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Taking stock of an ever-widening landscape

Durk Gorter and Jasone Cenoz, *A Panorama of Linguistic Landscape Studies*

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The most apposite summary of this excellent book arguably comes in its final sentence, where Gorter and Cenoz warn that studying signage, once you get started, 'may never let you go'. This has demonstrably been the case for these two pioneers and stalwarts of linguistic landscape (LL) research, whose latest 'panorama' complements two other recent volumes (Kallen 2023; Blackwood et al. 2024) in taking stock of the discipline from its origins to its most recent developments. The book achieves this first by chronologising the field's early history and the theoretical underpinnings to its quantitative and qualitative methods (chs. 1–4), including a discussion on photography and its role in data collection (ch. 5). The second half of the book is structured along key themes of interest: multilingualism (ch. 6), minority languages (ch. 7), language policy (ch. 8), English throughout the world (ch. 9), and education (ch. 10). This leads to a brief discussion of onomastics and the roles of naming both languages themselves and placenames in the LL (ch. 11). The final chapter touches on some areas beyond the immediate scope of the book and looks forward to emerging areas of interest.

The introduction opens with an intriguing challenge to the mythologies that have sprung up around LL as a discipline, including the use and origins of *linguistic landscape* itself. The authors mount a robust criticism of many (this reviewer included!) who have shown an occasional tendency to misattribute 'first use' status to *that widely cited paper* of Landry and Bourhis (1997). As the authors explain in detail in ch. 2, interest in signs and even description of this interest as 'linguistic landscape' (in different languages) in fact far predates the 1990s. A discussion follows of the various alternatives that have emerged – *semiotic landscape*, *semiotoscape*, *linguistic/semiotic landscape* – as well as criticism of the term *landscape*. This has variously been substituted with *ethnoscape*, *mediascape*, *technoscape*, *skinscape*, and *smellscape*: many of which are explored further in the remaining chapters.

The third and fourth chapters, dedicated to theoretical approaches and quantitative and qualitative research methods, pay further testimony to the 'many-sidedness' (p. 57) of the field, and indeed to the authors' position that the diverse backgrounds from which researchers have approached what is (often to them) a new discipline has enriched it. The authors identify four fundamental concerns which they suggest underpin much of the work thus far: ethnolinguistic vitality, the sociological approach first proposed by Ben–Rafael et al. (2006), frame analysis, and geosemiotics. Theorisations of space and pragmatics are apt additions, especially given the growing interest with actors' behaviours in different types of space. Following a section on diachronicity and analyses of change, there follows a summary of 'other' perspectives of interest: economics, cultural geography, and policy sciences. The authors then re-propose their Multilingual Inequalities in Public Spaces (MIPS) model. While they position this as a 'new research agenda for linguistic landscape studies' (p. 81), MIPS is arguably a (very useful) summary of key theoretical concerns rather than an entire re-working of the LL approach.

A summarising line is likewise taken in the following chapter with regards to quantitative methods, where the authors argue for a generalisation of six principal categories for coding signs. The criticism of such generalisations – fundamental to any

empirical study – is reasonable, and leads logically to the section on qualitative LL methods. LL novices who are excited by the possibility of studying large-scale trends will appreciate the nuance with which the two approaches are addressed here, as well as the discussion on their potential for combination and the 'unresolved issues' (p. 113) that lie therein. Ch. 5 develops the discussion on methods of collecting and analysing LL data, drawing attention to photography and videorecording with some useful contextualisation of the photographer-researcher and using photos and videos as data. The participatory angle has proven important for the field too, and is highlighted in extended discussions of walking tours, crowdsourced data (such as social media or GPS mapping), and eye-tracking.

Multilingualism, minority languages, and language policy are the themes of chapters 6, 7, and 8, through which Gorter and Cenoz make the case for translanguaging (and related concepts) to encompass LL data. An interesting debate follows on script mixing (the process of writing grammatically in one language while using a visual style designed to look like another), for example the use of orthographical features such as ⟨å⟩ or ⟨æ⟩ to make shop fronts in Brooklyn, New York look more 'Nordic' (p. 167). The labelling in much of the literature of this as 'faux' (e.g. 'faux Arabic', p. 166) could be criticised further, since this arguably carries an undesirable association with falseness or inadequacy which is not especially relevant under the supposedly unbounded frameworks of multilingualism discussed above. The authors' suggestion of 'mimicry' improves on this, though this still potentially hints at a sense of inauthenticity, when in many cases sign-writers may be availing themselves of multilingual resources in an inclusive and holistic way.

Sign creators combine scripts and languages for all sorts of reasons, though strategic commercial interest, or commodification, is a theme that has become central in the field. The authors discuss this in a brief section in ch. 7 on the visibility of minority languages, entitled 'commodification and tokenism'. This supplements a review of 24 case studies exploring the visibility of minority and minoritised languages in settings across the globe, and what this visibility means for ethnolinguistic vitality and speaker empowerment. There is a dedicated section on Chinatowns here, which provides an authoritative overview of this now well-established sub-field of LL studies. Almost all LL work engages with language policy and planning (LPP) on some level, and not just the research dealing with minority/majority hierarchies. In ch. 8 the authors draw important links between pioneering LPP work by scholars such as Ricento, Spolsky, and Shohamy and the applications of their ideas to LL studies, illustrating emergent debates and new ideas through reflections of studies carried out in Canada, Belgium, the Basque Country and the Post-Soviet states.

Attention is next turned to English, argued in the aptly named ch. 9 ('English Can be Seen Everywhere') to be as fundamental to LL studies as language policy. Maintaining that English is likely visible on any shopping street in any city in the world, the authors justify the significance of LL studies for ongoing debates around globalisation, both within and beyond academia. LL newcomers familiar with World Englishes research will appreciate the framing within Kachru's circle model, especially since, for at least a decade now, the growth of LL studies beyond Europe and North America has been exponential. The authors highlight work exploring English in LLs in numerous outer- and expanding circle settings. They also touch on places where English is absent, inviting the reader to consider that invisibility in the LL can be as impactful as visibility.

The penultimate two chapters address distinct themes within the broader volume: educational contexts (ch. 10) and place-naming (ch. 11). The former is a cornerstone of the field, and applied linguists of various appetites will benefit from the contrastive analysis of research into the 'schoolscapes' of educational settings, as well as the potential for the LL to influence language learning and multilingual awareness. Multilingual street signs are something of a totem for many LL scholars, and these are discussed in ch. 11, along with a brief review of the debates around named languages and multilingualism. In the final chapter, the authors offer their impressions of where the field might be heading next. They alert the reader to important areas of growth not covered in the previous chapters, such as borders, gentrification, gender and sexuality, and graffiti. The discussion on uniformity (pp. 391–3) ties together several themes from earlier in the book, notably English, globalisation, and homogenisation; and the authors return here to their MIPS model, querying its application for research questions concerning the social (in)equality of languages.

Readers looking for a detailed, critical appraisal of LL research will be very well-served by this book. Great credit must be given in particular for its gargantuan list of references, some 50 pages long, which alone offers a wide panorama of a huge amount of the LL literature published to date. Another plus is the inclusion of almost 90 high-resolution colour images in the paperback version – of great use to the multimodal discussions in the volume and indicative of a rare authorial victory in academic publishing – and a series of invaluable 'boxes's providing short summaries, definitions, and contextualisations. There is no new research in this book, but it will be of great value both to newcomers seeking an introduction to LL studies, and old hands looking to refresh or expand their expertise. For anyone even remotely interested in the mechanics of language, identity, and power in public spaces, this book is undoubtedly a must-have.

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