When we arrive in a new country, public signs, ads and billboards are often the first form of contact we have with the language and script of the place. In the absence of familiar languages, these signs may cause frustration and disappointment, while in experienced hands multilingualism can become a useful marketing device: in the city of Kirkenes, for example, Norwegian-Russian store signs and street signs have been instrumental in encouraging shopping tourism from Russia. Language choices in public space are particularly significant in multilingual countries like Russia, where more than 100 minority languages are spoken and 35 are considered official regional languages alongside Russian. In such a context, each instance of language choice and representation in public signage transmits symbolic messages regarding legitimacy, centrality and relevance of particular languages and the people they represent.

Conceived as an equitable collaboration between Russian and Norwegian colleagues, our seminar has three interrelated aims. Our first aim is to develop greater understanding of Russian language policies and minority language politics among Western scholars. Our second aim is to share the wealth of expertise developed by Norwegian experts on multilingualism and language policy. Our third and most important aim is to exchange experiences and develop potential collaborations for future research, including in the High North and the Arctic, where some minority languages, most notably Sámi, are spoken on both sides of Russian-Norwegian border.
Thursday, October 4

9:45 – 10:00  Arrival at Professorboligen: Coffee and tea

10:00 – 10:15  Introduction by Elizabeth Lanza, Director of MultiLing, University of Oslo, Norway

10:15 – 10:45  Aneta Pavlenko (MultiLing)
   A stroll on the Nevsky circa 1846: What multilingual shop signs reveal and conceal

10:45 – 11:15  Vlada Baranova (Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia) and Kapitolina Fedorova (European University at St. Petersburg, Russia/Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea)
   ‘Dear guests’ or ‘unwelcomed intruders’? How minority languages are represented in St. Petersburg’s linguistic landscape

11:15 – 11:30  Coffee break

11:30 – 12:00  Alla Kirilina (Moscow International Academy, Russia)
   Linguistic landscape of Moscow: Trends and features

12:00 – 12:30  Konstantin Grigorichev (Irkutsk State University, Russia)
   “Bazaar pidgin” and "Russian Chinese": Language marking of contact and conflict in the urban space of Irkutsk

12:30 – 13:30  Lunch break

13:30 – 14:00  Pia Lane & Olga Solovova (MultiLing) Linguistic landscapes in the Northern borderlands – a nexus analysis

14:00 – 14:30  Hilde Sollid (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) Road signs as targets: Tensions and conviviality in multilingual Northern Norway

14:30 – 14:45  Coffee break

14:45 – 15:15  Anja Pesch (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) Schoolscapes as constructions of multilingualism – a case study of two kindergartens

15:15 – 15:45  Judith Purkarthofer (MultiLing) Intended multilingualism? Reading Linguistic Landscapes as representations of space in schools

15:45 – 16:15  Discussion
Friday, October 5

9:45 – 10:00  Arrival at Professorboligen: Coffee and tea

10:00 – 10:30  Robert Blackwood (University of Liverpool, UK)  
Murmansk Airport on Instagram: Representations of an Arctic airport through a mediated linguistic landscape

10:30 – 11:00  Ludmila Fedorova (Institute of linguistics of Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia) The linguistic landscape of today’s Yerevan

11:00 – 11:30  Zufar Makhmutov (Institute of History of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia)  
The linguistic landscapes of Tatar national Internet

11:30 – 11:45  Coffee break

11:45 – 12:15  Maimu Berezkina (The Norwegian Directorate of eHealth / MultiLing) When state communication moves online: Russian in the virtual linguistic landscape of e-Estonia


12:45 – 13:45  Lunch break

13:45 – 14:15  Elizabeth Lanza (MultiLing) Place and mobility: The linguistic landscape in contemporary globalization

14:15 – 15:00  Discussion and summing up
A stroll on the Nevsky circa 1846:
What multilingual shop signs reveal and conceal

Aneta Pavlenko (Center for Multilingualism, University of Oslo, Norway)

The purpose of this paper is to address two questions, one theoretical, the other methodological. The first one involves an issue central to the study of linguistic landscapes (LLs), namely, how representative are LLs of multilingualism in the community at large? And if they aren’t, what can we read in LLs or, rather, what do we read them for? Another, equally fundamental issue, is whether we can link LLs of today to LLs of the past, replacing snapshots with a diachronic picture of multilingual development. To address these questions, I will take the audience on a stroll along St Petersburg’s Nevsky Prospect circa 1846, using a 16-meter water-color panorama of the Nevsky from the Admiralty to the Anichkov bridge, painted by the talented serf-artist Vasily Sadovnikov, who depicted all buildings and signs on both sides of the street. I will also draw on verbal depictions of Nevsky’s multilingualism in city guides, such as Rastorguev’s (1846) Strolls along the Nevsky Prospect, and memoirs of foreign visitors, including Lewis Carroll, Alexandre Dumas and Théophile Gautier. Mining concordances and contradictions in the visual and verbal evidence, I will highlight the facets of Russian imperial multilingualism that often remain hidden from the public eye and show that Gogol was not far off when he claimed that everything is an illusion on the Nevsky, “everything is other than it seems”.

‘Dear guests’ or ‘unwelcomed intruders’?
How minority languages are represented in St. Petersburg’s linguistic landscape

Vlada Baranova (Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia)
Kapitolina Fedorova (European University at St. Petersburg, Russia/ Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul, Korea)

The paper presents first results of the project aiming at mapping St. Petersburg’s linguistic landscape via application LinguaSnapp St. Petersburg (https://linguasnapp.hse.spb.ru) distributed by ‘Multilingual Manchester’, LinguaSnapp (Gaiser, Matras 2016). The goal of this study is twofold. On the one hand, it focuses on languages of labor migrants in St. Petersburg. Mass labor migration to Russian cities (mostly from the territory of the former Soviet Union but also from other countries, such as China or Vietnam) is gradually transforming their ethnic and linguistic composition. However, changes in urban space and especially in linguistic landscapes of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and even border cities such as Vyborg, Ivangorod, or Zabaikal’sk, are
much less rapid and radical. Looking at the map, one can come to a conclusion that ‘linguistic visibility’ of minority groups in urban space is less evident than could be expected (see also Fedorova & Baranova, 2018). Most of advertisements using minority languages are hidden from majority’s eyes. Considering that linguistic landscape reflects not only actual diversity but also power relations between different ethnic groups (Blommaert, 2013; Shohamy et. al., 2010) sometimes exclusion of minority languages can be witnessed (Rubdy & Ben Said, 2015), and this fact can tell us a lot about dominant language ideology and ethnic attitudes.

On the other hand, the project tries to shed light on the specifics of tourist-oriented written communication in Russia. In doing so, it reveals differences in treating different languages and different categories of visitors. While tourists are welcomed, at least on the surface, and there is an increase in the presence of English in urban space, the use of languages of bordering countries (Finnish, Estonian and Chinese) is restricted and sometimes (as in the case of Vyborg) even unofficially banned in public settings. Thus, situations in which the Russian speaking majority in communication with speakers of minority languages ignores their linguistic needs are typical. And even if foreign/minority languages are used, the insufficient information provided through them maintains language barriers instead of overcoming them.

References


Linguistic landscape of Moscow: Trends and features

Alla Kirilina (Moscow International Academy, Russia)

This paper deals with peculiarities of the Moscow linguistic landscape (LL) and is based on the observations made by the author in 2008 – 2018. Personal experience has been considered as a valuable resource and facility for registration of social changes through language changes [Coupland, 2010: 2]. The appeal to the self-reflection of the native speaker, within the boundaries of which the clash of the old and the new, one's own and another's, acceptable and unacceptable, is recognized as legitimate by increasing number of scientists [Coupland, 2010, Nikolayev, 2010].

Like many post-Soviet megapoles, language contacts in the Russian capital have known big changes in comparison to the previous period [Pavlenko, 2010]. The main trends of this process are being reflected in the LL of Moscow. Our data were collected in 2008 - 2018 from everyday language in the public space of Moscow. We describe the LL in the broad sense of the concept (signboards, labels in shops, different types of advertisements, municipal and transgressive signs and others). In the paper we demonstrate the main trends and features of Moscow LL which are:

1. *The increased intensity and growth of language contacts:*

Languages that didn’t use to interact or did it to a certain limited extent are now beginning to interact; the spheres of language functioning and social prestige of languages are changing.

2. *The rapid movement towards the multilingualism and language hybridization*

This kind of linguistic development displays an evident dominance and visibility of English among all other languages, and the reduction of the functional space of Russian. English-Russian language contacts in Moscow and expansion of English are discussed in many studies: “the breadth of penetration (all spheres and variants of a language are affected); borrowing of a word and its derivatives i.e. transference whole semantic groups to Russian; acronym borrowing, a *particular activation of a loan translation* [Marinova, 2008: 3]. Loan translation involves changes in the usage and semantics of language units and provokes the “secondary loaned meanings” [Nikiporets-Takigava, 2006]. Thus, the manifestation of a human being and his parameters i.e. basic socio-anthropological constructs (gender, in particular) is changing. According to our data on the LL of Moscow, Russian also is being suppressed by English, despite the current legislation. There are three stages of displacement: hybrid texts, the understanding of which (albeit not always fully) is possible without the knowledge of English; hybrid texts, which can only be understood by an English speaker; fully English texts (electronic air ticket, prints of some medical research, some billboards) [Kirilina 2011].
3. **The change of values in the public signs and the dominance of the” market- semantics”**.

Public signs indicate the changing picture of the world, for example, the expansion of the semantic zone of trade, sale, expansion of the scope of market logic, the transformation of the human model and, in particular, gender construct, etc. [Kirilina, 2009].

4. **The rapid growth of transgressive signs [Scollon, Scollon 2003]** demonstrating individual preferences and – often – social critics and irony.

The presence of these sings marks personal points of view as well as the common social tendencies.

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"Bazaar pidgin" and "Russian Chinese": language marking of contact and conflict in the urban space of Irkutsk

Konstantin Grigorichev (Irkutsk State University, Russia)

This report is based on research of the "ethnic" markets in Irkutsk (2008-2018) and a pilot study of the impact of tourism from China on the urban space of Irkutsk (2018). I will consider language marking of two types of urban spaces, both of which can be defined as ‘migrant localities’. The first type is ‘ethnic’ markets, which in Siberian cities are often defined as ‘Chinese markets’. One of the key features of such localities is the contact language, which was formed on the basis of simplification and deformation of the Russian language by foreign merchants, originally the Chinese, and later those from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and the Caucasus regions. I designate this language as ‘a bazaar pidgin’ based on the similarity with the ‘Kyakhta pidgin’ of the Russia-China borderland of the XIX century. I suppose that the ‘bazaar pidgin’ can be considered as a marker of the contact space in which the ‘situation of the border’ is realized and specific practices of interaction with migrants are allowed/approved that are unacceptable in other urban areas.

The second type of localities are the tourist and shopping areas of Irkutsk. For the last years such areas often became defined by the residents as ‘Chinese’ as a result of the increase in the number of Chinese tourists. The key marker of such localities is the Chinese language and hieroglyphics on the signboards. Marking such localities through simplified Chinese language
and not always correct signboards is typologically similar to the situation of "ethnic" markets. However, this is a symbol not of contact, but of a contested space for the residents. Thus, commodification of two languages in the space of one city through typologically similar scenarios forms the opposite situations: a contact and a conflict. I suppose that this difference is determined by the difference in the positions of the host society of the Siberian city. In the first case it acts as a majority. In the second case the host society is in position of a trade minority. And both cases are marked through a specific language.

Linguistic Landscapes in the Northern borderlands – a nexus analysis

Pia Lane & Olga Solovova (MultiLing, University of Oslo)

Northern Norway, set in a history of long-standing cross-border trade, cooperation and cultural encounters, is one of the key regions for delving into the complexity of multilingual phenomena. With the end of Cold War and implementation of more flexible border policies due to the establishment of Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, Northern Norway, as other regions neighbouring with ex-URSS, got placed into the heart of geopolitics, global migration and sea trade, security and environmental agenda. In the two decades after the Warsaw Pact dissolution, use and acquisition of Russian by different social actors, including speakers of other languages, has renewed its significance in the multilingual economy of the region. Our LL data come from Kirkenes, the largest town in the Norwegian county of Finnmark situated 15 km from the Russian border. About 10% of its population is Russian-speaking. Speakers of other languages like Kven and Sami have always lived in the area, so the resulting multilayered borderscape makes Kirkenes a very fruitful site for a LL study.

The material aspect of multilingualism sustains Linguistic Landscape (LL) studies since signage may be seen as material outcomes resulting from cycles of discourse and chains of social actions carried out in the past (Scollon 2001, Pietikäinen et al 2011). Drawing on Scollon&Scollon (2003) and Norris (2004), we adopt the concept of frozen action (Pietikäinen et al 2011), i.e. material results of social actions taken in the past and embedded in objects or our physical environment, to develop a preliminary analysis of the Linguistic Landscape in Kirkenes.

The materiality is bound in historicity, so artefacts are situated in the present, and while building on the past, they project possible futures. Therefore they cannot be analysed without including a time perspective (Scollon and Scollon 2004; de Saint-Georges 2005; Lane 2017). Taking a nexus analytical approach, we aim to identify and map some of the significant cycles of discourse embedded in the Kirkenes signage, helping us to trace its history. This exercise will prepare the ground for the next step of our study – investigating current multilingual practices in the region to reveal the deep-running processes across the time.
Road signs as targets: tensions and conviviality in multilingual Northern Norway
Hilde Sollid (UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

In Northern Norway there is a growing interest in using road signs to describe culturally diverse and multilingual communities, but the process of shifting from mono- to multilingual signage, and thus changing the linguistic landscape, is not without controversy. For instance, in Tromsø, the largest city in Northern Norway, even suggestions to put up road signs in Sámi and Norwegian caused an intense debate in 2012 (cf. Hiss 2013), which continues also in 2018. In my talk, however, I will look more closely into a rural community, today called Gáivuotna/Kåfjord/Kaivuono in Sámi, Norwegian and Kven, where the road signs actually have changed from mono- to multilingual. An important context for this change is the municipality’s decision to enter the Sámi administrative area in 1992. This is first of all an initiative to revitalize Sámi language and culture, and part of this new status was an obligation to put up Sámi and Norwegian bilingual road signs. These signs were interpreted as symbols of Sámi heritage and also of decline of Norwegian hegemony, and in fact they literally became targets of frustration in the society. In light of the turmoil in the 1990’s, it is therefore interesting to note that the trilingual signs that were put up in 2016 where quickly and silently accepted.

As Blommaert & Maly (2014) and others show, analyzing the linguistic landscape is a way to identify social changes, and the goal of my talk is to analyze discursive changes indicated by the
changing linguistic landscape in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord/Kaivuono. Scollon & Scollon’s (2004) nexus analysis is a promising methodological frame for tracing present and past discourses. In general road signs are manifestations of our past and present ideas about where and who we are. These signs are frozen actions (cf. Pietikäinen et al. 2011) that discursively describe and construct the landscape and differentiate between places and people in one or more language. As such, signs are mediational tools of power relations in the society (cf. Helander 2014), and thus they are indicators of belonging and of insiders and outsiders (Stroud 2016).

**References**


**Schoolscapes as constructions of multilingualism – a case study of two kindergartens**

Anja Pesch (UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

This presentation explores the construction of multilingualism in the schoolscapes of two kindergartens. The concept of schoolscape (Szabö, 2015; Brown, 2012) is related to the concept of linguistic landscapes (as in for example in Blommaert, 2013), but places these in an educational and institutional context. Brown (2012, p. 282) uses the term *schoolscape* to refer «to the school-based environment where place and text, both written (graphic) and oral, constitute, reproduce, and transform language ideologies». Schoolscapes can be understood as linguistic landscapes that include an educational or pedagogical aim as well as pedagogical ideologies. Although this definition mainly refers to schools, Brown (2012) uses it to analyze the
semiotic landscape of both schools and kindergartens. In this study, I choose to follow her in applying the concept to kindergartens, even though this might be a question to discuss since kindergartens and schools often have different curricula, pedagogical approaches and educational aims.

The pictures of the kindergartens’ schoolscape in this presentation are part of a larger data material, which I collected as part of my PhD when carrying out an ethnographic case study in two kindergartens, one in Norway and one in Germany. Using a nexus analytic approach (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Lane 2014), I study the schoolscapes as practices and explore which discourses on multilingualism circulate through them. According to Szabò (2015), educational institutions have official rooms addressing for example parents and visitors and less official rooms used by students and teachers. One question in my study is therefore whether constructions of multilingualism differ throughout the kindergartens’ schoolscape related to whom they address. Another question is, whose voices can be found in the schoolscape, how they display discourses in place and contribute to types of interaction order (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) between different agents in kindergarten (cf. Ødegaard & Krüger, 2012). Drawing on Garcia and Li Weis (2014) views on multilingualism, the presentation explores which views emerge and how they contribute to forms of iconization, fractal recursivity or erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000).

References


Intended multilingualism? Reading Linguistic Landscapes as representations of space in schools

Judith Purkarthofer (MultiLing, University of Oslo)

Welcome signs in different languages, greetings and other colorful writings can be found in many schools in an effort to express openness towards multilingualism. Drawing on data from a larger multimodal case study, including ethnography, interviews, photo and drawing elicitation, as well as Linguistic Landscapes (Purkarthofer 2017), I will analyse Linguistic Landscapes in the semi-public space of different multilingual and dual-medium primary schools in Austria to understand how they predict or prescribe language practices in their surroundings. Using Lefebvre’s conception of social space (Lefebvre 1991) I examine how the decisions and policies translate into spatialized language regimes which are negotiated among the different actors such as teachers, students and parents. In an attempt to think further, I will ask with Cixous how to “have once on ourselves the other's point of view” (2005, 81) might turn into an interesting analytical tool for Linguistic Landscapes.

References


Murmansk Airport on Instagram: Representations of an Arctic airport through a mediated linguistic landscape

Robert Blackwood (University of Liverpool, UK)

Social network services, such as the image-sharing platform Instagram, provide fascinating datasets of representations of public (or semi-public) spaces, such as airports, which – in the words of Jaworski and Thurlow (2012: 155) – are prime sites for “tracking the contours of multilingualism in contemporary life”. Digital linguistic landscapes invite the researcher to consider the representation of specific sites whose linguistic and semiotic construction is clearly partial and mediated by a host of users, ranging from the Original Poster to those who make meaning by engaging with the uploaded images. Addressing the issue of multilingualism in the High North and Arctic, we explore in this paper the representations of Murmansk Airport as seen through images uploaded to Instagram and geo-tagged at the airport. In particular, we privilege the multilingual public signs that individuals include – deliberately or otherwise – in the images they share, with the intention of discussing how a sense of place is constructed online.

Taking a corpus that covers much of 2018, tropes emerge that present Murmansk Airport as an imbalanced bilingual space, with Russian dominating and English playing a subordinated role. Omitted from the signage captured and distributed through Instagram are the national standard languages of nearby Norway and Finland, and the minority languages such as Sámi. The tension, therefore, between the airport as an emblematic site of mobility in late modernity, and the largely monolingual representation of Murmansk Airport, is productive inasmuch as it engages with Cresswell’s (2006: 225) contrasting of spaces of flows and spaces of place. By way of examples, the bilingual entrance to the Departure Lounge manages the movement of individuals into the airport, whilst the Russian-only Hero City sign on the airport’s roof, anchoring Murmansk in its Soviet past, gives a clear sense of place. These and other examples collectively provide an interesting approach to understanding language contests in the public space.

References


The linguistic landscape of today’s Yerevan

Ludmila Fedorova (Institute of linguistics of Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russia)

Linguistic Landscape (LL) of a city can be considered as a sum of graphic and written signs and texts seen by an observer in the public space. Earlier in the study of the LL in Moscow we accepted that LL can have static and dynamic aspects. The static LL develops along the avenues and streets; it is formed by multilingual and ‘multi-graphic’ advertising billboards, signage on administrative and commercial buildings and shops. The dynamic landscape can be observed during meetings, public processions; it is formed with banners, slogans on the posters. Both static and dynamic LL of Moscow shows language diversity, though of different sort. In the static LL different languages are represented as signs of foreign trademarks, they are addressed to the citizens of a rather high level and to tourists. The dynamic LL is made mostly of Russian texts in different registers – from high poetry to folklore and slang – and includes English as a language of citations.

The object of the present study is the LL of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. Armenia is a monolingual country (96% Armenians, also Kurds, Russians) with the ancient tradition of national writing and culture. In the Soviet period both Armenian and Russian were official languages, with Armenian used in everyday speech and in national culture and Russian used in administration and education as a prestige form (HL). In the post-Soviet period Russian had lost its official status and its role in education was reduced. Now we can see the expansion of English in public space, yet Russian inscriptions are still present. So the static LL is represented with three main languages and three different graphic forms: Armenian, Latin and Cyrillic. It is addressed to citizens and guests. The city turns its face to Europe.

The dynamic LL could be observed during the April-May 2018 revolution, while the multiple mass of people gathered on the main squares of Yerevan. Not only banners and posters, but also motto-inscriptions on baseball caps and T-shirts were made in the national writing, all together with national colors represented the image of national solidarity and monoglossia. Yet there is a meaningful exception. One of the main slogans of the Armenian revolution is the word Դուփով [duxóv] – it is the Instrumental case form of the Russian word dux (‘spirit, moral force’). This word was borrowed in the 60-s when language contacts were strong, and it became a part of slang. The form duxov in the sense ‘with spirit, with courage’ has now become a motto of national solidarity. Today it is also a part of the static LL: it can be seen in shop windows, on the walls of houses, on badges and even on the chest of pigeons on the main Avenue. So the Russian language contributed to the LL of Yerevan in such an indirect way.

The linguistic landscapes of Tatar national Internet

Zufar Makhmutov (Institute of History of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, Russia)

The appearance of the Internet led to the formation of a global virtual space. The so-called ‘national’ or ‘minority’ Internet is one of the phenomena generated by the global web. Currently the scientific use lacks both a stable definition of ‘national Internet’, and a clear idea of it, although we frequently face with such notions, as Runet or Tatnet in the media. In this essay, we understand the ‘national Internet’ as a combination of network resources oriented to an audience the significant share of which consists of one ethnic group. This definition involves the distinction between: a) websites in the language of a given nationality; b) websites in other languages, addressed to members of the same nationality.

The article deals with the study of the Tatar Internet. In 2014 we carried out a language monitoring of 317 websites of the official organizations segment of Tatnet. In 2015 and 2016 we examined the social segment of Tatnet including three Tatar dating sites and Tatar groups in the social network «Vkontakte».

Our analysis shows that the main language for communicating information in the official and social segment of Tatnet is Russian. Tatar is least used in commercial sites. The virtual spheres where Tatar language functions are ethnic groups in the social network «Vkontakte», for instance «KYZYK-MUSIC (Tatarcha humor)» (149 573 members), «Ih shap tatarcha gırlar» (249 228 members), and some sites of Tatar theaters. In these sites, Tatar language is used more often than Russian.

When state communication moves online:
Russian in the virtual linguistic landscape of e-Estonia

Maimu Berezkina (The Norwegian Directorate of eHealth / MultiLing)

Estonia is often referred to as ‘e-Estonia’ and as having a ‘digital society’. The country is rapidly digitizing the public sector, and state institutions have moved most of their communication with the public to the Internet. This paper examines the use of Russian in the virtual linguistic landscape (VLL) (Ivković & Lotherington, 2009) of Estonia’s public sector. I draw on an analysis of the websites of four state institutions, interviews with language managers at these institutions, and visual data collected at their key offices. For investigating the online language policy, I use the method of ‘virtual linguistic ethnography’ (Kelly-Holmes, 2015), which combines virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000) with linguistic landscape analysis.
L1 Russian-speakers constitute almost 30% of Estonia’s total population. Despite this, Estonian has been the single official language of the country since the restoration of independence in 1991, and the vast majority of public arenas in Estonia continue stressing monolingual norms. The official language policy in Estonia privileges the titular language in official communication between the state and the people and makes no reference to Russian. This paper reveals that despite an overt monolingual language policy and the erasure (Irvine & Gal, 2000) of Russian from official legislation in Estonia, it is widely present in the VLL of the country’s public sector. The interviews show that this is largely due to a practical necessity, and that state institutions in Estonia are ‘playing on the borderline’ between official legislation and real-life communicational needs. In this paper, I argue that language choice on public sector websites can offer an important additional measure of the vitality and status of different languages in highly digitized countries.

References


Where post-Soviet never ends: Russian language and identity in the linguistic landscapes of Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria

Sebastian Muth (Lancaster University)

In recent years, a considerable body of work has studied the linguistic landscapes of the countries of the former Soviet Union, covering a wide geographical area and ranging from diachronic perspectives of language change, the representation of minority languages, the commodity value of Russian, or the public sphere as an arena for identity politics. However, to date there is only little research that addresses the role of the Russian language outside of Russia not as a language of conflict and contest but as an expression of outward orientation, political identity and allegiance. This particular constellation becomes visible in the linguistic landscapes of three largely unrecognized and internationally contested territories in the post-
Soviet peripheries, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. While all three share aspects commonly associated with that of nation states within largely hostile geopolitical environments, all are in varying degrees dependent on Russia for its continuous existence. At the same time, Russian continues to be an uncontested language of wider communication and upward social mobility, either alongside a national language (Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia), or as the national language itself within a multilingual region (Transnistria).

Within this context and backed up by ethnographic data from Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria, in this presentation I will highlight the continuing significance of Russian in the three territories and argue that from the perspective of linguistic landscape research there is much to uncover: On the one hand a look at language use in the public sphere illustrates alternative trajectories of Russian that do not mirror explicit or implicit attempts of de-russification visible in parts of the former Soviet Union such as Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, or Kazakhstan. On the other hand, linguistic landscape research highlights in which circumstances and under which conditions Russian becomes a language of exceptional value within both economic and political contexts. In addition to that, this illustrates how a continuing relationship between (post)-Soviet Russia and its peripheries finds its manifestation in language use, underscoring commonly recurring themes such as outward work migration, tourism, education and the media.

**Place and mobility: The linguistic landscape in contemporary globalization**

Elizabeth Lanza (MultiLing, University of Oslo)

The linguistic landscape has proven to be a fruitful approach for investigating the intersection between language, communication, and space in the public sphere in contemporary globalized society. Space, as Cresswell (2015) points out, can be attributed meaning and thereby become place, and the linguistic landscape contributes to this process. Akin to the notion of place is that of social space, which Lefebvre (1991) and Massey (2005) argue is negotiated between actors with their discursive power, material constraints, and spatial practices. Moriarty (2014: 457) proposes investigating language practices in the linguistic landscape, focusing on “language in motion, a process by which different linguistic resources are in a state of translocality, meaning they are on the move across various trajectories of time and space”. In my talk, I will address these notions of place and mobility through an overview of work on the linguistic landscape in areas as diverse as Ethiopia and Norway. The linguistic landscape has proved valuable as a sociolinguistic lens in explorations of complex issues in Ethiopia concerning language policy, identity constructions, language contact, and the sociolinguistics of globalization (cf. Lanza & Woldemariam 2014; Woldemariam & Lanza 2014; Blackwood, Lanza & Woldemariam 2016).
Current collaborative work in Oslo provides another perspective to place and mobility as demonstrated in the linguistic landscape, namely gentrification. In my discussion, I will highlight the impact and importance of different types of data in studying the linguistic landscape.


