BOOK REVIEW

Robert Blackwood, Elizabeth Lanza, and Hirut Woldemariam (Eds.). *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2016. 288 pages.

Scholarly and linguistic interest in language choice in the public sphere is not an entirely new topic of study—starting in the late 1970s a few scholars produced sociolinguistic studies of language choice in multilingual settings, and in the 1980s and 90s examinations of the role of global English and multilingualism in advertising began to appear. In the early 2000s this nascent field of study was beginning to coalesce around the term "Linguistic Landscape" as used by Landry and Bourhis (1997). A 2002 collection of articles about language in India (Itagi and Singh, Eds.), contains a few chapters that addressed this conception of Linguistic Landscape (LL), but by 2005 when Gorter reviewed the volume edited by Itagi and Singh, he was able to write, "Across the world the interest in the study of LL is growing" (Gorter, 2005: 200), and it has continued to grow ever since. The special issue of the *International Journal of Multilingualism*, Vol 3, Issue 1, 2006 edited by Gorter and later republished in book format by Multilingual Matters (2006), laid a more solid foundation for LL studies. While LL research was the topic of presentations and colloquia at several conferences, it was the creation of an annual international LL Workshop that led to some of the most influential studies in the new interdisciplinary field. The inaugural workshop, in Tel Aviv in 2008, resulted in the first extensive collection of LL studies edited by Shohamy and Gorter (2009), *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*. The second workshop, in

Siena in 2009, led to Shohamy, Ben-Rafael, and Barni's (2010) collection *Linguistic Landscape in the City*. Work originating in the Strausbourg 2010 workshop was edited by Helot, Barni, Janssens, and Bagna and published as *Linguistic Landscapes, Multilingualism and Social Change* (2012). As the field matured, more focused volumes emerged with *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space* (Jaworski and Thurlow, Eds., 2010), *Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape* (Gorter, Marten, and Van Mensel, Eds., 2012), *Dimensions of Sociolinguistic Landscapes in Europe* (Laitinen and Zabrodskaja, Eds., 2015), and *Conflict, Exclusion and Dissent in the Linguistic Landscape* (Rubdi and Ben Said, Eds., 2015). Blackwood, Lanza, and Woldemariam have added to this development of thematically specific collections with the most recent volume *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes* (2016), which draws on work presented at the 4th LL Workshop, held in Addis Ababa in 2012.

Though considerations of identity are foregrounded to varying degrees in the different chapters of this book, the topic is always salient in the background. Indeed, in the editors' preface, they state "Language, culture and identity are inevitably interwoven in the study of the LL of a given space" (xvii). Thus, while nearly any LL study is bound to resonate with these issues, the chapters in this volume were assembled with the goal of being "the first collection of articles that explicitly focuses on the issue of identities from the perspective of the LL" (xvii). The editors appropriately begin by outlining the epistemological traditions in the study of language, culture, and identity while clarifying current conceptualizations of identity as a performed and dynamic

construct that is sensitive to the social dimensions of power relations. The subsequent fifteen chapters are organized neatly into five sections of three chapters each which are outlined below. Readers should note that each section's focus on a particular aspect of identity (political, economic, regional, collective, in sites of protest, and comparative approaches) makes it easy to lose sight at times of the larger theme especially in chapters which address identity minimally or less explicitly.

The chapters in the first section address "Political and economic dimensions of identity construction" with a strong opening contribution by Stroud, whose 2009 paper co-authored with Mpendukana has been very influential in the LL field. Here Stroud presents case studies from Cape Town, all examples of another growing theme in LL studies: mobile LL signification. The first study is of a grass-roots demonstration and occupation of a public space, the second demonstrates how physical gestures (enactments) of people in the LL can function as semiotic, place-making resources, and the third points to the skinscape of tattoos which are especially meaningful in terms of personal identity. Stroud situates all of these LL discourses within post-Apartheid South Africa, and discusses the theoretical lens of "Turbulence" as a useful heuristic for understanding the dynamic nature of group and individual identity construction in conjunction with LL creation and contestation. In line with the theme of this section, Muth addresses the unique political situation of post-soviet eastern European contexts in which the recent change from soviet republic to market economies and capitalist consumer societies has opened up new forms of advertising (commercial graffiti). The final

chapter in this section adequately conveys how economic circumstances (mainly tourism, in this case) lead to the inclusion of a foreign language (Italian) in the two different LLs examined in Tanzania and Zanzibar; Gallina, however, does little to address how the analysis relates to identity.

Part two of the book explores "Protest and contestation of identities" starting with Barni and Bagna's innovative use of multimodal methods to analyze the public discourse of protest demonstrations by immigrants in Italy over the course of three annual events. The lack of linguistic diversity on display at these protests organized by a very multilingual population has strong implications for the identity construction of immigrant populations and how they represent themselves in their new LLs. Ben Said and Kasanga, in their contribution on signs displayed during the Arab Spring Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, are limited by their data collection method which relied only on images collected from the *Guardian Online*, yet they make up for this with a strong analytical framework that exemplifies both Frame Analysis and Mediated Discourse Analysis. Waksman and Shohamy once again deliver a fresh perspective on the LL as they demonstrate how LL items are resemiotized when they are moved from an open (public) space to an institutional space (within a college) and, thus, appropriated and institutionalized according the values and identity of the institution. This chapter raises awareness of the dynamic flows of LL messages and items and foregrounds the role of context and emplacement in the context of institutional sanctioning.

The chapters grouped under the heading "Regional and national identities" deal

with minority language situations and all have a strong connection to issues of language planning especially the effects of policies meant to encourage the vitality of minority languages and societal multilingualism. Tufi returns us to Italy with a detailed historical account of the border region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the eastern-most part of Italy, for a study of the Slovenian speaking community in Trieste that demonstrates a striking contrast between urban and rural areas. The other two studies in part three recall the location of the LL Workshop that inspired the entire collection: Ethiopia. The first, by Mendisu, Malinowski, and Woldemichael, has less to contribute regarding identity, but it is a reminder of the pragmatic usefulness of LL studies to document the presence and absence of local languages in the LL, especially in relation to language policies—in this case the LLs of two relatively small towns in southern Ethiopia which are analyzed for patterns of language choice and status. Yigezu and Blackwood turn to the ancient city of Harar and its Muslim-influenced UNESCO World Heritage Site where the minority language Harari (written mostly in Ethiopic script but in Arabic script for certain domains) exists alongside Amharic, Oromiffa, and English. One of the most explicitly focused chapters on identity in the book, the authors "aim to tease out differences between attitudes, as attested by decisions in the emplacement of languages, and to discern processes of legitimization in the creation of a linguistic identity in the public space."

One criticism that might be laid on this collection is that the five parts that the chapters are grouped into are too porous; some individual chapters could easily be moved to other sections, yet this may simply speak to the inherent difficulty of

categorizing something as multifaceted as identity. Part 4 is called "Collective identities" and what apparently sets these chapters apart from the others is their analysis of group membership that extends beyond one's local/regional identity. Pappenhagen, Scarvaglieri, and Redder use Functional Pragmatic Discourse Analysis (derived mainly from Austin and Searle's speech act theories) to analyze two very different streets in the St. Georg district of Hamburg. While their analytical framework is innovative, the most striking element of their study is that in addition to documenting the visible signage on stores and shopfronts, they entered places of business to track languages used, by observing, listening, and sometimes recording in order to compare the landscape to the soundscape. Their ethnographic methods, standardized observation form for data collectors, and functional analysis of language choice during various parts of the service encounters (i.e., greeting, asking, talking about products, paying, etc.) is a welcome addition to LL studies that brings the field closer to the more general meaning of Linguistic Landscape: all of the language constituted in a place. In a very different kind of study, Guilat addresses how different local constituents are engaged with LL agents who conveyed an evolving identity in relation to an international biennale public art installation in Bat Yam, Israel. Echoing the previous chapter, Guilat quotes De Certeau, "the act of walking is to an urban system what the speech act is to language or to statements uttered" (1984, p.97)—Guilat examines the identity discourses of the local inhabitants who walk daily through the place, the art event organizers, the national and international artists who converge at Bat Yam, and the qualities of the city itself. European football fans will be

pleased to read Siebetcheu's study of fan-made signs which acknowledges that "the dynamics of communication through banners aim, in various ways, to strengthen the identity and the sense of belonging in the group and express high emotional involvement." Here, an individual football stadium is a microcosm of a typical LL, and Siebetcheu connects stadiums in the UK, France, and Italy to demonstrate a collective identity that spans city, regional, and national borders.

The final section of the book is called "Identity construction from a comparative perspective." The comparison in the chapter by Ben Rafael and Ben Rafael is of two globalizing forces, one pushing toward homogenization and the other toward heterogeneity. The authors' research site is the global city of Berlin: traditionally German but highly touristic and home to recent waves of immigrants from Turkey, the Middle East, Africa, eastern Europe and Asia. Thus, three principles of structuration come into play: national allegiance (i.e., to German), particularistic solidarity (i.e., to one's ethnocultural identification), and supra-societal references (i.e., to global brand names and businesses). Garvin and Eisenhower contribute to a growing body of LL work on 'schoolscapes' as they document two middle schools—one in the US and one in Korea. The result is an insightful contrast of cultures that conveys how institutions establish identities within larger societal expectations about education, students, and authority. The final chapter brings the reader full circle on this world tour of LLs—back to Cape Town. Williams and Lanza analyze 'spaces of consumption' where commuters and local inhabitants "become intertwined, semiotically, in the spatiality of a given landscape" as local, national, and global

identities are indexed on signs. The most noteworthy finding is the presence of 'histories' inscribed in the LL when agents entextualize language that is infused with cultural knowledge.

A unique feature of this volume is its deliberate attempt to simultaneously expand the breadth of LL research in Africa while also including chapters from nearly every region of the world. From a geographical perspective the chapters progress as follows: South Africa, Romania & Belarus, Tanzania & Zanzibar, Italy, Tunisia & Egypt, Israel, Italy, Ethiopia, Germany, Israel, Italy & France & the UK, Germany, USA & South Korea, and concluding where they began in South Africa. In the Preface the editors offer that, "the reader is invited to journey across Europe, North America, Asia and Africa to witness the negotiation and contestation of identities in the public space" (xxiii). Taking their invitation to heart, this reviewer attempted to follow along in the footsteps of the researchers by reading with the e-book version of the collection open on one pc monitor and Google Maps on an adjacent screen. Though this slowed down the reading process, it was time well-spent as the cumulative effect was one of taking a world tour. The ability, at minimum, to see street maps and Google Earth views from an aerial perspective added context to the studies. For research in nearly all but the most remote locations, Google Maps contained 'street views' of the places mentioned in the articles, making it possible to virtually navigate through the streetside sites studied, and in a few spots locate specific signage that is discussed and reproduced in photos in the chapters. Viewing these research sites would have been far easier if authors had included more specific street addresses or ideally the GPS coordinates for their

locations of data collection. This not a criticism of this volume, but a recommendation that all future LL work include these details in published studies. As geolocated photo-representations of urban environments become more accessible and are updated more frequently, these online references can become part of the LL researcher's tool-kit.

Studies of the LL are booming. During the years from 2007 to 2015, the number of LL studies published per year in academic journal articles grew from 15 to 67 and *Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal* was launched in 2015. According to the online bibliography of LL studies maintained by Troyer and Gorter, of the nearly 300 journal articles published about the LL, 88% are empirical studies of specific geographical locations: Africa (34 articles), America and the Caribbean (32), Asia (79), Australia and New Zealand (4), Europe (91), and Western Asia/Middle East (17). Given that the majority of these articles are readily available online through institutional database subscriptions, conducting your own self-guided world tour of linguistic landscape studies does not require an edited collection—merely a computer, some online resources, and the wanderlust combined with linguistic curiosity that drives much LL scholarship.

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