Linguistic Landscape Approach to Language Visibility in Post-Soviet Baku

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Abstract

The paper aims to apply the concept of linguistic landscape as a social science theoretical framework to language visibility in post-Soviet Baku as it is assumed that radical shifts in a society inflict radical changes in the balance of language power. The rationale to focus on both top-down signs and bottom-up signs in the central part of Baku was to detect the overt official language policy and to determine whether the official language policy was backed by the entrepreneurs. Findings showed that the shift has radically changed the functional balance of language power. Russian, which experienced unlimited power during the Soviet period, has significantly weakened. English has sharply strengthened its position. Many functions that Russian used to fulfill have been taken over by English. Turkish has a huge impact on Azerbaijani. Three tendencies can be observed: returning to Turkic roots, de-Russification and linguistic globalization.

Keywords

Linguistic landscape, post-Soviet Baku, language policy, language power, globalization

1. Introduction

The aim of the present study is to focus on the language use in public signs in Baku by applying the Theory of Linguistic Landscape (LL) which has been one of the hot linguistic issues that the sociolinguistic community has been engaged in the last two decades. The rationale behind the choice was the assumption that language is designed to fulfill two im-

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portant functions: informational and symbolic. Therefore, appearance of any language sign in public space is never arbitrary. The focus in the present study is on the symbolic function of public signs.

Linguistic Landscape is a young field of quest which is establishing its epistemology, although it has been addressed by special journal issues, books and a great many articles. Although both urban and rural areas have been focused on, the term landscape collocates mostly with cities. The reason for the choice of urban places seems to be quite convincing. First of all, mostly cities are bi- or multi-lingual. Second of all, multilingual cities are places where each spot is commoditized. In other words, all contesting forces, both local and global, can easily be observed in a relatively small location. Finally, the official stance of the government in terms of language policy can be better mirrored in metropolitan areas rather than in rural ones. From this viewpoint, the choice of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, has its own justification. The fact that language reflects the processes in the country, it can be assumed that the cardinal changes taken place inevitably influence the language balance. Therefore, it would be interesting to internalize these changes. Moreover, Baku, as a multilingual city with the representatives of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, can serve as a laboratory to focus on how different forces conflict or coordinate their attitudes. Lastly, with globalization, a new player appeared in the local markets: English. Thus, it will be interesting to see the functions it experiences in the Azeri language market and the attitudes it enjoys. It would also be interesting to see its power and prestige vis-à-vis Russian which had been evolved to the second 'native' language or at least lingua franca at least.

2. The Concept of Linguistic Landscape

The concept of Linguistic Landscape originates from sociological theories of social action with several hypotheses one of which proposed by Bourdieu (cited in Ben-Rafael, Amara and Trumper-Hecht 2006) implies that social reality should be treated as fields of interconnected and more or less autonomous facts structured by unequal power relations. Moreover, each of these categories or facts needs to be analyzed in terms of its own mutually affected dynamics. According to the second sociological theory of social action hypothesis proposed by Goffman (see Ben-Rafael, Amara and Trumper-Hecht 2006), social action is determined by the desire of presentation of self. In fact, this approach is preferred by researchers studying the importance of ethnic communities who desire to assert themselves in the public space. Finally, the theory is based on the idea that social action is

accounted for the rational considerations of alternates. In other words, actors' considerations inform about choices which are determined by interests in obtaining goals. Thus, each of these theories is significant for LL research in three ways. The first perspective, the relationship among different codes in a public space, should be explainable in terms power relationship among various ethnic groups. Also, from the second perspective, present-of-self, it can be hypothesized that identity markers of various communities imprint themselves in the public space. Finally, from good perspective, linguistic structures and characteristics can be interpreted in terms of linguistic landscape actors' interests vis-à-vis the public.

The working definition for the present paper is the one proposed by Landry and Bourhis: "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street signs place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration" (1997: 25).

Concerning the scope and the perspectives, the literature review shows that the range of objects addressed in the studies of linguistic landscapes is very diverse and the issue of linguistic landscapes has been focused from various perspectives. Theoretical, methodological, multidisciplinary, ideological, language awareness, globalization of English and semiotic perspectives are among the most frequently taken ones. As language also fulfills symbolic functions, linguistic landscape analysis can provide valuable insights into how languages exercise power, cooperate or compete. As Landry and Bourhis (1997: 23) demonstrate, "the linguistic landscape may serve important informational and symbolic functions as a marker of relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting the territory".

It should also be mentioned that linguistic landscaping is a dynamic process and processes taking place in the society inevitably leave traces in language visibility. Therefore, it is inevitable that linguistic landscapes of Eastern bloc countries including those of former Soviet countries have been among the focal points in the studies due to the recent radical changes. As Du Plessis (2010: 74) mentions, "a change in regime can bring about a change in the linguistic landscape" and it "then becomes one of the most 'vocal' and concrete indicators of consequential language regime change". That might be one of the reasons why post-Soviet space has been among the foci (Yurchak 2000, Gendelman and Aiello 2010, Pavlenko 2009, 2010, etc.). However, linguistic landscape of Azerbaijan has rarely been focused on although it may serve as real laboratory of multilingualism in function. In fact, there are two articles. One of these articles focuses

(Sadıkhova and Abadi 2000) on the general panorama of the linguistic landscape of Baku after the collapse of the USSR. The other article deals with the removal of the Azerbaijani language in a city which is under Armenia's occupation (Muth 2013).

3. The Study

Due to feasibility and practicality considerations, the study limited its focus with the central part of Baku which can serve as a presentative sample for the whole city. The area can be imagined as a triangle with *28 May* metro station, *İç ri ş h r* metro station and *D niz Vağzalı* with its angles. All public signs containing language in this area were photographed. The total number of photos was about eight hundred. The objects included both private enterprises (shops, firms, markets, hotels, etc.) and public institutions (police stations, schools, universities, museums, libraries, etc.). The next step was to eliminate those samples which were not relevant for the purpose. Then, the samples were categorized as top-down and bottom-up. The former included public institutions which could reflect the official attitude to language functioning, that is, towards official language policy while the latter included private enterprises which could enable the researcher to see people's attitude towards language. The last step was categorizing the public signs in accordance with the field they represented such as art, banks, education, jewelry, markets, etc.

As was mentioned before, the theoretical framework in this paper is the social science approach with three perspectives: power relationship, presentation-of-self and good reasons. The rationale for taking such an approach can be explained by the assumption that public space is an arena where various forces compete to exercise power. Also, communities or social forces residing in a certain territory have a need to demonstrate their identity, and linguistic signs in a public can be used to mark their identity. Finally, languages on public signs and their characteristics refer to the interests of actors in relation to the public. Although all these perspectives are important, emphasis will mostly be placed on two of them: power relations and presentation-of-self. In other words, emphasis will be placed on the relationship between the frequencies of visibility of languages in the public and the degree of power they possess.

Methodology used here is based on the elements of nexus analysis and critical discourse analysis. The motivation for this is that elements can be understood better if considered in a network connected with other elements in various ways. Moreover, simple quantitative data will unlikely help to explain many things: contextualization of facts and getting insights into them by referring to

political, social and psychological factors can be more effective. This is quite logical since, as Hélot, Janssens, and Bagna (2012: 17) mention, "the extraordinary diversity of the LL all over the world can be seen as the linguistic mirror of the dynamics of our globalized society" which is "moulded in fluid and dynamic ways by different historical, social, political, ideological, geographic and demographic factors…".

3.1. Language policy of post-Soviet Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has always been a multilingual country and this tendency is on today although ethnic compartmentalization process has accelerated nearly in all post-Soviet countries. According to the statistical data, along with the titular nation, Azerbaijan is inhabited by Lezgins, Armenians, Russians, Talyshs, Avars, Ukrainians, Georgians, Sakhurs, Jews, Kurds, etc. One of the important points here is the fact that, native-language proficiency of these minorities is very high (Shibliyev and Osam 2003). This might be the result of the positive attitudes to these minorities whose language rights are protected by the state.

Language has been considered one of the important elements of nation-building process in post-Soviet Azerbaijan and a symbol of its independence. Therefore, there was a need to create legal base for language management. In other words, the orientations in fundamental transformations seriously impacted language situation and balance of power of languages in Azerbaijan: there was a need to adopt a new language policy which could meet the ideological imperatives. Such a language policy covered all three constituents: status, corpus and acquisition.

The issue of status planning became a hot issue during the early days of the independence as language acquired a symbolic value. Moreover, it was directly associated with the issue of identity let alone its consolidating role. In fact, this identity issue was based on *Türklük* (Turkic common core) and *Az rbaycanlılık* (peculiarism) dilemma, which was not a new topic (see Shibliyev 2005). The government in power during that period, *Xalg C bh si*, supported the policy of *Türklük*. Therefore, according to the Law on the State language adopted in 1992, the state language of Azerbaijan was *Turkish* or *Azeri Turkish*. The justification here was to restore historical justice as it was the 1937 Stalin Constitution that named the language as *Azerbaycan dili* as the people were *Az rbaycan türkl ri*. However, in 1995 *Xalg C bh si* was overthrown, the Constitution was amended: the name of the language was changed from *Az rbaycan Türkc si* to *Az rbaycan dili* (Azerbaijan const. art 21). In fact, it was a 'legal' shift in identity.

During the early years of independence, hot debates were centered on alphabet change rather than lexical standardization or modernization in terms of corpus planning. This was justifiable since there was no need for standardization and modernization needed to be an on-going process. In this context, the alphabetical issue was of great importance as it happened two times before (see Shibliyev 2005). Thus, one of the first legal acts taken by the young democracy was the shift from Cyrillic to modified Latin: in 1991 the *Milli M clis*, the Azerbaijan parliament, adopted the Law on the Restoration of the Latin-based Azerbaijani alphabet. The rationale behind this cannot be explained by linguistic considerations only, rather political, psychological and pragmatics considerations were involved. However, the most important one seems to be psychological and political. In other words, shifting from Cyrillic to Latin was seen as a symbol of independence, de-Russification, and shift in orientation towards the West.

Since 1991 many legal acts have been taken which deal with language management. One of the important language laws that concerns language visibility is the one adopted in 1998 which regulates language management in topography (place names). The law envisages that all place names must be written in accordance with the rules of the state language, and in case when they are written in a foreign language as well, the foreign-language text should follow the text in Azerbaijani. Moreover, it must occupy less space. Also, the use of the state language on labels of imported and exported goods is also regulated by Laws adopted in 1995, 1997 and 1999. In accordance with Article 315 of the Code of Administrative Offences, those who violate the law are legally punished (see Garibova and Asgarova 2009: 196).

Adoption of legal acts concerning language management and the process of realization of provisions of various language-related laws intensified after 2000s. In 2001 the presidential Decree on the Improvement of the Implementation of the State Language was adopted. According to the Decree, it was obligatory for local authorities to use Latin street signs and advertisements and the Language Law adopted in 2002 underscored the role of state language as a symbol of Azerbaijan's independent statehood and placed emphasis on its protection and development. Article 7 envisages the use of the state language in the field of service, advertisements and announcements. It is mentioned that along with the state language other languages can also be used in advertisements and announcements. But the area they occupy cannot be larger than that of in the state language and they must be written after the text in Azerbaijani language (Article 7.1).

Article 9 deals with the size of the characters and the sequence of languages in case when a foreign language is also used in signs (see *Az rbaycan Respublikasın da dövl t dili haqqında 30 sentyabr 2002-ci il; N: 365-IIQ*).

The most recent document concerning language management is the State Program on the use of the Azerbaijani language in the epoch of globalization. The Program covers the period between 2013 and 2020. It underscores the need to develop the language so that it could meet the requirements in the epoch of globalization. The Program deals with the tasks to be dealt with: systematizing the vocabulary stock and its grammatical norms; investigating language situations and language contacts (3.1.11). The program touches upon the mechanisms of dealing with the violations of norms of the literary language in advertisements, announcements and billboards (4.1.13). Among the tasks set for 2013-2014, the program mentions of establishing 'hot line' through which citizens could report of the cases when the norms of the literary language are violated in advertisements, in the names of cafes and restaurants etc. It is believed here that in this way the language can be protected and its purity can be achieved. The program also underscores the importance of carrying out systematic work against violations in writing street names, advertisements and announcements in accordance with the norms of the Azerbaijani language.

One of the important points that the Program speaks of is the task to intensify the comparative study of Turkic phonology, vocabulary and grammar, and also launching joint projects to prepare common alphabet, terminology and literary language. Another important point is the task to prepare programs to provide transliteration from Azerbaijan alphabet to other alphabets based on the national transliteration standards. Thus, many legal acts have been taken. But, the most important question is whether the laws and programs are realized in both directions, top-down and bottom-up. In this study, the focus will be on this issue.

The analysis of the changes taking place during the two decades that lapsed after the collapse of the Soviet union revealed: (a) influx of the *Türkiye Türkçesi* elements; (b) purification in the direction of getting rid of Arabic, Persian and Russian elements; (c) influx of anglicisms under the cover of globalization; and, (d) enrichment of the standard variety at the expense of the internal resources of the Azerbaijani language.

3. 2. Data Analysis
3.2.1. Top-down Approach

The objects under consideration were classified in accordance with their mission assigned for them. As was mentioned above, the visual data was grouped under the domains as art, state banks, education, state organs and law. Furthermore, the public signs were subjected to two different types of processing; (a) categorization based on the languages visible on the signs (monolinguals, bilinguals and trilinguals); (b) categorization based on the names of the enterprise, the languages that provided additional information and other notes. The problem here was that many shop names represented international trademarks. Therefore, it is hard to define the language they might pertain (e.g. Nike, Adidas, etc.).

Data analysis revealed that two-thirds of the subset of art which included public theatres, concert halls, cinemas, museums, etc., was monolingual Azerbaijani, i.e. in the official language whereas one-thirds was bilingual containing Azerbaijani and English. The only Azerbaijani-Russian sign was in front of the theatre which traditionally stages plays in Russian (Appendix A, Figure 1). There was also a note in Russian at the door of a cinema to inform that tickets could be obtained inside (
). This shows that in the domain of art Russian has nearly lost its Soviet-era role of a second language. This function seems to be acquired by English. What concerns the size of the characters and the sequence of languages, the provisions of the language law concerning the relevant issues, were ignored.

Signs on state banks were one the categories to focus on. Exactly half of the inscriptions in front of the state banks were monolingual Azerbaijani (e.g. *Az rbaycan Respublikasının Dövl t Bankı*) while one of them was monolingual English sign (e.g. *Access Bank*). In fact, this is in breach with the official language policy which envisages the obligatory use of the state language. Two inscriptions were Azerbaijani-English bilingual signs. As with the previous subset, traditional Azerbaijani-Russian bilingualism has completely been replaced by Azerbaijani-English bilingualism.

The data analysis of the subset of education which included institutions of various levels (kindergartens, secondary schools, universities, etc.) showed that there was not any consistency in language choice on the labels. While the majority of university labels were Azerbaijani-English bilingual ones (e.g. *Az rbaycan Dövl t Neft Akademiyası – Azerbaijan State Oil Academy*), there were still monolingual Azerbaijani labels (e.g. *Az rbaycan Ictimai-siyasi Universiteti*). On the other hand, the signs referring to secondary schools and kinder-

gartens were in Azerbaijani only. The provisions of the language law regulating the size of the characters and the order of languages were ignored. In other words, the official authorities seemed reluctant to obey the official language policy. It was found out that bilingual signs significantly prevail in this domain: of seventeen public signs, only five were monolingual Azerbaijani signs.

Similar attitudes to language use on the signs of state organs were observed: the choice of languages seemed to be absolutely arbitrary. It was impossible to realize why some signs were monolingual while others were bilingual. It could also be observed that the share of public signs in the state language prevails although the number of bilingual signs cannot be underestimated: of thirty-three public signs nine were bilingual (e.g. *Az rbaycan Respublikasının Diaspo-la Iş Üzr Dövl t Komit si - Azerbaijan Republic State Committee on Affairs with Diaspora).*Finally, as with the previous subsets, Russian which was the obligatory part of bilingual signs during the Soviet period, had completely disappeared in the public space in the given domain. Concerning the space given to languages and their sequence, the situation was not different from the previous ones. In fact, the same can be stated concerning the subset of law which included police stations, courts, institutions of justice, etc. For instance, in most places, police headquarter signs were in the state language, but some of them were written in both Azerbaijani and English. In fact, 12 of 15 public signs were in the state language while three bilingual. It could be observed that Russian was completely non-existent.

Thus, data analysis concerning top-down signs revealed that there is no consistency in the realization of the language policy especially in the use of foreign languages in the labels. In other words, the choice of languages seemed to be arbitrary. Moreover, the law stipulating the size of the characters and the order of languages characters was mostly overlooked. Concerning the role of Russian, it was observed that it had nearly lost its Soviet-era role as to function as a second language and this function had been taken by English. Moreover, in case when Russian was used in some labels, the information given in those labels was subsidiary. It should also be noted that Azerbaijani-Russian bilingualism in signs has completely disappeared. The only Azerbaijani-Russian sign was in front of the theatre which has traditionally been staging plays in Russian only. In fact, the same situation was true for all top-down categories. The provisions of the language law were ignored in the domain of banking where most of the signs were in foreign languages only. This is in breach with the official language policy which envisages the obligatory use of the state language.

3.2.2. Bottom-up Approach

Unlike top-down public signs which may enable to see the official attitudes towards language use, bottom-up public signs (e.g. private ones) may indicate people's attitudes towards languages. In other words, it would be important to see the attitudes or language awareness indirectly, that is, judging on how they name their private businesses. As will be seen, bottom-up signs will differ from top-down ones in some ways including their frequency and diversity of languages.

It needs also to be mentioned that categorization or codification in bottom-up sings differs from those of top-down ones in some respects. This, above all, can be explained with the huge diversity of privately-owned objects. Although there are some categories that are common (education, banks, etc.), the great majority of objects that can subsume bottom-up signs are different. In fact, this subset consists of 14 spheres like private banks, education, barber shops or beauty homes, tourism, jewelry, markets, business centers or firms, clothes, accessories and so on. It also includes catering and entertainment.

Data analysis revealed that nearly half of the private banks (22 of 43) were in monolingual Azerbaijani, and eight were in monolingual English. Unlike the signs of state owned banks, some private banks with their signs in monolingual Turkish (Figure 2) could be seen. The extensive use of Azerbaijani-English bilingualism was also evident. In fact, Russian was used only in some trilingual signs and this implies that Russian is on the verge of disappearance in the domain leaving its previous functions to English. One of the new tendencies was found to be the use of transliteration (e.g. *United Credit-Yunayted Kredit*). In general, it could be seen that private banks were reluctant to abide with the provisions of language laws concerning the place of foreign languages in public signs.

Similar situation could be observed in the domain of barber shops or beauty salons where some of the signs were monolingual Azerbaijani ones (e.g. *X dic Göz llik salonu, Leyla Göz llik salonu*). However, in most cases, the names of the objects were foreign names (e.g. *Vision, Adelina, Bella, Isabella, Isida*), and only informatory parts were in the state language. Two of the monolingual ones were in English only. Using transliteration was also encountered (*Byuti klub - Beauty Club*).

Twelve of thirteen bilingual signs contained Azerbaijani and English while one of them contained Azerbaijani-Russian bilingual elements. The situation with trilingual signs looked a bit different: of four trilingual signs, two contained Azerbaijani, English and Russian elements. One of the trilingual signs contained Azerbaijani-English-Turkish trilingualism. It should also be men-

tioned that most of the names in both bilingual and monolingual were not from the state language (e.g. *Best, Grace Beauty Complex, Elegance, Crystilla, Lady Style*, etc.). There was also transliteration of a Russian word: *Obraztsovi*, which was given to attract Russian-speaking customers. Thus, as can be seen, Azerbaijani-Russian bilingualism has nearly disappeared in bilingual texts and as with previous cases; English has taken its function over. Turkish seems to be on its way to be one of the actors in the domain.

The most striking feature of the subset of tourism was the non-existence of monolingual Azerbaijani signs. In fact, the great majority of the signs in this domain were monolingual English (Figure 3). It was found out that eight of the signs were Azerbaijani-English bilingual ones. There seems to be a tendency to give English names to local hotels (*12 Inn hotel, Swan hotel, Azcot hotel*, etc.). Only one travel agency contained a word from the state language (e.g. *Mirvari*). This contradicts the official language policy of the country. Concerning Russian, it has completely disappeared in the domain of tourism. In fact, the deficiency of signs representing the official language of the country was also observed in the subset of jewelry: only two of the seventeen signs pertaining to the given sphere were monolingual Azerbaijani (*Zümrüd* and *Firuz*) and two the bilingual ones contained the Azerbaijani text as well (*Midia z rg rlik* and *Z rg rlik Le-Gi*). As a matter of fact, the number of monolingual English signs (e.g. *Captain Silver, Royal Diamond*) exceeded those in the state language two times. There were three Azerbaijani-English and two Azerbaijani-Russian. In comparison with the previous cases, there were some cases when Russian was used. This can also be explained by the existence of a significant number of Russian speaking citizens in Baku. Generally speaking, most of the words used as shop names are not from the state language (*Emerald, Horlogerie, Rosato Marco Bogego, Uvas*, etc.). As with previous cases, the official language was violated in public signs (Figure 4): the characters used for the state language text is smaller and this contradicts the provisions of the language law.

Signs pertaining to business centers, companies clearly showed that the provisions of the official language policy are not respected. Only one-third of the public signs in this field was in monolingual Azerbaijani (e.g. *Xagani Ticar t M rk zi*) whereas four were in English (e.g. *Improtex City Center Improtex Trading*). In fact, the number of Azerbaijani-English bilingual signs prevailed (e.g. *Sahil Biznes M rk zi - Sahil Business Center*). Russian was used only in two trilingual signs where there performed a subsidiary role (e.g. *Park Center Ticar t kompleksi Endirim Sale*). This exemplifies the degrading role of Russian in public signs. In short, this domain can also be characterized with extensive use of non-Azeri origin words (e.g. *Landmark*) or abbreviations (e.g. *ISR Plaza*).

Data analysis also revealed that each of the domains possessed features that were characteristic for them. For instance, the most characteristic feature of the domain of education was extensive use of Azerbaijani-English (e.g. *G rb Universiteti - Western University*) or naming the institution in English and providing extra information in the state language (e.g. *Shall T drisM rk zi*). Also, although rarely, Russian was used in public signs in bilingual (e.g. *Home Education -   *) and trilingual signs (*A class/klacc T dris M rk zi*) in this domain. It was also interesting to witness how public signs could be used for symbolic considerations to stress self-perceived ethnic identity (Figure 5).

It was also seen that naming of an institution may be used for symbolic purposes to stress self-perceived ethnic identity (Figure 6). Thus, it could be seen that the official language policy is not reflected in this domain. In competition with English, Russian is a loser, and Turkish is a new actor. Data analysis showed that the number of monolingual Azerbaijani signs was less than those of in English.

The negative balance of power in relation to English increases in the domain of computer shops, book stores or stationaries. In fact, only five of twenty-seven shop signs were monolingual Azerbaijani whereas the number of monolingual English was eleven. At the same time, one-third of the signs were in Azerbaijani-English. There were also Azerbaijani-Turkish bilingual signs. One of the interesting trends here is the creativity of the shop owners. In other words, they create new words by combining the elements of different languages. One of such newly formed was *Bakumoz* which is based on the technique of blending of Baku and the last syllable of Turkish word *Yakamoz*. The same process has been used in *Bakinity* where the Azerbaijani variety of the capital is combined with second part of the *infinity*. Another important point to be noted was the privatization of the public space by giving private names to shops (e.g. *li mobile*). It could also be seen that Russian has completely disappeared and its place has been taken by English.

However, the situation with signs pertaining to markets was different from the previous categories in that the main corpus (16 of 27 signs) of texts belonged to the state language. On the other hand, the number of languages used here were more diverse. The domain can also be characterized with abundant use of the shop owner's name (*Ayxan market*) in the sign and the use of a geographic location (*Ş ki market*). As was mentioned before, language diversity was also characteristic for the domain. Signs representing German and Azerbaijani were offering bakery (Figure 6 and Figure 7) while a few yards away there was a shop with a monolingual Russian sign which is not characteristic of contemporary Baku (Figure 8).

Another feature not characteristic for Baku was the sign of 'gastronom' (Figure 9). It was the only Soviet-era sign to survive. It should also be mentioned that preference was given to Azerbaijani-English bilingual signs rather than Azerbaijani-Russian. In fact, ones of six bilingual signs, only one was in Azerbaijani-Russian with a shop with a Russian name.

Although the domain of health services had some common features with the subset of markets, they had their own discrete points. The category of health services resembled the subset of markets in that it gave preference to the state language in public signs (e.g. *H yat, Yeni, Z f ran*, etc). In fact, half of the signs (11 out 22) were in Azerbaijani. Moreover, as it was with markets, in this sphere privatization of the public space by giving the owners' names to the objects could also be observed. However, data analysis revealed an interesting trend in language change: some words borrowed through Russian have begun to be questioned. For instance, such words as *optika* and *klinika* are used in parallel with *klinik* and *optik* under the influence of the Turkish language (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Also, among the monolingual signs, there were also signs in English and in German. Another important point here was about one-third of the total number of signs in the domain were Azerbaijani-English bilingual signs. What concerns the use of Russian, there was only one case when Russian was used to provide additional information. Even in this case, Russian name was written not in Cyrillic alphabet, but in the Azerbaijani Latin which shows that Cyrillic seems to have additional psychological negative impact (e.g. *Sibirskoe Zdorovye*). In fact, as with other domains, Russian seems to strip off the functions that it used to have during the Soviet period. On the other hand, English has started to replace it. It should also be mentioned that the word *cz xana,* which was used along with *aptek* during the last decade of the Soviet period, has completely disappeared. Among the trends in this domain, giving Latin terms (*EN DENT Stomotoloji klinika*), medicine names (*Aptek Aspirin*) or abbreviations (*AVIS Tibbi Market Aptek/Pharmacy*).

There are also subsets where a complete chaos in choice of language in signs can be observed. One of such subsets is the sphere of goods for home. Nevertheless, some trends here can be realized. In fact, this domain can be characterized with the extensive use of monolingual English signs and, rare use of state language signs, abundance of Azerbaijani-English bilingual signs and non-existence of signs in Russian. Moreover, it is one of the domains where shops were given names unclear for passers-by (e.g. *Storaz, Lokano, Blumarine*, etc.). In fact, it would be interesting to see the rationale behind it. But, there were many constraints: in most cases shop owners were reluctant to be interviewed and the police were the main obstacle although it was dealt with the public space. As was mentioned before, more than a quarter of the shop names Azerbaijani-English bilin-

gual signs (e.g. *Carpets boutique - Xalça dünyası*). It could also be seen that Turkish has already entered the public space. As with other categories, privatization of the public space by giving their names to shops (e.g. *Irşad Electronics*) could also be observed. Giving foreign city names to shops (e.g. *Veimar*) could also be seen. As with other bottom-up signs, official language policy provisions were not observed.

It should also be mentioned that some subsets experienced huge hegemony of English. One of such subsets was the subset of goods for children. As a matter of fact, of 20 signs of shops selling goods for children, only two bear the state language (*Balacam Uşag dünyası, Dooşan*) whereas nearly half of them had monolingual English signs (Figure 12). Another important point here is the use of Italian and French as shop names. Moreover, more frequent use of the state language in Azerbaijani-English bilingual signs (e.g. *Kid's Club Usag paltarı*) could also be observed. It was also interesting to see how the English word 'brand' entered the Azerbaijani language as 'brend' (e.g. *Kid's Brend*). What concerns the use of Russian, it has nearly disappeared. There was only a note on the shop window in Russian: '   '.

As was mentioned before, each of the subsets had its own specific features. Therefore, there was a need to group some subsets in accordance with their names and the additional or supplementary texts that they contained. For instance the signs pertaining to catering was grouped as (a) Caterings with Azerbaijani names; (b) Caterings with English names; (c) Caterings with Turkish names; (d) miscellaneous.

Data analysis revealed that 21 of 25 signs with Azerbaijani names did not contain any additional information in other languages while 4 of them included extra information in English. Names given to objects cover various objects. This can be a name of a city or its sights (***Istanbul,PARK, Filarmoniya***), a personage from a tale (***Ş hrizad, Sultan***),a meal from Azerbaijani cuisine (Figure 13), a phrase that expresses nostalgia (***X Bakı Gec l ri***), a flower (***N rgiz***), a river that symbolizes the divided Azerbaijan (***Araz***), a slang word for car-lovers (***Avtoş Dön r***). It was also interesting to find out that only 3 of 142 objects could save their Soviet-era names: *Araz, Firuz* and *N rgiz*. But, they take less area and are forced to function in the basement floor.

Another interesting point was word-plays in the names of some objects. For instance, *Düşb r* is a meal from Azerbaijani cuisine and a café which was situated in the basement floor was called *Düş b ri* (the word *Düş* literally means 'come down' and '*b r* ' is modified as '*b ri*' which means *here*. There were some signs representing the official language as *L ziz, Naxış, Sarı*

Sümbül, etc. Some objects with names from the state language provided information in two languages: Azerbaijani and English (e.g. Menü Az rbaycan Milli M tb xi – *Azerbaijan National Cuisine*). As could be seen, *Menü* was also written in a Turkish style. In fact, 60 of 141 caterings were given names in English and 42 of these 60 did not contain any text in other languages. Some of these names were *Caramel, Sweet Diet, Castle, Tower, Town, Red sofa, The Old Forrester, Carrousel, The Brewery*, etc.).

It was also found out that 13 of 60 catering names in English had supplementary Azerbaijani texts. These texts usually indicated the working hours, whether they are open or closed, supplementary information about the object, their menu items and origins of their raw materials. As usual, these supplementary texts took less space than the names of the objects which were in English. Data analysis also showed that along with English-Azerbaijani bilingual texts, there were two bilingual texts: English-Russian and English-Turkish. It was found out that 20 of 141 caterings had Turkish names. In fact, 15 of these 20 signs did not include any other language than Turkish (e.g. see Figure 14). Some of the names can be said to be Turkish trade marks (*Mado, Namlı kebap, Büyük Fırat, Merkez Lahmacun, Tarihi Sultan Ahmet Köftecisi, Tadım, Baklavacı Güllüoğlu*, etc.). Other names are *Turkuaz Erzurum Cag Kebabi, Efendi Restoran, Anadolu, Bogazici, Testi, Divan Restoran, Hacıbaba Döner, Künefeevi, Kardeşler*, etc.).

Only two of the twenty signs that were with Turkish names, could be taken as bilingual Turkish-Azerbaijani sings and the supplementary texts were about the names of the meals to be served. There were two more which included two more languages (Azerbaijani and English) which provided supplementary information or other notes. There was a sign in four languages including Russian. There were three English signs with texts in two more languages (Azerbaijani and Russian). These texts involved working hours and some food items. In one of the signs the name of the object was written as in the original and in transliteration.

It was found out that a true multilingualism was the main characteristics of the space under consideration in the domain of caterings. In fact, along with names in Azerbaijani, Turkish and English, there were restaurants which were given names in such languages as Italian, French, Arabic, Japanese and Ukrainian. In fact, 15 of 141 names were in these languages. However, the leading positions were taken by Italian and French. Only in some cases, there were texts providing additional information in Azerbaijani or English.

There was a sign that needs to be focused on: a sign in Russian written in transliteration (as *Çudo Peçka*). The matter is that it was the

only sign in Russian with a note in the state language. Avoiding Cyrillic, that is, using Azerbaijani seems to be psychologically meaningful since Cyrillic may have negative impact on the customers since it symbolizes their colonial past. Moreover, as can be seen, above the inscription *Çudo Peçka,* there is *H yatın Şirin Anları* which means *Sweet Moments of Life*). There is another use of transliteration: *Shakespeare Pub - Şekspir pabı*).

The information provided in supplementary texts in other languages included the types of meals to be served (*L v ngi, Dön r*), origins of meals (*Italian cuisine, Arabic shaurma*), working hours (*, Open,*   ), available (*, WF zone*), type of the object (*lounge, Kafe, Café*), price (*Biznes lanç c mi 5 AZN -Business lunch just for 5 AZN*) and notes about 'wanted' (*Ofisiant t l b olunur*). In fact, the texts in the state language, in case that it was used, occupied less space than the texts in non-state language.

One of the problems was that it was hard to find out where the names originated from. They seemed to be abbreviations (*LIK*), an opera (*Tosca*), a Portuguese or Spanish word (*Churrasco*) or a trade mark (*Vivel Patisserie*). Some of them were given to look original. For instance, when asked why the owner called the patisserie as Roka Şoka, he said he liked the way it sounded. Other shop names of this category are *Café Milla, Balizza café, Kaffka café, Larino Grand Café, MUSE café, Loca Lounge & Bar,* and *Notto Grill & Fish*. In fact, apart from the informative texts that these names were accompanied, only one of them had a phrase *Nuş olsun.*

Thus, data analysis revealed the diversity of languages used in signs in the domain of caterings and among this diversity English takes a leading position. In fact, English is not used as names only: phrases or lengthy texts in English are frequently used in signs. Even in the cases when other languages were used as object names, English was used to provide further information. Turkish seems to compete with the state language which is a loser in its competion with English. Russian is rarely used. As with other domains, Russian has nearly disappeared. Using transliterations seems to accelerate. Generally speaking, the provisions of the language law are frequently ignored in terms of the use of the state language, the size of the characters and the order of languages used in signs.

As was with such subsets as tourism, the subset of entertainment which included night clubs, disco bars or so-called karaoke clubs, contained signs originated not from the official language. In fact, eight of thirteen names were English words (*Sherwood, Coral, Hill's Lounge, Life club, Oriental, Night office*, etc.) while three of them were words coming from other than the English language. The only sign that could be assumed to have come

from the state language was '*Elita*' which has been borrowed through Russian '   '. The word Zevs can also be considered an Azerbaijani word, but it symbolizes one of the gods of the ancient Greece (*Zeus*). The other words that name the places of entertainment are *Reina*, *Kakadu* and *Benua*. It could be seen that seven of the thirteen signs contained only texts in English. The words that came from the state language were *Diskoklub*, *Açıqdır* and *Canlı musigi*. It should also be mentioned that Russian had completely disappeared in the signs of this domain.

The subset of clothes and accessories was found to be the most difficult one to analyze. The matter is that although some of the stores sell only one type of product, many of them sell mixed type of products. For instance, one can buy clothes, shoes, bags and accessories in the same store. There were also cases when a store could sell clothes, artificial flowers and perfumes. Therefore, the best way seemed to categorize all of them under the category of clothes, shoes, bags, perfumes, gifts and accessories. Another problem was the fact that many of the names cannot be referred to a specific language since they refer to 'global' or 'supranational' trademarks or whole-sellers. Therefore, a different approach had been used here. Procedure-wise, the starting point for the analysis was the visibility of trademarks or their representatives. It was found 172 out of 306 public signs represented trademarks or wholesale representations. Moreover, 135 of 172 public signs that represented international trade marks and their representations did not contain any informative or supplementary texts. This implies that globalization of the public space is a fact and it is manifested in the form of the global language: English. In fact, 'global' trademarks seemed to an indivisible feature of the central part of Baku (e.g. *Guess, TAGHeuer, Armani, Tom Ford, Yves Rocher, Ermenegildo Segna, Garda, Chimento, Ganezzi, Pierre Cardin, Yves Delorme,* etc.).

It was also found out that only fourteen of these 37 signs that were not trademarks were in monolingual Azerbaijani. The names given to these shops were ranging between the owner's name (e.g. *Iman*) to a phrase taken from a film (Figure 16).Some of the shop signs provided extra information about the type of the shop (e.g. *h diyy l r,   triyyat aksesuarları, ayaggabı,* etc,), the working hours (*işgrafiki*), whether it is open or not (*Açıqdır*), collections (*Payız qış kolleksiyaları* or *sales/endirim*). It was observed that ten of the monolingual signs that did not refer to trade marks were in English. They were mostly texts about the origin of the trade mark, sales, collections, whether they open or close, sentences glorifying the goods like *WAGGON Paris -The others are your shadows*.

Creativity of the shop owners in language use also deserves attention: One of the shops had an Azerbaijani-English bilingual sign (Figure 17) where

the 'English' part contains two parts 'don' and 'wear' where the former means 'women wear'. In other words, the owner has created an English compound noun consisting of English and Azerbaijani words. Concerning the use of Russian, it should be mentioned that, as with previous categories, its use is sharply declining. In fact, it practically disappeared as a shop name and it maintains its use only in subsidiary roles (e.g.   ,   ,   ). There were two containing Azerbaijani-English-Russian trilingual signs and one containing Azerbaijani-English-Spanish trilingual notes (e.g. *Rebaias 50%*).

It should also be mentioned that Turkish takes important part in this domain. Such names as *Osmanbey, Adil Işık* and many others have already privatized the public space. *Damat, Çinici* and *Pantorama* are already Turkish trademarks. Some other signs in Turkish did not contain elements of any other language.

4. Conclusion

Thus, it was hypothesized that a fundamental shift in socio-political, economical and ideological orientations would inflict radical changes in the balance of language power. The concept of linguistic landscape as a social science theoretical framework was used to test the hypothesis. In other words, visibility of languages in public signs in the central neighborhood was focused on based on the assumption that the use of public signs is never arbitrary. Another point here was to see how the official language policy is observed by both top-down actors and bottom-up actors. It was also indirectly aimed to see how globalization processes are reflected in the public scene of Baku.

It was found out that the ethnic diversity of Azerbaijan is not reflected in public signs of the given neighborhood. Instead, imported languages were overrepresented. This is especially true for the language of globalization. On the other hand, it was observed that the lexical modernization process is on. Besides, Turkish has begun to influence the state language whereas the share of Arabic, Persian and Russian elements keep decreasing.

The state language is strong in the domain of markets and its weakest domains are tourism and goods for children. However, it is a loser in its competition with English and it competes with Turkish. In fact, the number of monolingual Turkish signs is significant. It should also be mentioned that Turkish is very strong in such domains as catering and clothing. This implies that Turkish is in the way to establish its status as an influential language. What concerns the place of Russian in the public signs, Russian has completely lost its traditionally strong position. Even in instances when Russian is used in signs, it has subsidiary functions. Tradi-

tional Azerbaijani-Russian bilingualism in public signs has been replaced with Azerbaijani-English paradigm. It should also be mentioned that in comparison with top-down signs, bottom-up signs demonstrate great diversity in terms of languages.

As it was with top-down signs, most of the provisions of language laws are ignored in bottom-up signs. This implies that the overt language policy is not respected by both official bodies and private actors. In fact, there is no consistency in the realization of the language policy especially in the use of foreign languages in the labels. In other words, the choice of languages seemed to be arbitrary.

One of the interesting points here is the use of transliteration for English and Russian words. In other words, in some cases, English and Russian words are written in Azerbaijani Latin by using the norms of the host language (e.g. United Credit –Yunayted Credit, *Çudo Peçka*). Also, some new tendencies in word-formation can be observed. In other words, some private owners are very creative.

There is a tendency of privatization of the public space by entrepreneurs by giving their names to commercial objects. It could also be observed that some names of commercial objects that were widely used during the Soviet period like *magaza*, *dükan*, *gastromom, univermag, cafeteriya* have completely disappeared. Instead, such words as *boutique, market, mall, lounge* have emerged.

Some domains (e.g. catering, clothes) have become extremely multilingual. Needless to say that English takes a leading position. In fact, the visibility of English in public signs has gone beyond any imagination: long texts or friendly jokes in English decorate many commercial objects.

Globalization with its 'global' trademarks and its 'global' language (English) has taken hold of the public space of the central part of Baku allocating a secondary role to the state language. Russian has given its role to English and the state language is in competition with Turkish.

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APPENDIX A: Figures

Figure 1. *Azerbaijani-Russian bilingual sign*

Figure 2. *A sign in front of a Turkish bank*

Figure 3. *A public sign in monolingual English*

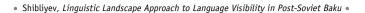**Figure 4.** *A public sign with characters of various sizes*

Figure 5. *A sign symbolizing self-perceived ethnic identity*

Figure 6. *A German Bakery shop*

Figure 7. *An Azerbaijani Bakery shop*

Figure 8. *The only food shop with a Russian name*
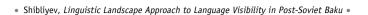
Figure 9. *The only surviving predecessor of markets*

Figure 10. *Traditional spelling*

Figure 11. '*Modernized' spelling*

Figure 12. *A shop sign in monolingual English*

Figure 13. *A sign with a name taken from Azerbaijani cuisine*

Figure 14. *A sign with a Turkish text*

Figure 15. *A sign with a Russian name in transliteration*

Figure 16. *A phrase used as a shop name*

Figure 17. *A sign with a 'new' coinage*

Sovyet Sonrası Bakü'nün Dil Manzarasına Dilbilimsel Görüntü Yaklaşımı

Javanshir Shibliyev[*]

Öz

Makalede *Dilbilimsel Görüntü* (*Linguistic Landscape*) kavramı kullanılarak, Bakü'nün merkez kısmında tabela ve levhalar sosyal bilim teorisi çerçevesinde dil açısından irdelenmiştir. Burada amaç, Azerbaycan'da boy gösteren köklü sosyal, politik ve ideolojik değişimlerin dil görünümünü nasıl etkilediğini ve dil manzarasında oluşan değişiklikleri tespit etmektir. Resmi ve resmi olmayan kurumların tabelaları, yazıldıkları dillere ve onların kullanım şekillerine göre incelenerek, hem kamu kurumlarının hem de özel sektörün günümüzde geçerli olan dil politikasına yaklaşımı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, dil görünümünün ve dillerin güç dengesinin tamamen değiştiğini göstermektedir. Azerbaycan Türkçesi, yasalarca koruma altına alınmasına rağmen, küreselleşmenin getirdiği şartların etkisiyle İngilizce ile rekabet etmekte belli zorluklarla karşılaşmaktadır. Rus dili Sovyet zamanındaki kullanım alanlarını kaybetmiş ve ondan boşalan yerleri İngiliz dili doldurmuştur. Ayrıca, Türkiye Türkçesinin Azerbaycan Türkçesi üzerinde yoğun etkisini görmek mümkündür. Kısacası, üç sonuçla karşı karşıyayız: Türk köklerine dönüş, Ruslaştırma etkisinin kaybolması ve 'dilsel küreselleşme'.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Dil bilimsel Görüntü, Sovyet sonrası Bakü, dil siyaseti, dilin gücü, dilsel küreselleşme.

_____

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