

IDENTITY, NATIVE LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN THREE GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN LEBANON¹

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ABSTRACT

Lebanon is home to both minority groups and expatriates from different countries of the world. Armenians are one of those minority groups that arrived after the WWI. Armenians in Lebanon are considered an ethnic minority that has its own ethnic language and a unique identity based on ethnic, cultural and religious factors. As of the late 20th century large numbers of expatriates (migrant workers) have arrived in Lebanon in search of a living. The majority of these expatriates come from Ethiopian, Sri Lankan, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Filipino backgrounds. Most importantly, the study, through an analysis of shop signs, aims at showing the impact of the identity, culture, and native language of the people living in a specific geographical area on its linguistic landscape. This paper aims to study different factors taken into consideration to finalize any shop sign. It also defines linguistic landscape, identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity and other related issues. It focuses on the linguistic landscape of three different locations in Lebanon: Bourj Hammoud and Dora, two suburbs in the governorate of Mount Lebanon, and Anjar, a village in the Beqaa Governorate. Data were collected by using pictures² of language signs of shops, restaurants, banks, petrol stations, etc. from these three locations. In addition, the mayors of both Bourj Hammoud and Anjar and a few shop owners are interviewed.

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic landscape, which is related to a multitude of different disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, economics, geography, landscape architecture, psychology, education, semiotics, etc., is considered one of the most recent and attractive fields of study.³ It is mainly defined as the signs, words, and

¹ Paper presented in the fifth biennial Towson University Conference “Forging Linguistic Identities: language in the National, the Region & the World” on March 14-16, 2019.

² I would like to thank Simon Dogharian for his help during the photo collection period. I am grateful for the time he put in taking the highly professional photos that made the data analysis process considerably less complicated and simpler.

³ D. Gorter, “Linguistic Landscapes in a Multilingual World,” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 2013:33, p. 191; D. Gorter & J. Cenoz, “Knowledge about language and linguistic landscape”, in N. H. Hornberger (Chief Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, 2nd revised edition, 2007, pp. 1-13, Berlin: Springer Science;

images that are displayed in a public space,⁴ that is to say, in “every space in the community that is not private property, such as streets, parks or public institutions”.⁵ Landry and Bourhis went further in their definition of linguistic landscape suggesting that it is “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings”.⁶ Bilingual and multilingual countries are considered fertile land for research in the field of linguistic landscape.⁷ It is mainly applied in countries where different nationalities, identities, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, roots, and languages occur.⁸ Lebanon is home to both minority groups and expatriates from different countries of the world. Armenians are one of those minority groups that arrived after WWI. The majority of Lebanon’s expatriates come from Ethiopian, Sri Lankan, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Filipino backgrounds. This paper aims at showing the impact of the identity, culture, and native language of the people living in a specific geographical area on its linguistic landscape.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to show the impact of the identity, culture, and native language of Armenians and expatriates living in Bourj Hammoud, Anjar and Dora on the linguistic landscape of the said areas and to set out the different factors and aspects that are taken into consideration before finalizing any shop sign, such as the language choice.

The following are the research questions to be answered:

http://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-0-387-30424-3_160, 2007, p. 7; E. Shohamy & D. Gorter (ed.), *Linguistic landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 1.

⁴ F. Amer & R. Obeidat, “Linguistic Landscape: A Case Study of Shop Signs in Aqaba City, Jordan,” *Asian Social Science*, 2014:10(18), p. 250; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009, p. 14; K. J. Taylor-Leech, “Language Choice as an Index of Identity: Linguistic landscape” in Timor-Leste Dili, *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 2012:9(1), p. 15; J. Wang, “Linguistic Landscape of China: A Case Study of Shop Signs in Beijing,” *Studies in Literature and Language*, 2013:6(1), p. 42.

⁵ Ben Rafael, 2009, p. 41, in Taylor-Leech, p. 15.

⁶ R. Landry & R. Y. Bourhis, “Linguistic landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study,” *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 1997:16(1), p. 25.

⁷ D. Gorter & J. Cenoz, “Linguistic Landscape and Minority Languages,” *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 2006:3(1), 67-80.

⁸ O. Kayam, T. Hirsch, & Y. Galily, “Linguistic Landscape: Investigation of Linguistic Representations of Cape Town,” *International Journal of Linguistics*, 2012:4(3), 71-78.

RQ1. Do the identity, culture and native language of Armenians living in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar have any impact on the linguistic landscape of the area/village?

RQ2. What are the factors that contribute to imposing an Armenian identity in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar?

RQ3. Do the identity, culture and native language of expatriates working in Lebanon have any impact on the linguistic landscape of Dora?

RQ4. What are the factors that contribute to the imposition of the expatriates' identity in Dora?

TYPES AND CLASSIFICATION OF SIGNS

Recently, as a result of the technological development that the world has been witnessing, many new types of signs, such as LED neon lights, electronic message centres, interactive touch screens, scrolling banners, and many others, have been introduced in the market.⁹ Gorter and Cenoz and Kayam, Hirsch, and Galily classified linguistic signs into top-down and bottom-up signs. Top-down signs mainly include everything that is official and governmental, such as public and official building names, street names, road signs, and public announcements. Bottom-up encompasses private and commercial signs, such as private businesses, shops, advertisements, announcements, sales/rentals of apartments/shops, etc. Leclerc, on the other hand, differentiated between government signs and private signs. The former includes road signs, street names, and names on government buildings such as ministries, town halls, etc. The latter includes business institutions, shops, commercial centers, etc.¹⁰

FUNCTIONS OF A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

The linguistic landscape of any region serves both informational and symbolic functions.¹¹ The informational function provides information about the shops, establishments, people, and language groups living in a particular region.¹² Landry and Bourhis believe that the linguistic landscape used in a specific area is considered the “distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community.” In addition to that, the presence of a particular language on public signs and government buildings indicates that people can receive services in that particular language. Actually, the absence of services in the in-group language often results in frustration and disappointment. Alternatively, the symbolic function is related to how members

⁹ Gorter, 2013, p. 191.

¹⁰ As cited in Landry & Bourhis, p. 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

and speakers of a language group perceive the language used on any sign, whether public or private, in addition to its value and status.¹³ Linguistic landscape is considered to contribute to the “social identity of ethnolinguistic groups”¹⁴ being the “most important dimension of ethnic identity”.¹⁵ It is worth noting that

The prevalence of the in-group language on public signs can symbolize the strength or vitality of one’s own language group on the demographic and institutional control front relative to other language communities within the intergroup setting.¹⁶

SIGN RULES

A study by Spolsky and Cooper proposed a theory of language choice in relation to writing the signs of any linguistic landscape. Table 1 presents a summary of the three sign rules that they have suggested.¹⁷ These three rules are equivalent to four “sociological structuration principles” put forward by Ben Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, and Trumper-Hecht. The first principle presents the self, the second one includes the instrumental purposes of the signs, the third presents the signs used as markers of the collective identity of the people, and the fourth presents power relations where linguistic landscape is explained in terms of dominant and subordinate groups.¹⁸

Table 1. The Three Sign Rules	
Sign Rule 1	Write signs in a language you know
Sign Rule 2	Prefer to write signs in the language or languages that intended readers are assumed to read
Sign Rule 3	Prefer to write signs in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified

Source: Gorter, 2013, p. 196; Gorter & Cenoz, 2007, p. 3

LANGUAGE, LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AND IDENTITY

In the introduction of *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, Shohamy and Gorter claim that linguistic landscape is not a phenomenon that occurs haphazardly and randomly.¹⁹ A series of recent studies has indicated that linguistic landscape is related to the social, cultural, and ethnic identity of the people residing in a specific territory.²⁰ Kuun defines identity as “a person’s

¹³ Akindele, 2011.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁷ In Gorter, 2013, p. 196; Gorter & Cenoz, 2007, p. 3.

¹⁸ In Gorter, 2013, p. 197.

¹⁹ Shohamy and Gorter, 2009, p. 4.

²⁰ Gorter, 2013, p. 201; Gorter & Cenoz, 2007, p. 4; S. Muth, “Linguistic Landscapes on the Other Side of the Border: Signs, Language and the Construction of Cultural

knowledge about who they are; who other people are; what it is that differentiates them and how one should behave in certain situations considering the social group where one belongs".²¹ As for ethnic identity it includes origin and culture, in addition to traditions and values related to them.²² Moha adds that cultural identity refers to people's belonging to a specific social or cultural group that has its own nationality, ethnicity, and religion.²³

The relationship between language and identity has been a focal point of discussion in several studies. While Skutnabb-Kangas states that language, culture, ethnicity, and identity are all interrelated,²⁴ Wodak sees that language and identity have a "dialectic" relationship and that using language reveals "who we are" and draws boundaries between "us" and "others".²⁵ Simpson notes that one of the most important functions of language as a "symbolic marker and index of individual and group identity" is to operate as a boundary device that separates certain language communities from neighboring ones where each language community is believed to have its own shared sentiments of identity.²⁶

Studies by Landry and Bourhis indicated that there is a significant relationship between linguistic landscape and the choice of language. According to them, the choice of language in the public space "marks the relative power and status of the linguistic communities in a given territory".²⁷ While Miller considered identities and language as "inseparable",²⁸ Hymes believes that language is an "inseparable" part of culture.²⁹ Kayam, Hirsch, and Galily, claimed that language has great impact on the social identity of the people using

Identity in Transnistria," *De Gruyter Mouton*, 2014:227, p. 30; J. M. F. Rodríguez, "Interpreting the Linguistic Traits of Linguistic Landscapes as Ethnolinguistic Vitality: Methodological Approach," *Revista Electrónica de Lingüística Aplicada*, 2009:8, p. 1; Taylor-Leech, p. 16.

²¹ E. Kuun, "The Ethnic and Linguistic Identity of Russian-Speaking Young People in Estonia," *Trames*, 2008:12(2), p. 184.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

²³ As cited in N. Aristova, "Rethinking Cultural Identities in the Context of Globalization: Linguistic Landscape of Kazan, Russia, As an Emerging Global City," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2016:236, p. 154.

²⁴ T. Skutnabb-Kangas, *Linguistic Genocide in Education, or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?*, 2000, Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates., pp. 114-115.

²⁵ R. Wodak, "Language, Power and Identity," *Language Teaching*, 2012:45(2), p. 216.

²⁶ As cited in R. L. Diab, "Lebanese University Students' Perceptions of Ethnic, National, and Linguistic Identity and Their Preferences for Foreign Language Learning in Lebanon," *The Linguistics Journal September*, 2009 Special Edition, p. 103.

²⁷ As cited in Taylor-Leech, p. 16.

²⁸ As cited in Kayam, Hirsch, & Galily, p. 74.

²⁹ As cited in Aristova, p. 155.

it since it symbolizes and represents their roots, identity, and culture.³⁰ As for Geertz and Halliday, language plays a fundamental role in “representing and creating our environment”.³¹

ARMENIANS IN LEBANON

The presence of Armenians in Lebanon goes back several centuries; however, the present day Armenian community is the result of WWI and the Armenian Genocide. The community is an important constituent of Armenian Diaspora around the world. The current Armenian community of Lebanon holds Lebanese citizenship, as entitled by the international Treaty of Lausanne (1923), and are represented in the Lebanese Parliament (6 members) and the government. They are considered an ethnic minority group who have preserved their linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identity. Ever since their naturalisation, Armenians have made Lebanon their home, settling mainly in Beirut and its northern suburbs, particularly Bourj Hammoud, a suburban town in the Mount Lebanon Governorate and part of Greater Beirut, as well as Anjar, a village in the Beqaa Governorate. Bourj Hammoud is densely populated by Armenians, and Anjar is entirely populated by them. In both towns, Armenians have established their own social, religious, educational, cultural, sports, philanthropic, and commercial institutions. Bourj Hammoud and Anjar have their municipalities headed by Armenians.

EXPATRIATES IN LEBANON

As a result of globalization in general and for the purpose of personal and economic growth in particular, many expatriates have arrived in Lebanon. The majority of these expatriates come from Ethiopian, Sri Lankan, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Filipino backgrounds. They are known as migrant workers and work in houses (as maids taking care of cooking, cleaning, baby-sitting, and caring for elderly and sick people), at gas stations, for ‘garbage collection’ companies, in restaurants, in other companies and in hospitals as cleaners. They are employed according to the “kafala” (sponsor) system of the Lebanese Government. Although there is no exact number, it is estimated that between 150,000 and 250,000 expatriates reside in Lebanon. Kanso (2018) stated that Ethiopians constitute the largest group (approximately 100,000 workers) followed by 60,000 Bangladeshis, as stated by Gousal Azam Sarker, the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Lebanon (Kullab, 2014), about 80,000 Sri Lankans

³⁰ Kayam, Hirsch, & Galily, p. 74.

³¹ As cited in W. Baker, “Language, Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca in Asia: Notes from the Field,” *The Linguistics Journal*, September 2009 Special Edition, p. 17.

and some 19,000 Filipinos. It is worth mentioning that some of these expatriates have an illegal status.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, data were collected in three ways using different sources: analyzing pictures, conducting interviews and observing the linguistic landscape (shop signs and others), thus establishing triangulation.

For the purpose of data collection, 397 pictures were taken since the main focus of linguistic landscape is photography and picture analysis.³² The pictures were from Bourj Hammoud, mainly from Armenia Street, Dora, which has become a centre for expatriates, and Anjar, which is mainly populated by Armenians. Indeed as Shohamy suggests, the symbolic messages of power, significance, relevance, and irrelevance are all conveyed through the absence or presence of a specific language in the public space.³³ The pictures are classified in 3 different ways:

- Three main categories: based on the geographic areas of Bourj Hammoud, Dora, and Anjar,
- Six subgroups: (a) Governmental institutions-Armenian letters, (b) Private shops owned by Armenians, (c) Private shops owned by non-Armenians, (d) No Armenian letters, (e) Symbols, Signs, Slogans, and (f) Shops owned by expatriates.
- Four major groups: Bourj Hamoud and Dora bottom-up and top-down, and Anjar bottom-up and top-down.

As Table 2 gives an overview of the first two classifications above and the number of pictures taken it is worth noting that a few pictures belong to more than one group.³⁴

Table 2. Classification of the Pictures		
Picture Category	Picture Subgroup	# of Pictures Taken
Bourj Hammoud and Dora	Private shops owned by Armenians	126
	Private shops owned by non-Armenians	45
	Shops owned by expatriates	23
	Symbols, Signs, Slogans	19
	Governmental institutions-Armenian Letters	16
	No Armenian letters	12
Anjar	Private shops owned by Armenians	101

³² Akindele, 2011.

³³ As cited in D. O. Akindele, "Linguistic Landscapes as Public Communication: A Study of Public Signage in Gaborone Botswana," *International Journal of Linguistics*, 2011:3(1), pp. 1-11.

³⁴ A sample collection of pictures is included at the end of the paper.

	Governmental institutions-Armenian letters	31
	Symbols, Signs, Slogans	18
	No Armenian letters	11
	Private shops owned by non-Armenians	0
	Shops owned by expatriates	0

In addition to the pictures collected, the mayors of Bourj and Anjar were interviewed. The head of Bourj Hammoud Municipality, Mardig Boghossian, was interviewed on June 1, 2018, and the head of Anjar Municipality, Vartkes Khoshian, was interviewed on June 8, 2018.³⁵ Some semi-structured interviews were conducted as well with a few shop owners who were selected either randomly or for the purpose of clarifying a specific linguistic choice (language, lexicon, symbol, etc.).

The data of the research were collected in June 2018. The pictures were taken by a professional photographer, after getting official written permission from the head of Bourj Hammoud Municipality and oral consent from the head of Anjar Municipality.

During the process of taking pictures, the focus was on the usage of the native language(s) of the people living in those geographical areas. While in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar the focus was on the usage of the Armenian language or Armenian names, in Dora it included all languages of the expatriates.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

This section aims at presenting the data collected through pictures of signs and interviews.

Pictures of Signs

As mentioned above, the pictures taken have also been grouped into two main categories: bottom-up and top-down (Table 3). In Bourj Hammoud, 162 bottom-up and 66 top-down pictures were collected (Figure 3). The top-down category includes the following sets of signs: mayors, notaries, sworn translators, streets, theatres, scouts organizations, doctors, schools, churches, charity organizations, announcements, slogans, school buses, buildings, and old people's homes. The bottom-up category includes two groups: Dora, which is highly frequented by expatriates, and other neighbourhoods that are densely populated by Armenians. In Dora, 23 pictures of restaurants, minimarkets, beauty salons, cargo companies, and Asian food signs were collected.

These two suburbs populated by Armenians include the following sets of signs: banks, sweet shops, commercial centers, job vacancy announcements,

³⁵ Each interview was recorded and later transcribed.

social gatherings, real estate, shops selling clothes/ buttons/ bags/ chocolate/ food/ zippers/ slippers/ shoes, art galleries, exchange shops, trading centers, pharmacies, online money transfer shops, insurance companies, butchers, calligraphers/ designers, travel agencies, apartments for sale and rent, shoe repair, spice shops, one dollar shops, bakeries, libraries, fast food restaurants, physiotherapists, tailors, taxis, cultural centers, dental laboratories, liquor shops, wholesale/ resale/ retail shops, and petrol stations.

In Anjar, 45 bottom-up and 117 top-down pictures were collected (Figure 6). The top-down category includes sets of signs for the Electricity Company, village entrance, Red Cross, streets, scouts, stadium, cultural centers, monuments, water distribution and irrigation center, Armenian Relief Cross, churches, schools, dentists, doctors, child welfare, mayors, and school buses. The bottom-up category includes sets of signs for holidays, greeting esteemed guests, hair salons, pharmacies, trading centers, food service and equipment shops, school and office supplies, rental shops, bakeries, dinner party announcements, art galleries, crafts centers, butchers, shops selling clothes, mini markets, sausage shops, tailors, libraries, vegetable and fruit markets, shoe repair and laundry shops, restaurants, and ice cream shops.

Table 3. Bottom-up and Top-down Pictures		
Region	Bottom-up	Top-down
Bourj Hammoud and Dora	162	66
Anjar	45	117

Among the pictures taken in Bourj Hammoud and Dora.-
23 pictures taken from Dora include Amarinya (Ethiopia), Sinhala (Sri Lanka), Bengali (Bangladesh), Filipino (Philippines), and Hindi (India)
16 pictures of governmental signs
126 signs that include Armenian and are used by people with Armenian roots
45 signs with Armenian letters but owned by non-Armenians
12 signs with no Armenian letters but with Armenian names
19 pictures with Armenian symbols and slogans
Among the pictures collected in Anjar.-
31 government signs
101 signs with Armenian letters and hung by Armenian people
11 pictures with no Armenian letters but including Armenian names
18 signs of Armenian symbols and slogans

Interview Results

Prior to the interviews, the heads of both municipalities gave an overview of the history of Armenians in Lebanon and of their town/village, focusing on how Armenians arrived in those areas, their geographical significance, how they have improved throughout the years, and a glimpse of their future plans.

To start with, regarding the question of the importance of using Armenian in shop signs, both Boghossian and Khoshian admitted the significance of having Armenian at the top of the signboards whether in Bourj Hammoud or Anjar.³⁶ Khoshian explained that the need for Armenian letters on the shop signs is generally considered a necessity when they have visitors of Armenian descent as they usually ask why some shop signs have no Armenian letters.³⁷ In contrast, the same question is asked by non-Armenian visitors who wonder why some signboards are not (partly) in Arabic. Hence, Khoshian considers the presence of both Armenian and Arabic necessary as a sign of respect for all social groups regardless of their linguistic background.

Regarding the specifications of a signboard, both mentioned that an official document had been issued by the state. It specified the requirements for a shop sign, regulating its terms and stipulating that people had to abide by a certain size for signboards as well as for the words and languages used. However, rarely do people abide by those rules and regulations.³⁸

As for the size of the population, Boghossian stated that Bourj Hammoud is highly and densely populated by almost 130,000 Armenians. Dora, which is a district/neighbourhood administered by the Bourj Hammoud Municipality, is inhabited/frequented by around 50,000 migrant labourers especially Ethiopians, Filipinos, Syrians, and Iraqis.³⁹ Khoshian on the other hand stated that Anjar is entirely populated by Armenians.⁴⁰

Concerning the question about the relationship between language and identity, both Khoshian and Boghossian believe that language and identity are interrelated. They noted that having Armenian on public signs is a means of preserving the identity of minorities.⁴¹ Khoshian claimed that language reflects the identity of the people living in a specific area. Nonetheless, he noted that using Armenian letters on signboards happens spontaneously, naturally and without any extra effort.⁴²

Khoshian pointed out that not only are the signs for Anjar streets written in Armenian, but some have Armenian names. The street next to the school is named after Mesrob Mashdots, the inventor of the Armenian Alphabet, a

³⁶ M. Boghossian, personal communication, June 1, 2018; V. Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

³⁷ Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

³⁸ Boghossian, personal communication, June 1, 2018; Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

³⁹ Boghossian, personal communication, June 1, 2018.

⁴⁰ Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

⁴¹ Boghossian, personal communication, June 1, 2018; Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

⁴² Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

linguist and theologian. The street next to the cultural club “Hamazkayin” is named after Gomidas, the Armenian musicologist, composer and priest. These are examples that reflect the identity of the population of the village and contribute to the preservation of their identity.⁴³

Regarding the issue of English as a global language, both Khoshian and Boghossian stated that as a result of globalization and the status of English as a global language, the number of signs that include Armenian has recently decreased. This decrease, however, has had no impact on the identity of Bourj Hammoud or Anjar.⁴⁴ On the other hand, in some cases Armenian shop signs have increased due to the opening of new shops in the village. Hence, more shop signs are seen as part of the linguistic landscape of the village.⁴⁵

Having said that, the influence of English as a global language is tangible. For example, for the recycling campaign in Anjar, the municipality has adopted “Clean Anjar” (in English) as the motto and logo for its trash bins as it is considered to better serve the purpose.⁴⁶

As for the question about what preserves identity, Khoshian believes that there is more than one factor that contributes to preserving it. He considers traditions as the most important factor after language and stresses the necessity that the youth should learn the Anjar dialect from the elderly. “By preserving tradition, we preserve language ... If people lose their traditions, they lose their existence as well. Consequently, traditions have a fundamental role in people’s lives.”⁴⁷

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The pictures collected and the interviews conducted indicate that Armenian identity is expressed dominantly through the linguistic landscape in Anjar and Bourj Hammoud. In addition, the identity of the expatriates is revealed through the linguistic landscape in Dora, where they have imposed their culture and identity through the shop signs of the ethnic shops they have opened and the businesses they have established. Each social group has revealed its ethnic culture and identity through its native language.

There is more than one factor that has contributed to imposing Armenian identity elements in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar. Most of the population advertise their products or businesses in Armenian, even those who do not have any Armenian roots. For instance, out of the 88 branches that Bank Byblos

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Boghossian, personal communication, June 1, 2018; Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

⁴⁵ Khoshian, personal communication, June 8, 2018.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

owns in Lebanon, only 2 have Armenian on their signs: one in Bourj Hammoud and another in Dora (Figure 1). Furthermore, many non-Armenians in Bourj Hammoud have added Armenian to their shop signs (Figure 2). This may be explained by the fact that Bourj Hammoud has a very high number of Armenian residents. Next to Bank Byblos, the list encompasses many other banks such as Bank of Beirut, Credit Libanais, SGBL, Credit Bank, Fransa Bank, etc. Other than the banks, a pharmacy, a shop that sells zippers, a bakery, a school, a petrol station, department stores like Big Sale, Akil Bros, and Nassour, Burger King, a butcher, a doctor, a one dollar shop, and a notary are all businesses and shops that are owned by non-Armenians who have added Armenian to their shop signs because of the overall identity of the area and for the purpose of attracting the Armenian residents of the area as well as the neighbouring areas, who constitute the majority of their clients and customers.

It is worth mentioning that although some signs do not include any Armenian letters, the names used and spelled in English, French, or Arabic are Armenian. For example, one of the restaurants mentions “Armenian Street Food” on its sign, others include Armenian names or family names, a street sign reads “Armenia Street”, a commercial center is named “Marash” after a town in Cilicia, and an art gallery is called “Arvest”, which means art in Armenian. All these are indicators of the presence of elements of Armenian identity (Figure 5). Some of these businesses are owned by Armenians and others by non-Armenians; however, they may have in mind attracting the Armenian consumer, as indicated by some of the non-Armenian shop owners.

Last but not least, monuments and other signs contribute to the presence of Armenian identity elements in the said locations. For instance, the frame of the village sign in Anjar is the tricolor of the Armenian flag; at the entrance of the village there are several Armenian flags that include the Armenian coat-of-arms as well (Figure 8). This may be explained by the fact that, being mostly populated by Armenians, the village hosts visitors from Armenia every year. And, as stated by Khoshian, such monuments and signs please the guests. Monuments in Anjar symbolize battles that Armenians have fought during, before and after WWI. Moreover, the traditional Armenian cross-stone (Khachkar) is present in the middle of the village and in Bourj Hammoud too. Besides the cross-stone, monuments, and flag colors, Bourj Hammoud displays many anti-Turkey slogans, taxi signs such as “Hay Group Taxi” (Hay means Armenian), “I Love Bourj Hammoud” motto in the tri-color of the Armenian flag, and a statue of “Apolo” the man who delivered *Aztag* (Armenian Daily Newspaper) to the readers until his death (Figure 4).

Anyone entering Dora cannot but notice the presence of expatriates in the area because of the prevailing linguistic landscape. This is due to the presence of shops that have their shop signs written in Amarinya, Sinhala, Bengali,

Filipino, and Hindi. In addition to the shop signs, the majority of those shops sell ethnic food and other items expatriates use in their daily lives. Observing the area during the weekends and holidays reveals that Dora is one of the destinations most visited by expatriates, who come to meet friends, do shopping, buy ethnic food, and have their hair done using traditional techniques such as the “Habasha sherroubba”, as stated by one of the Ethiopian expatriates (Figure 9).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to the findings of the study, the number of pictures in the top-down category indicates the significance of Armenian in both Bourj Hammoud and Anjar. This finding is in line with Huebner, who believes that “It is the ‘linguistic norm’ of the community ... that determines to a greater extent the parameters under which the texts will be printed.”⁴⁸

After careful analysis of the pictures collected, it has been revealed that the shop signs in Bourj Hammoud, Dora, and Anjar follow the three sign rules proposed by Spolsky and Cooper and discussed in the literature review above.⁴⁹

Sign Rule 1: Write signs in a language you know

Since many members of the Armenian community are either inhabitants or business owners in Bourj Hammoud (as stated by the mayor) and since Anjar is entirely populated by Armenians according to its mayor, a vast number of shop signs, road signs and sign posts are inscribed in Armenian. This finding is consistent with that of Spolsky and Cooper, who believe that people usually design their shop signs using the language they are familiar with. Parallel to that, and as mentioned in the literature above, Landry and Bourhis believe that there is a correlation between linguistic landscape and the choice of language.

Sign Rule 2: Prefer to write signs in the language or languages that intended readers are assumed to read

Whether the shop owners are Armenians or non-Armenians, they prefer having Armenian on their shop signs. A possible explanation for this is that intended readers, who could be inhabitants, other business owners or shoppers, could be mostly Armenians. For instance, the advertisement poster that Lycée National Libanais (a non-Armenian private school in Bourj Hammoud) has distributed in Bourj Hammoud is written in Armenian simply because their target is to attract not only non-Armenian community members of the area but also those of the Armenian community. This finding supports the concept suggested by Spolsky and Cooper, who believe that using the language of the intended readers on shop signs is a good step where the

⁴⁸ As cited in Rodríguez, p. 1.

⁴⁹ As cited in Gorter & Cenoz, 2007, p. 3.

intended readers encompass probable shoppers and customers in addition to some of the inhabitants and visitors of the area. This finding is also supported by Landry and Bourhis, who believe that the presence of a particular language on public signs and government buildings indicates that people can receive services in that particular language.

Sign Rule 3: Prefer to write signs in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified

In fact, when Armenians write their shop signs in Armenian, they are using their own native language, which is also the language that they wish to be identified with. When the language used is not Armenian, the names used are Armenian, which is also another means of expressing their identity.

Besides the Armenian language and the different languages of the expatriates, many of the pictures collected encompass icons and symbols that reflect the identity of the social groups residing in those three areas. Parallel to Spolsky and Cooper, Bucholtz and Hall believe that “iconicity entails an association of language and its essentialised features with a social group”.⁵⁰ The frame of the village sign at the entrance of Anjar is the colors of the Armenian flag, an icon which is identified by Taylor-Leech as national, regional or local identity.⁵¹ In Bourj Hammoud, a restaurant has the Armenian flag under its sign in Armenian and the Lebanese flag under its sign in Arabic, meaning that they serve both Armenian and Lebanese dishes. In Dora, most of the shop signs or shop windows include either their national flags or the colors of their flags.

No matter what language names are written in, they have a significant role in any linguistic landscape (Gorter, 2013). Although the language used in the signs is not Armenian, they are considered essential for the simple fact that they include Armenian names such as “Sevan” or “Arin” (Armenian names for girls). The same applies to another shop sign in Dora, “Manila”. Although the name of the cargo company is written in English, it symbolizes the Philippines.

The findings and data analysis of the research conducted answer the research questions raised. In reference to research questions one and two, the identity, culture and native language of Armenians living in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar have a significant impact on the linguistic landscape of the area and village respectively. This is shown in figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, where every sign includes something that is Armenian, whether the alphabet, a name, a sign, a symbol or a slogan. In fact, several motivating factors, such as preserving identity, culture, language and traditions, contribute to the dominating Armenian identity in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar., In the case of Armenian signs adopted by non-Armenians, they could be motivated to use

⁵⁰ As cited in Taylor-Leech, p. 16.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 16.

them for the purpose of attracting more customers, whether of Armenian descent or not, and showing good intentions towards their fellow citizens with Armenian roots.

In reference to research questions three and four, as per figure 9, the identity, culture and native language of expatriates working in Lebanon show a significant impact on the linguistic landscape of Dora. In fact, for some expatriates Dora is a home away from home, where they can meet people from their own ethnic and cultural background. It is also where most of the ethnic shops and restaurants are found, where they can get a traditional haircut, buy traditional ingredients related to their cuisine, and buy other cultural items.

CONCLUSION

The data collected from the locations, Bourj Hammoud, Anjar, and Dora, and the interviews carried out, indicate that people's identity and their native language do have an impact on the linguistic landscape of an area. This can be stated on the basis of the limited selection of pictures used for this study, which could represent all shop signs. Gorter (2013) believes that "the language in which signs are written can influence the perception of the status of the different languages and affect linguistic behaviour".⁵² It was highlighted by Rodriguez that the ethnolinguistic vitality of minority groups is reflected through the linguistic vitality of the linguistic landscape found in the areas where they reside. Hence, the presence of the Armenian language and other symbolic elements on the linguistic landscape in Bourj Hammoud and Anjar reflect the dominance and vitality of the Armenian identity and language in those two areas. Similarly, the presence of Amarinya, Sinhala, Bengali, Filipino, and Hindi and other symbolic elements on the linguistic landscape in Dora reflect the presence and vitality of expat identity there.

Interview Questions

1) How important is it to put Armenian at the top of the signboard? 2) Is there any official rule/document that specifies the language of the signboard? 3) What is the number of the population of: Armenians, Ethiopians/Sri Lankans/Indians/Pilipinos/Bangladeshis, etc., Non-Armenians/Non-Expatriates? 4) Does the language of the public signs contribute to preserving the identity of minorities? 5) Do the identity and native language of people living in an area influence the linguistic landscape of that area? And vice versa? 6) Has the linguistic landscape of Bourj Hammoud/Anjar changed over time? Why? 7) Has the intensity of the linguistic landscape of Bourj Hammoud/Anjar changed over time? Why? 8) Has the context of the linguistic landscape of Bourj Hammoud/Anjar changed over time? Why?

⁵² Gorter, 2013, p. 202.



Figure 1. Banks in Bourj Hammoud



Figure 2. Shops Owned by Non-Armenians in Bourj Hammoud



Figure 3. Top-down Pictures in Bourj Hammoud



Figure 4. Signs in Bourj Hammoud That Include Armenian Symbols Instead of Letters



Figure 5. Signs in Bourj Hammoud That Include Armenian Names Instead of Letters



Figure 6. Top-down Pictures in Anjar



Figure 7. Road Signs in Anjar



Figure 8. Monuments and Other Signs That Contribute to the Presence of the Armenian Identity in Anjar



Figure 9. Shops Signs Written in Amarinya, Sinhala, Bengali, Filipino, and Hindi in Dora

ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹԻՒՆ, ՄԱՅՐԵՆԻ ԼԵՋՈՒ ԵՒ ԼԵՋՈՒԱԿԱՆ ԲՆԱՆԿԱՐԸ ԼԻԲԱՆԱՆԻ ԵՐԵՔ ՎԱՅՐԵՐՈՒՄԷՋ

(Ամփոփում)

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Մեկնելով ինքնության եւ մայրենի լեզուի գործոններէն, յօդուածը կը քննարկէ այն ազդեցութիւնը, որ շրջանի մը բնակչութիւնը կրնայ ունենալ տեղի լեզուական բնապատկերին վրայ:

Ուսումնասիրութիւնը լուսարծակի տակ կ'առնէ Պուրճ Համուտի, Տորայի եւ Այնճարի շրջանի պետական թէ սեփական (հայապատկան, ոչ-հայապատկան) հանրային-բացօդեայ ցուցանակները, կը քննարկէ օգտագործուած լեզուն (հայերէն, արաբերէն, անգլերէն, այլ) եւ խորհրդանշանները, արտայայտչաձեւերը, ցուցանակներու գրութեան ուղղութիւնը, ձեւը:

Հետազօտութիւնը կ'եզրակացնէ թէ, ցուցանակը մատչելի դարձնելու համար անոր տէրը կամ պատասխանատուն նկատի կ'առնէ շրջանի բնակչութեան եւ շրջանը այցելողներու ինքնութիւնը, օգտագործած լեզուն, արտայայտչաձեւերը եւ խորհրդանշանները: