes, garments and bags

Furthermore, bottom-up signboards that are visible in this LL are also characterised by multilingualism. Though they are not predominant, there is a total number of 8 multilingual signs designed by shop/restaurant owners. In fact, they depict a small percentage of private signboards, i.e. 4.44%. Accordingly, there are 3 MSA – French –English signs (1.66%), 3 MSA – AA – French signs (1.66%), 1 MSA – French – Spanish –Italian signs (0.55%), 1 AA – Berber – French (0.55%). Out of 40 top-down signs, there is only 1 (2.5%) that is characterised by multilingualism. Figure 12 below illustrates a public company whose façade consists of three languages. Indeed, its name which is "Algerian Telecom" occurs in both MSA at the top and French at the bottom of its right-hand side. By contrast, the left part of this board displays the phrase "the Commercial Agency" in both Modern Standard Arabic and Tamazight, i.e. Tifinagh alphabet. They importantly appear in big and bold characters since this is a governmental agency and Arabic and Berber are considered as the Official

and national languages of the state. French also comes into view though it is a bit smaller in size owing to the fact that it has no official status but it is the most widespread and understandable foreign language in Algeria. What could also attract shoppers is the exhibited multilingualism Algeria once knew.

Figure 12. Algeria Telecommunications Corporation signboard

In the same vein, this multilingual configuration is pictured by Figure 13 below. It exhibits a restaurant whose name is "La Corrida." In fact, this term, which belongs to the Spanish language, signifies "Bullfight." This is the reason lying behind the use of Spanish. Furthermore, the word "restaurant" appears on the right and left sides of this signboard in Arabic and French, respectively. Yet, this allows one to read the phrase "La Corrida Restaurant" by having a mix of Arabic-Spanish and French-Spanish languages. Thus, this specific language use makes clear that, in this region, MSA, French and Spanish are of immense importance. However, among these three languages Spanish appears to be the most important one by being chosen as the name of this restaurant and being put in the centre of the sign. But this also augurs of what one might eat in such a place.

Figure 13. Restaurant's signboard

The abovementioned data analysis attempts to clarify the way government signs differ from private ones in terms of language use. The first type of signs is primarily made of MSA being the official and national language of Algeria in addition to French. The idea carried by the first language is the mandatory aspect of some signs. The second type, on the other hand, consists of a number of

languages including the ones emphasised by the authorities. These are English which is widespread within this public sphere because of the hegemony of the language in economic matters, while Spanish is present to remind us of Oran's historical past. This clarifies that this language is still part of this city because the Spanish people used to live there. Moreover, this LL refers to the existence of other tongues though they rarely appear such as Algerian Arabic for obvious reasons, Classical Arabic occurs because of religious reasons, Turkish comes into view with the arrival of some cooks and individuals who have become proprietors of some restaurants and businesses and Italian appears in very few instances. What is surprising among all these languages is the insignificant use of Berber. Oran is known to be hosting a large Berber community. Despite the fact that it is formally recognised as an official and national language of Algeria just like Arabic, it is employed only on two signboards, a private and a governmental one. But this is expected to develop with more institutional attention to this official language.

Conclusion

Nowadays, in this age of globalisation, the world has shrunk and then the distances between diverse countries have become shorter. This led to changes in different corners of the world. Hence, an Algerian metropolis called Oran has not been exempt from this change in terms of languages use or mix. Indeed, the public space has turned into an arena where a number of languages coexist even if one sees them competing against one another for a number of reasons not always admissible. The policy implemented by the Algerian authorities demonstrates preference for MSA that is the official and national language of the country forgetting Berber. Conversely, French is still considered wrongly as the main foreign language. Shop/business owners do not show disagreement with their government but express implicitly their need for other tongues so as to attract and interest as many customers as possible. In addition to the remarkable use of MSA and French on private signs, English and Spanish are noticeably included because of the great importance they have in the world. Thus, many individuals prefer using those languages instead of others as they believe that, in this globalised world, these codes may stimulate and influence people. They also believe that their use brings them up to date and close to innovations that make their shops and restaurants more salient in a real jungle of signs not always controlled by the state. The use of English, for instance may be beneficial and have an impact on people since it is considered as a universal language. In sum, unlike the Algerian authorities that are imposing the use of MSA and French on the signs that are visible in Oran public space,

shop/business owners are communicating a strong message through their contribution to the making of a multilingual linguistic landscape. In other words, those individuals are turning this particular city centre to a linguistically eclectic area decorated with divergent tongues. In fact, they are saying that, in addition to MSA and French that occur on a number of signs, it is essentially important to focus on other languages since Oran has become part of this globalised world. A port open to the influences from across the world with which the authorities have problems regulating.

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Abstract

Nowadays, investigating the linguistic landscape of a particular area has become of gigantic importance. It has captured the interest of a number of scholars around the world. In sociolinguistics, this field of study is essentially connected with language policy. This paper attempts to enquire the relationship between these two concepts. Hence, it focuses on the city of Oran because of the high stature it has in Algeria. As far as language use is concerned, this research tries to reveal the similarities and discrepancies between governmental signs and private ones in Oran city centre which is characterized by the density of signboards. In fact, this gives an insight into the language policy implemented by the state and individual practices, i.e. the languages preferred by shop-owners while persuading various customers and passers-by in an era of globalization.

Keywords

Linguistic Landscape, language diversity, Algeria, Oran city centre, globalization.

مستخلص

في هذه الأيام، أصبحت دراسة المشهد اللغوي لمنطقة معينة ذات أهمية بالغة وقد ألفتت اهتمام عدد من الباحثين و الأكاديميين من جميع أنحاء العالم. فيما يخص اللسانيات الاجتماعية، قد يرتبط هذا المجال الدراسي أساسا مع السياسة اللغوية. في الواقع، تحاول هذه المقالة البحث عن العلاقة بين هذين المفهومين. ومن ثم، فإنها تركز على مدينة وهران بسبب المكانة العالية التي تتمتع بها في الجزائر. وفيما يخص الاستخدام اللغوي، يحاول هذا البحث الكشف عن أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين اللافتات الحكومية و الخاصة المتواجدة في وسط مدينة وهران و التي تتميز بكثافة اللوحاتة و اللافتات. قد يمكن ذلك من إعطاء نظرة ثاقبة عن السياسة اللغوية المنفذة من طرف السلطات والممارسات الفردية، أي اللغات التي يفضل أصحاب المحلات كتابتها من أجل إقناع مختلف الزبائن والمارة على زيارتهم في عصر العولمة.

كلمات مفتاحيّة

المشهد اللغوي ، تنوع اللغات ، الجزائر، وسط مدينة وهران ، العولمة.

Résumé

De nos jours, l'étude du paysage linguistique d'une région particulière est devenue d'une importance primordiale. Elle a suscité l'intérêt d'un certain nombre de chercheurs dans le monde entier. En sociolinguistique, ce domaine d'étude est essentiellement lié à la politique linguistique. Le présent article tente d'examiner la relation entre ces deux concepts. Ainsi, il se concentre sur la ville d'Oran en raison de la grande stature qu'elle a en Algérie. En ce qui concerne l'utilisation de la langue, cette recherche tente de révéler les similitudes et les

différences entre panneaux gouvernementaux et privés dans le centre ville d'Oran qui se caractérise par la densité des enseignes. En fait, cela donne un aperçu de la politique linguistique mise en œuvre par l'État et des pratiques individuelles, c'est-à-dire les langues préférées par les commerçants tout en persuadant les divers clients et les passants à l'ère de la mondialisation.

Mot-clés

Paysage linguistique, diversité des langues, Algérie, centre ville d'Oran, mondialisation.