

МЕСТНИЯТ ЕЗИКОВ ЛАНДШАФТ В КОНТЕКСТА НА ГЛОБАЛНИЯ СВЯТ LOCAL LINGUISTIC SCENERY IN GLOBAL WORLD CONTEXT

Svetlana Atanassova, *Exploring Local Linguistic Scenery amongst Superdiversity: A Small Place in the Global Landscape*. New Castle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022, 139 p. ISBN (10): 1-5275-7631-0, ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-7631-5

Svetlana Atanassova's monograph *Exploring Local Linguistic Scenery amongst Superdiversity: A Small Place in the Global Landscape* is devoted to the signs in public space – a new field in sociolinguistics, called Linguistic Landscaping Studies (LLS), which has recently attracted the attention of many researchers. It assesses the relationship between public signs, community and authority in urban places in the global community. The author of the book conveys an idea of saving, not marginalizing the native language as a system of signs and demonstrates its function through arguments and evidence. The author regards a place to be a complex and polycentric sociolinguistic system, consisting of different layers. The emplacement of discourse and language in the landscape is authorized in a sociocultural way and is related to the history and life experiences of individual social actors.

The monograph consists of eight parts offering a profound analysis of signs in public space visually supported by pictures, a conclusion, and a list of references. The chapters are ordered thematically, reflecting the chronological and historical aspects of the object of analysis – the local public space. To support the thesis, the author has organized the book logically, underpinning the analysis by adequate theoretical principles and methods of research. The linguistic analysis is illustrated by a collection of visual material (pictures of public inscriptions).

The first chapter highlights the academic conversation that the author had with scholars who worked in the field previously. This section discusses the sources used and the methodology of research. The author methodically develops the thesis to show the complicated nature of writing in the Bulgarian public space from the point of view of J. Blommaert's ethnographic analysis of signs and public inscriptions. As she says, "I adopted the analysis of a place as a complex and polycentric sociolinguistic system, consisting of different layers. This system is best studied from a historical perspective - not as a static phenomenon but as the result of a process of becoming." (p. 3 of the monograph). The book has a new focus of interest – space, which forms a different triad of relationships: the one between people, language, and space. In this regard, the author discusses the semiotic aspects of signs, trying to explain their functions in the local landscape engendered by their doubly indexical nature. From a practical point of view, this method looks attractive for the contemporary research of a linguistic landscape in the globalized world. Space is seen as an agent, participating actively in the process of communication: "The perspective of analyzing space as an instrument of power and as a social actor makes it historical. It is full of expectations, norms and codes regarding people's behavior and is closely associated with cultural traditions. Space is controlled by people and at the same time, it controls them. If we analyze this relationship deeper, we will see that it is indexical. Social, cultural and political structures are inscribed in the linguistic landscape and the landscape reflects these structures". (p. 6)

The author expresses a comprehensive view on the subject of LLS, so we can assume that her monograph is a synthesis of the major theoretical approaches to Linguistic Landscaping Studies includ-

ing geosemiotics, the mapping technique, the sociological approach to linguistic landscape analysis as a gestalt, the ethnographic approaches, sociolinguistics, and onomastics. Atanassova discusses and reassembles these approaches with a new insight and interpretation. The author's research of the local landscape is supported by a large number of works published by Bulgarian and foreign researchers but in the monograph we find a unique approach to the analysis of the material collected by Atanassova and several interesting conclusions. The analysis of the linguistic landscape is carried out from the perspective of the communicative processes in social, cultural, and political diversities. S. Atanassova begins the linguistic landscape analysis of her native town Veliko Turnovo with the presumption that it is a monolingual town, in which people use only one language for communication. However, the public inscriptions in languages other than Bulgarian abounding in the local space reveal a completely different picture – due to the influence of foreign language instruction foreign languages become visible in the landscape and their presence indexes different values and attitudes. For the purposes of the monograph, the author has constructed a public sign typology, based on the approaches of Benjamin Spolsky, Jan Blommaert, R. Scollon and S. W. Scollon (p. 42–43).

Throughout chapter 6 “Code blending: literacy, transliteracy, orthography, and heterography” the author claims that the choice of medium of communication indicates the social function of communication. With this in mind, S. Atanassova argues that code preference may be based either on geopolitical indexing or on symbolisation carrying socio-cultural associations. A non-standard approach to public writing explaining the difference between elite and non-elite forms of writing is to use the concept of centripetal and centrifugal forces proposed by M. Bakhtin. The author indicates the significance of rules and regulations, which view language as monoglossic – that is, homogeneous. However, there are alternative forms of writing – heteroglossic, called also “grassroots literacy” (a term borrowed from J. Blommaert): “Any live language”, she states, “is a blend of different language uses. Therefore, another range of forces – centrifugal (heteroglossic or socially distinguishing) – also operates in language”. (p. 75). Atanassova makes sure to point out that linguistic behavior is based on the use of linguistic features. She speaks on a shift in the analysis of use – from language as an ideological and institutional abstraction to resources, which include actual and observable ways of using language. Both features individually and languages as wholes are associated with values, meanings, speakers, and so on.

Writing about the role and place of the English language of the linguistic landscape of Veliko Turnovo, the author has observed two main ways of using it – translanguaged writing and mirror images. Translanguaged writing involves mixing at four levels of language – semantic, morphological, phonological and spelling. A similar problem – hybridization of language units is also observed in Kazakhstani linguistic landscape and that is why the monograph will be valuable to researchers in the same field in Kazakhstan. As a citizen of a multilingual country, which has recently aimed at independence, I should state that choice of language for writing in public as well as adherence to different types of literacy is significant in multilingual areas. Language mixing manifests the mobility of the users' vocabulary, their creativity and openness to the global world, states the author.

The main argument in chapter 7 is the symbolic use of Bulgarian and of other foreign languages (English, Italian, and Greek). Atanassova writes about their co-existence in the landscape – each language serving as a symbol indexing the country of its origin. Another contemporary debate she brings up is the co-existence of public inscriptions written in different periods – in the communist era and nowadays. She writes: “the two layers of the sign complex work together embodying different ideologies and indexing groups of citizens and visitors belonging to different times, but at the same time complementing each other by exploiting different semiotic modalities (p. 112). Further, she assumes that in the landscape of Veliko Turnovo, English as a global language along with Bulgarian stands as a tool for helping people to find their way in an informative space, but she also points out its symbolic functions – it can be interpreted as a symbol of high-quality education, prestige, and affiliation with the global world. This trend regarding the role of English in Kazakhstan is similar to the one Bulgaria, but we are not talking about the prestige of one language in this case. The reason for this is the multi-vector policy as well as the multilingualism policy of our state. Another important aspect in the landscape of Veliko Tarnovo survey is the function of the signs “behind the stage” or their “backstage life” to use the term of E. Goffman.

If chapter 7 discusses the linguistic landscape as a gestalt, chapter 8 focuses on its participants involved in an active process of sign making and language management. In the final chapter of her monograph, S. Atanassova draws attention to the role of the people behind the signs involved in various types of interaction and taking on different social roles inscribed in the public space – the roles of the tourist, the guide, the language learner and the translator are discussed in detail.

Throughout the book, Atanassova demonstrates that the local landscape of Veliko Turnovo is a part of the world and the people of the town are part of the global landscape while at the same time they preserve their own cultural identity. The conclusion of the monograph summarizes the author's main arguments that the writers of public inscriptions strive to produce a global identity by using the global language, which does not necessarily marginalize their native local language. Atanassova's fundamental argument is vitally important when we need to discuss and understand local linguistic scenery amongst superdiversity.

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