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## Linguistic landscape as an object of sociolinguistic studies of a city

### Abstract

The study of the linguistic landscape of cities is currently one of the actively developing areas of modern linguistics. The linguistic landscape is considered in the article as an object of sociolinguistic research; the subject of these studies is the language of the city, its representation in the public communicative environment in the form of signs, inscriptions, advertising billboards and other visual forms of written language demonstration. The main methods of studying the language of the city are observation and analysis; the purpose of the study is to identify the means and ways of personal expression, and as a result, their recording in the linguistic space of the city. Self-expression of a person in the communicative environment of the city happens with the use of more and more non-trivial ways and linguistic and extralinguistic means in order to attract the attention of a certain target audience, a potential consumer of a product or service.

The study of the linguistic landscapes of the city pursues the goal of understanding public multilingualism from the standpoint of the choice of a language, languages hierarchy, the phenomenon of language contacts, and the regulation of the written recording of languages. The linguistic landscape is, therefore, a kind of indicator of the language policy of society in relation to the languages of the peoples living in a given territory.

The authors conclude that it is the linguistic landscape that is the most expressive and convincing indicator of linguistic diversity in a particular area. It is symbolic and can serve as a certain indicator of the mood of certain groups in society and regions. The degree and density of the presence of the particular language in the linguistic landscape is always an indicator of the significance, strength, and relevance of a language in society.

*Keywords:* sociolinguistics, linguistic landscape, multilingualism, city language, language policy.

### Introduction

Linguistic changes taking place in society make it possible to fully trace globalization and linguistic processes interactively. This interaction, in general, determines the linguistic state of society, the study of which is one of the primary tasks of modern sociolinguistics.

The language processes and the transformation of the linguistic situation are due to the influence of a number of extralinguistic factors. The key factors are the language policy of the state, aimed at regulating language relations within a particular society, as well as the language ideology of the state. The leading factors are the language policy of the state, aimed at regulating language relations within a particular society, as well as the linguistic ideology of the state.

The linguistic ideology means metalinguistic and metapragmatic discourses, linguistic attitudes, language usages or the regulation of linguistic use. It is expressed, on the one hand in laws or linguistic norms, but on the other hand in unwritten customs and traditions or in relations of authorities [1].

The linguistic state of any society is a reflection of the linguistic policy and, above all, the linguistic ideology of the state. An important indicator of linguistic ideology, as it is known, is the presence or absence of a language in public places, first of all, this refers to the so-called "visibility" of languages, i.e. their written demonstration. In this regard, Western linguistics uses the term linguistic landscape, which is understood as any form of public display of a written language [1, P.76].

The linguistic landscape as an object of sociolinguistic research became the subject of study in the late 1970s, while its study was sporadic. Only at the beginning of the 21st century linguistic landscapes became the subject of massive research interest in language planning, sociology, social psychology, etc. What caused this research interest?

By linguistic landscape is meant the representativity of diverse languages in public spaces in multilingual cities or regions of the world. In the context of multilingual cities, this concept is detailed as the ratio of languages, in which signs, nameplates on public buildings, outdoor advertising, road signs and signboards, plaques, etc. are drawn up. In an extended sense, this concept reflects the specific balance of languages in the public urbanized communication space.

The term "linguistic landscape" is used in linguistics to describe multilingualism in different regions, metropolitan cities. The linguistic landscape is "the language of roadside poster boards, billboards, street and

square name plates, signs on shops and public institutions". It executes two main functions: informative and symbolic". In other words, the linguistic landscape is "the usage of written language in the urban sphere" [2].

### **Materials and methods**

At the present time, the study of the language of the city is one of the actively developing directions of modern linguistics. It is socially oriented, carried out in the linguoculturological, pragmatic aspects. City's language learning perfectly demonstrates new trends in the life of society, which is associated with the strengthening of the personal principle, the spontaneity of communication, the desire for a language game, variability, with the liberalization of the language.

The analysis of the language of the city presupposes answering the question what means and ways help a person to express himself or herself and how the result of this process becomes settled in the linguistic space of the city. At present, the interest in city names is growing due to the abundance of linguistic material and the possibility of its diverse study.

The purpose of research on linguistic landscapes is to study the correlation between language policy and practice in the use of written language in public space, and in multilingual contexts, such as most modern cities, scientists pay particular attention to the relationship of languages and potential language conflicts [3].

Sociolinguistics as a young science borrows the main classical research methods from sociology and linguistics. So, one of the classic research methods in sociolinguistics is the observation method mainly used for obtaining material. Therefore, observation is recognized as the most effective way to study linguistic processes taking place in multilingual societies.

Observation of linguistic landscapes aims at understanding social multilingualism from the perspective of language choice, language hierarchy, the phenomenon of language contacts, regulation and aspects of the written recording of languages [4]. Thus, it is possible to trace the extent to which the language policy in relation to the languages of peoples living in a certain territory is expressed in the linguistic landscape. For example, the famous linguist, Professor Bernard Spolsky considers the analysis of public multilingual inscriptions and signs as a part of the components of language practices included in his theory of language policy [5].

The main principle of the study of linguistic landscapes is the representativeness of the material. To ensure representativeness, approaches such as sampling are usually used, i.e. systematic sampling or systematic collection. Systematic sampling is more often used to compare different cities or areas of the same city. Systematic collection aims to collect all inscriptions in one district or on a specific street. The inscriptions are usually compiled by using digital photography and then placed in a corpus (database). Each picture/ inscription has its own code, including the place and time when the inscription was photographed, languages, material and type of inscription. Analysis of the material allows us to distinguish temporary inscriptions from permanent ones. The types of inscription are official, commercial, informal. Quantitative and qualitative analyzes of such corpuses are carried out taking into account both informational and symbolic functions of linguistic landscapes [6].

The informational function of the linguistic landscape involves determining of the languages concentrated in a certain area, their functional distribution, the correlation between different groups of languages. While the symbolic function of the linguistic landscape is focused on the individual identification of a person on ethnic grounds.

The analysis of the informational function begins by identifying all languages and language combinations used in the inscriptions and signs. Scientists then evaluate the percentage of languages in official inscriptions reflecting top-down language policy and commercial and unofficial inscriptions reflecting bottom-up language practice [7; 8]. For example, in studies of the near abroad analyses show that the state policy of monolingualism influences first of all the official inscriptions, while in the unofficial inscriptions of post-Soviet cities multilingualism dominates [6, P. 498].

Multilingual inscriptions are also analyzed in terms of the presentation of information. The information is divided into the following types: duplicative (identical texts in all languages), fragmentary (only one part of the text in one language is translated into another), intersecting (texts have both a common part and different information) and complementary (texts in two languages give different information) [9]. This analysis allows you to understand the target addressees of certain inscriptions better. Thus, for example, a complementary presentation usually implies bilingual addressees, as well as a language game, where the inscriptions mix two fonts or two languages [10].

In addition to the informational function, the inscriptions also have symbolic functions. The analysis of symbolic functions includes the choice of language, visual hierarchy, i.e. the order of presentation of languages, as well as color, font, and graphic style as potential code preference for certain languages and symbolic markers of identity. In multilingual contexts, attention is also paid to languages that was meant to be used and nevertheless wasn't used in the inscription [6, C. 498]. For example, the colors of the national flag of Kazakhstan (blue and yellow), photographs of the Kazakh horse breed, yurt and its structural parts, steppe landscapes, such areas as Sary Arka, Altai, Alatau, Aral, the Caspian and other can be considered as symbolic markers of Kazakhstan's identity. The language of the inscriptions is also an object of analysis and an invaluable aid in determining the authors of the inscriptions.

For maximum efficiency the collection of information on language landscapes should be part of a comprehensive research, including field research, surveys and interviews [10, P. 107].

Ethnographic fieldwork usually uses a combination of methods: overt observation, compilation of written materials (websites, forums, brochures, and language landscapes), systematic observation of communicative behavior and interviews.

Having established the degree of prevalence and scope of demand for the language, the researchers analyze the speech behavior of language speakers through surveys and interviews. To draw up a complete picture, both conversational formal (structured according to a pre-compiled questionnaire) and informal interviews are used. The first goal of sociolinguistic interviews is to determine the function of language use. The second goal of the interview is to find out the opinion of the informants about in what speech situations and why they or society, in general, use one or another language. The third goal of the interview is to establish who is engaged in language work and whether there is a demand for teaching a particular language.

The information obtained during the interview is undoubtedly important for compiling a complete picture, but it must be remembered that in order to fully understand the reasons for the commodification of a language, an analysis of secondary data is necessary, i.e. prepared data, as the results of previous research, publications in professional journals, articles in the media, as well as the data collected and published by government agencies (e.g. population census) and private agencies [6, P. 505].

Population censuses allow researchers to determine the percentage of titular and non-titular nations (in multilingual societies) residing in a given locality in relation to the total population. Together with the results of field research, this data helps to determine who uses what languages in a given area, and who are the authors and target audience of inscriptions and signs in the linguistic landscape of the city.

### **Results**

Modern researchers recognize that it is the linguistic landscape that gives a vivid concept of the ideas of multilingualism that really exist in the minds of the population [11]. It is symbolic and can serve as a certain indicator of the mood of certain groups in society and regions. Therefore, linguistic signs presented in public places are considered as tools of language policy that specify the ideology in relation to certain languages. With their help it is possible to publicly demonstrate rejection of certain languages: often occurring cases are painting or erasing inscriptions, or parts of a multilingual inscription on signs, up to their removal.

Linguistic landscapes demonstrate how and to what extent certain linguistic groups are represented in society in comparison with other languages. The installation of bilingual and multilingual signposts of settlements is not carried out in order to facilitate understanding of the names of settlements (since, as a rule, the names of settlements and other place names in different languages sound the same: transliteration or transcription is often used in their translation), but as a symbolic act of language recognition.

“The linguistic landscape reflects the linguistic alignment in society (the use of special languages), as well as dynamic processes between the language and its users” [12]. Specific languages are referred to here as registers of speech that speakers choose according to their roles. “Each register helps to express its identity at a specific time or place – how you strive to present yourself to others” [13].

### **Discussion**

According to scientists, the linguistic landscape serves as an important area for the study of city objects. There are a number of studies of the linguistic landscape by both domestic and foreign scientists. Thus, the category of the concept of “landscape” is considered by K.M. Veremiyeva in her works [14], G.Zh. Azanbayeva [15] studies the landscape in the linguistic view of the world, N.Yu. Zamyatina [16] highlights the basic concepts of the landscape.

The language of the city as a new object of linguistic research is an indicator of “a change in social behavior models and the emergence of new value orientations” [17]. It is studied by the so-called science of the city - philological urbanology, which considers as a subject of research “complex urban communication networks: oral urban speech (including urban vernacular, youth jargon, and corporate languages), written texts (names of city objects, trade signs, outdoor advertisements, graffiti, street advertisements, etc.” [11, P. 71]. The need to study the language of the city in relation to the social stratification of the urban population was noted by B.A. Larin: “The content of the linguistic history of a big city is in the struggle of languages, reflecting the incessant clash and crossing of mixed cultures in it” [11, P. 190].

Reflecting the objective urban space, the language of the city includes the space of names, covering a vast area of different names. These are the names of city objects (microdistricts, streets, squares, houses, industrial, commercial and cultural institutions), which can be conditionally divided into two groups: official (registered in legal, tax documents and on signs) and unofficial (colloquial equivalents of official names).

### **Conclusion**

Thus, linguistic landscapes are the totality of all signs and texts that make up the linguistic face of modern cities, including official (for example, street name plates, road signs, information boards, memorial boards), commercial (signs, posters, billboards) and unofficial inscriptions (announcements, graffiti, posters).

The linguistic landscape is the most expressive and convincing indicator of linguistic diversity in a particular locality. Therefore, the presence of languages in bilingual or multilingual inscriptions and signs, as well as the order of languages in them, perform a very important symbolic function for language speakers. The degree and density of the presence of a particular language in the linguistic landscape is always an indicator of the significance, strength, and relevance of the language in society. Namely, from this position that linguistic landscapes act as an object of research in sociolinguistics, in particular, in the study of the language of the city.

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#### **Лингвистикалық ландшафт – қаланың әлеуметтік лингвистикалық зерттеу объектісі ретінде**

Қаланың лингвистикалық ландшафтын зерттеу – қазіргі лингвистиканың белсенді дамып келе жатқан бағыттарының бірі. Мақалада лингвистикалық ландшафт социолингвистикалық зерттеулердің объектісі ретінде қарастырылып, аталмыш зерттеудің пәні - қала «тілі», оның қоғамдық коммуникативтік кеңістіктегі маңдайшалары, жазулары, жарнамалық билбордтар және тілді жазбаша түрде көрсетудің басқа да көрнекі нысандары ұсынылады. Қала «тілін» зерттеудің негізгі әдістері - бақылау және талдау; зерттеудің мақсаты - адамның өзін-өзі көрсете алу құралдары мен тәсілдерін анықтау, нәтижесі – қала «тілін» қаланың тілдік кеңістігінде бекіту болып табылады. Қаланың коммуникативтік кеңістігінде адамның өзін-өзі көрсетуі белгілі бір аудиторияның, өнім мен қызметті әлеуетті тұтынушының назарын аударуға лингвистикалық және экстралингвистикалық әдістер мен құралдарды қолдану мақсатында іске асырылады.

Қаланың лингвистикалық ландшафтарын зерттеу қоғамдық көптілділікті түсіну мақсатында тілді таңдау, тілдер иерархиясы, тілдік байланыстар феномені, тілдерді жазбаша тіркеуді реттеу тұрғысынан қарастырылады. Сондықтан лингвистикалық ландшафт осы аумақта тұратын халықтар тілдеріне қатысты қоғамның тіл саясатының өзіндік көрсеткіші болып отыр.

Авторлар белгілі бір аймақтағы тілдік әртүрліліктің ең маңызды және сенімді көрсеткіші - лингвистикалық ландшафт екендігін тұжырымдады. Символдық тұрғыда, лингвистикалық ландшафт – жергілікті қоғам мен аймақтың жекелеген топтарының ахуалын білдіретін белгілі бір көрсеткіш. Лингвистикалық ландшафтта белгілі бір тілдің дәрежесі мен қолдану жиілігінің болуы, үнемі сол қоғамдағы тілдің маңызын, ықпалы мен релеванттылығының көрсеткіші болып табылады.

Түйін сөздер: социолингвистика, лингвистикалық ландшафт, көптілділік, қала тілі, тіл саясаты.

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#### **Лингвистический ландшафт как объект социолингвистических исследований города**

Изучение лингвистического ландшафта городов является в настоящее время одним из активно развивающихся направлений современной лингвистики. Лингвистический ландшафт рассматривается в статье в качестве объекта социолингвистических исследований. Предметом данных исследований выступает язык города, его представленность в общественном коммуникативном пространстве в виде вывесок, надписей, рекламных билбордов и других наглядных форм письменной демонстрации языка. Основными методами исследования языка города выступают наблюдение и анализ. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении средств и способов самовыражения человека и, как результат, их фиксация в языковом пространстве города. Самовыражение человека в коммуникативном пространстве города

происходит с использованием нетривиальных способов и средств, лингвистических и экстралингвистических с целью привлечения внимания целевой аудитории, потенциального потребителя товара или услуги.

Исследование лингвистических ландшафтов города преследует своей целью осмысление общественного многоязычия с позиции выбора языка, иерархии языков, феномена языковых контактов, регулирования письменной фиксации языков. Лингвистический ландшафт является, таким образом, своеобразным индикатором языковой политики социума в отношении языков народов, проживающих на данной территории.

Авторы приходят к выводу, что именно лингвистический ландшафт является наиболее выразительным и убедительным индикатором языкового многообразия в определенной местности. Он символичен и может служить определенным индикатором настроений отдельных групп общества и регионов. Степень и плотность присутствия конкретного языка в лингвистическом ландшафте всегда есть показатель значимости, силы, релевантности языка в социуме.

Ключевые слова: социолингвистика, лингвистический ландшафт, многоязычие, язык города, языковая политика.

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