

Svetlana Atanasova. *Exploring Local Linguistic Scenery Amongst Superdiversity. A Small Place in the Global Landscape.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022. 145. ISBN 1-5275-7631-0; ISBN13: 978-1-5275-7631-5.

The monograph explores the linguistic landscape of the city of Veliko Tarnovo and its public inscriptions within the theoretical framework of Linguistic Landscaping Studies, a growing branch of sociolinguistics. The theoretical framework of this critical undertaking is characterized by considerable diversity, but the author does her best to provide a comprehensive overview of the major theoretical approaches that deal with the study of language in the public landscape. Thus, attention focuses on ethnographic approaches, including ethnopoetics and the study of voice, geosemiotics, the sociological study of the linguistic landscape as a *gestalt*, the multidisciplinary approach of the mapping technique, and the sociolinguistics of complexity. The local landscape is sketched out against the canvas of a globalizing and superdiverse world where space acquires special agentive properties as it becomes an instrument of power and control both constructing and reflecting social reality. Its agentive power is produced by the signs that exist in social space. Signs in public space are studied not only as linguistic written objects but also as material and semiotic entities. Visuality, historicity, and indexicality are all aspects of the study of signs as semiotic objects and these perspectives are discussed in detail in the book's first chapter.

Chapter two presents the linguistic landscape of the Bulgarian city of Veliko Tarnovo and provides detailed information about the ways in which foreign languages are taught there. Foreign language teaching is identified as the means of promoting foreign language use in an otherwise predominantly monolingual environment. Chapter three is concerned with signs and their function in public space, while chapter four discusses the typology of public signs that best reflects their function in the surrounding context.

The growing interest in written public inscriptions makes it necessary to pay special attention to different types of literacy existing in a given society and manifesting themselves in the local landscape/s. Using languages different from the local one is a frequent phenomenon in many linguistic landscapes. The cityscape of Veliko Tarnovo encompasses a variety of foreign languages the use of which is the result of foreign language learning. Within this framework, the author distinguishes between two major ways of writing in Bulgarian and, most frequently, English as a global language: mirror images and mixed writing.

Chapter five focuses on the role of mirror images and their production. The mirror image of a sign is obtained through a process of sign conversion whereby an original inscription in Bulgarian is converted into an inscription in English. It includes translation, which requires good command of the foreign language, but is not limited to it. Other aspects of sign conversion include transliteration, sometimes transcription, as well as rendering all accompanying paralinguistic aspects (e. g. use of punctuation), aspects of visual design (e.g. top-bottom or centre-margin positioning of the global versus the local code), ordering of information entities, and complete or partial transfer of information. Mirror imaging is monoglossic and aims at correct spelling and punctuation.

Mixed writing is discussed in chapter six. It is a heteroglossic and recalcitrant form of writing. Patterns of mixing languages vary from combining words and phrases from different languages on the syntactic level to producing blends by mixing parts of words on the level of morphology, and to their subtlest merging on the level of spelling and inscription generating various associations and implying different pronunciations. While mirror imaging brings into focus the informative aspects of signs, mixed inscriptions rely on the symbolic function of the foreign elements employed in them.

The sociolinguistic analysis of public inscriptions, whether mirror images or mixed inscriptions, requires an adequate analysis that considers the linguistic features of a given language and not the language itself, as named languages are ideological abstractions. What we see in public inscriptions is not languages as such, but linguistic features associated with different languages and loaded with different symbolic meanings. Thus, while mirror images are employed by sign makers to keep the linguistic features of two (sometimes three) different languages distinct to produce an almost ideal image of an original sign, mixed inscriptions make it difficult to identify what language they are written in. In mixed inscriptions, we can identify the features of the language employed but not the language to which they belong. Therefore, mirror images stand closer to our idealized concept of a named language, while mixed inscriptions represent different ideologies, they display partial knowledge of foreign languages and produce voice in the local landscape by incorporating in it decontextualized messages and global discourses.

Chapter seven provides an all-embracing picture of the linguistic landscape of Veliko Tarnovo. Assuming that the languages used in the landscape have two fundamental functions, symbolic and informative, the two of them, Bulgarian and English, that most frequently occur in the local public space, are used primarily in an informative function: Bulgarian for local citizens and English, as a global language, for foreign visitors. These two languages are also used symbolically: English in mixed inscriptions to symbolize global values and the values of the modern superdiverse world, and Bulgarian as a symbolic linguistic repository of local history and traditions. Other languages that are visible in the landscape are Italian and Greek mainly associated with restaurants and places to eat. Their use opens a space for a specific exploration of the linguistic landscape through typographic landscaping, that is, the semiotic study of the material font and shape of public inscriptions.

Finally, chapter eight dwells on the participation framework that is reflected in the public signage constructing the landscape. Participants in social discourses are presented as belonging to two major groups: sign makers and sign consumers. Tracing and identifying them is not an easy task and different models of deconstructing these roles are discussed in the chapter. Special attention is paid to the role of the tourist, as it helps see how the global world interacts with the local environment. Local participants are also “inscribed” in the public space as both authorized and unauthorized constructors of the landscape.

Overall, Svetlana Atanassova’s book is a timely contribution to the development of linguistic landscaping studies (LLS), a vigorously growing new branch of sociolinguistics. One of its merits is the perspicacious analysis of at least two reciprocal processes that are currently at work in global linguistic space: the englobing presence of international languages such as English that reshape the local linguistic landscape and the reverse process that stages their localization through mirror imaging. By explaining the mechanisms and forms of such cross-cultural linguistic interactions, the monograph takes part in the intensive discussions of *minor* languages as world languages and will be of interest to researchers in the fields of sociolinguistics, LLS, translators, language teachers, and students.

**Department of English and American Studies
University of Veliko Tarnovo**

Gergana Kusheva

CORRESPONDENCE: Dr Gergana Kusheva, Department of English and American Studies, University of Veliko Tarnovo, 2 Teodosi Tarnovski St., Veliko Tarnovo 5003, Bulgaria.

@g.kusheva@ts.uni-vt.bg

