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“Leave no trace”: The macro and microscale analysis of the linguistic landscape of the Polish-Czech border area

ABSTRACT. This article investigates the linguistic landscape of the Polish-Czech border area through the lenses of ecolinguistics and linguistic landscape studies. It explores the languages displayed in this region along with the semiotic and social contexts that surround them. Firstly, the study quantitatively examines the macroscale of the linguistic landscape in the Polish-Czech border area. The macroscale serves as a reference point for the microscale analysis. Specifically, the microscale examination focuses on a sticker board outside a tourist hostel entrance on Szczeliniec Wielki peak in Stołowe Mountains National Park, employing quantitative and qualitative methods. Both analyses reveal similar trends, i.e. a gradual shift from the monolingual paradigm. In addition, the examination of the microsigns on this sticker board in Stołowe Mountains National Park highlights the various forms of the tourists' self-expression. The paper also suggests a few activities – inspired by the research findings and LL – that can be incorporated into the EFL classroom.

KEYWORDS: linguistic landscape, Polish-Czech border area, ecolinguistics, macroscale analysis, microscale analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leave No Trace is a set of ethics aimed to promote the conservation of the outdoors. It originated in the mid-20th century in the United States as a response to ecological damage caused by wilderness recreation. *Leave No Trace* is becoming more and more popular in Polish mountain tourism. Promoting responsible behaviour towards nature and its resources is closely linked to efforts to change communication practices, mainly by reducing symbolic traces: inscriptions such as “I was here” made by tourists on cultural and natural monuments. These inscriptions, often referred to as “language vandalism”, are a concern in Stołowe Mountains National Park. To stop this practice, the park introduced “sticker

boards", i.e. white surfaces placed in various locations along tourist trails where visitors can leave a trace legally.

This study explores the linguistic landscape in the Polish-Czech border area through the lenses of ecolinguistics and linguistic landscape studies¹. It examines the languages displayed in this region along with semiotic and social contexts that surround them. Firstly, the paper examines the macroscale of the linguistic landscape in the Polish-Czech border area. The macroscale serves as a reference point for the microscale analysis.

To clarify the goal, 5 research questions have been formulated:

1. What languages can be identified on the signs (the macroscale and the microscale)?
2. What is their hierarchy?
3. What „traces” do visitors leave on the board (the microscale)?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the macroscale and the microscale?
5. What features of the local community are reflected on the signs when it comes to language choices and multilingual practices in the border area under investigation?

The study has four parts. At the beginning, it outlines the theoretical background. The focus on nature conservation and caring for natural heritage connects research goals with the assumptions of ecolinguistics, a field interested in the interdependence between languages, communities, and environments. As Hult (2009) claims, the ecology of language emerged as a useful conceptual framework because it combines micro- and macro-level research to understand all aspects of social mechanisms involved in multilingualism. Based on this, the study brings together ecolinguistic research in language ecology with inclusive multilingualism and linguistic landscape studies. It is due to the fact that these fields address sustainability, visibility, and social dimensions of language use. Together, they may form a holistic framework for understanding how languages coexist, compete, and support diversity in the Polish-Czech border area (Steciąg & Majdańska-Wachowicz 2025).

Next, the study presents the macroscale analysis of the linguistic landscape in the Polish-Czech border area, employing quantitative methods, i.e. counting the languages and their order plus arrangements on photographed boards.

¹ The study is part of a research project titled *Lingua receptiva or lingua franca? The linguistic practices in the border area between Poland and the Czech Republic in the face of English language domination (ecolinguistic approach)*. The project was funded by the National Science Centre, Poland (agreement no. 2017/26/E/HS2/00039). The study refers to the findings of the research team (Karmowska 2019; Steciąg & Karmowska 2020; Steciąg & Majdańska-Wachowicz 2021; Steciąg & Majdańska-Wachowicz 2025).

After that, it investigates the microscale, i.e. a specially dedicated sticker board outside the entrance to a tourist hostel on Szczeliniec Wielki Peak in Stołowe Mountains National Park. Minimal texts recognised on the board are examined quantitatively and qualitatively.

Finally, since it is stated that ecolinguistics supports diversity and heterogeneity in the L2 classroom and promotes activities that challenge monolingual ideologies (Wolanin 2021), the paper offers some glottodidactic implications. These include some activities inspired by research findings and LL that can be integrated into language teaching (L2).

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE MULTILINGUALISM

As this paper investigates the linguistic landscape in the Polish-Czech border area through the lenses of ecolinguistics and linguistic landscape studies, this section outlines the theoretical background that inspired the study. It starts with the notion of ecolinguistics and receptive multilingualism, then proceeds to the definition of *lingua receptiva*. After that, it explains the linguistic landscape within the framework of inclusive multilingualism and the importance of border areas research.

Ecolinguistics, which emerged in the 1970s as a new paradigm of linguistic research, has always been interested in language contacts and multilingual environments. Haugen (1972/2001: 57), regarded as the founding father of language ecology (Eliasson 2015), introduced a new perspective on intercomprehension in receptive multilingualism through his early research on language contacts between Scandinavians (Haugen 1966). To determine the extent of mutual understanding among native speakers of Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish, Haugen coined the term *semi-communication*. This concept highlighted the limitations / shortage of such contacts, metaphorically described as “the trickle of messages through a rather high level of ‘code noise’” (Haugen 1966: 286). However, in the 1990s, the phenomenon of semi-communication was reevaluated and transitioned from being seen as a deficient mode of communication to being recognised as an effective mode and, as researchers in the field conclude, a fundamental element of intercultural discourse that encourages interlocutors to engage in multilingual practices (Beerkens 2010).

In more recent studies on multilingual communication in Europe, the term *lingua receptiva* (LaRa) has frequently been used. Simply put, *lingua receptiva* is believed to be a type of specific code-switching, it could be said radical, meaning that codes switch together with interlocutor switching, leastwise in its model

pattern. The very core of LaRa's is that participants of communication exchange roles in the course of the receptive multilingual discourse, speaking alternately in one language and understanding in a different one (Rehbein et al. 2012: 250). Seemingly, LaRa and ELF have a lot in common since the main goal of these two modes is successful intercultural interaction. It means that speakers take advantage of language resources and communicative strategies, enabling them to understand each other despite having diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds. This is why LaRa and ELF do not compete with each other or exclude each other in multilingual environments. Quite the contrary, integrated skills employed in multilingual environments allow a variety of communication modes to be applied inclusively – apart from ELF and LaRa it might be a regional lingua franca – RLF (the most useful and natural language resource in a given place and time, e.g. a contact dialect), code-switching and code-mixing or even spontaneous intercultural translation in terms of adjusting one's language to the interlocutor's language, for example, changing word stress or word order (Backus et al. 2013).

The examination of the linguistic landscape in line with inclusive multilingualism requires a few assumptions to address the topic holistically. Firstly, multilingualism is perceived as a starting point since signs containing at least two languages are common rather than exceptional in contemporary city landscapes. From the passer-by's perspective – who is decoding signs – the message placed on signs is not limited to particular languages. It should be seen as a whole. Secondly, not only does the analysis below include the hierarchy of languages written on signs, but these signs themselves are also treated as a multimodal message / sign. Finally, the social context of the linguistic landscape is included in the process of the material examination because it carries information about local communities, their values, needs, and aspirations (Gorter & Cenoz 2015; Kallen 2020; Amara & Spolsky 2022; Pavlenko 2023).

The theoretical framework would not be complete without some remarks about the importance of border areas studies. During the last decades, the concept of border and borderland has evolved significantly. Instead of seeing a border as a static dividing line between countries and nations, recent approaches perceive border regions as zones of encounters and multilingual spaces for language contact (Abel et al. 2007). Consequently, the language of interactions between residents of two or more countries living near the borderland is viewed as fluid, dynamic, and emergent practice rather than a fixed or reified code in contact (Steciag & Majdańska-Wachowicz 2025).

3. THE MACROSCALE ANALYSIS OF THE POLISH-CZECH BORDER AREA LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

The macroscale analysis of the Polish-Czech border area encompasses the linguistic landscape of the Hradec Králové Region on the Czech side of the border and part of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship on the Polish side. Those two constitute a typical section. Generally, the section consists of tourist attractive uplands and mountainous areas, including the Sudetes and the Silesian Beskids mountain ranges. Figure 1 shows the towns under investigation (marked red).

The material for the analysis of the local linguistic landscape was collected during two week-long photographic sessions, held two years apart in 2018 and 2020. The outcome is a collection of almost seven thousand pictures, depicting both man-made objects and natural elements, all of which are marked.

The macroscale analysis is quantitative. The procedure includes counting signs on the photographed boards according to language presence, visibility, and order. Trends in language configurations are recognised through frequency tables and charts. To trace language configurations and hierarchies represented most frequently, coherent terms: *lingua materna*, *lingua franca*, *lingua receptiva*

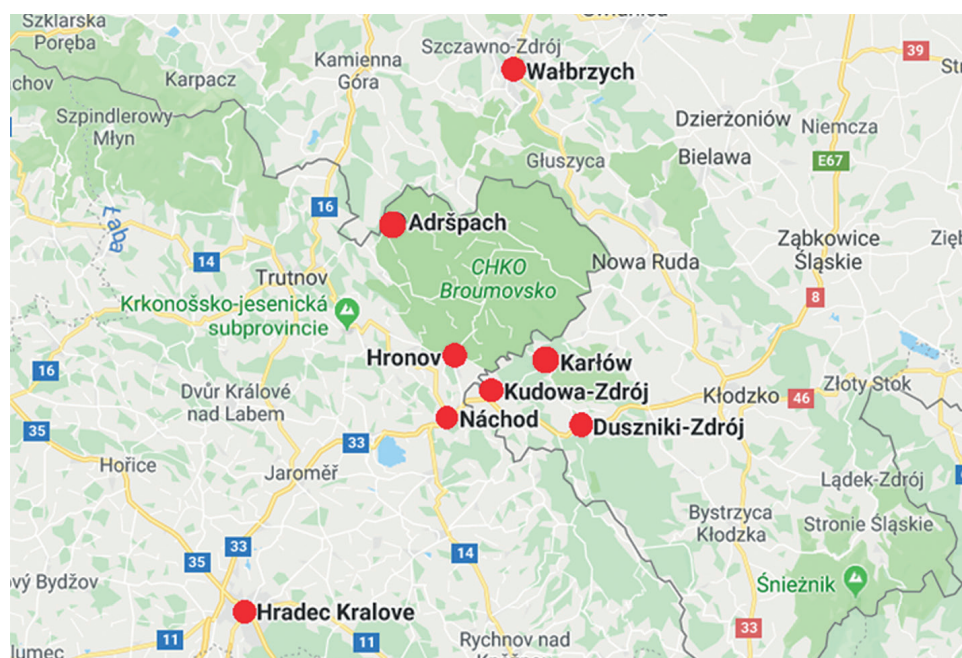


Figure 1. The Area under investigation

Source: Screenshot of google maps.

are employed. This terminology is helpful when investigating general rules and patterns in language selection on the examined signs (Steciąg & Karmowska 2020).

At first sight, the data would seem to suggest the predominance of the national language (referred to as a *lingua materna*) on both sides of the border. The vast majority of signs include *lingua materna*. Circa 80% of the collected research material is monolingual. The study of the remaining 20% reveals that multilingual signs can be associated far more with the public sector than with commercial activities of the private sector. Also, language configuration and hierarchy are not fixed on multilingual boards. The configuration is diverse on both sides of the border as detailed in Table 1. The order of configuration is determined per established frequency. The hierarchy refers to the sequence in which languages appear on the boards.

Table 1. Language Configurations and Hierarchy on Multilingual Boards contact.

Language configuration – Czech border	Language configuration – Polish border
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish)	<i>Lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Czech), <i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Czech)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), international writing
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Czech), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish), <i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German)
<i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)	<i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua franca</i> (English)
<i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>lingua materna</i> (Czech), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German), <i>lingua receptiva</i> (Polish)	<i>lingua franca</i> (English), <i>lingua materna</i> (Polish), <i>regional lingua franca</i> (German)

Source: Steciąg & Majdańska-Wachowicz 2025.

Table 1 shows that the most frequent language configuration on the Polish side of the border is: *lingua materna* (Polish), *lingua receptiva* (Czech), *lingua franca* (English), *regional lingua franca* (German). It seems that the information “layout” builds good neighbourhood policy and prioritises the neighbour’s language interpreted receptively (*lingua receptiva*). English follows in the hierarchy which may suggest that public institutions recognise its global function as a lingua franca. English is the second most frequent language (after the national language), appearing in 7 out of 10 configurations. On the Czech side of the border, the order differs a bit, with English as a lingua franca having a higher position than on the Polish side. The importance of English as a lingua franca in the Czech towns is proved by its frequency, appearing in 8 out of 10 configurations.

On balance, the analysis of the information boards in the public sector shows a tendency to foster a multilingual space at the junction of two ethnoses – the space respecting principles of inclusivity.

4. THE MICROSCALE ANALYSIS OF THE POLISH-CZECH BORDER AREA LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

The microscale analysis of the Polish-Czech border area refers to a *Leave No Trace* policy sticker board, placed outside a mountain shelter in Stołowe Mountains National Park. Installed in 2020, it was designed for stickers and written messages, encouraging tourists to leave a trace legally. The board is called *Tablica na wlepy* ‘Sticker Board’. The headline is followed by a subheading, inviting visitors to leave a trace of their presence: *Cieszymy się, że odwiedziliście Park Narodowy Gór Stołowych. Tutaj możecie zaznaczyć swoją obecność* ‘We are happy you visited Stołowe Mountains National Park. You can leave your trace here’. Figure 2 depicts the board and its content.

Since the name on the board indicates that it is intended for stickers, it is essential to briefly define stickers before examining the content. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, stickers are small pieces of paper or plastic that have a picture or writing on one side and an adhesive substance on the other, allowing them to adhere to surfaces. In digital communication, a sticker can also refer to a digital image used to express a particular idea or feeling². Makowska claims that stickers have specific features of minimal texts: they are small, transgressive, have limited number of words, and can be placed almost anywhere (Makowska 2023: 330). As for their functions, stickers can express protest,

² <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sticker>



Figure 2. A Board for Stickers in Stołowe Mountains National Park

Source: own study.

identity, self-expression, solidarity, and advertisement. Also, they can serve educational purposes (Makowska 2023: 329). Stickers are multimodal minimal texts because they combine language and visual codes (Czachur 2020: 26).

In contrast to the macroscale analysis, the study of the microscale is both quantitative and qualitative. 161 minimal texts are identified on the board, with Polish (understood as a *lingua materna*) emerging as the most predominant language. Polish is represented by 57 stickers and 61 handwritten inscriptions. 39 minimal texts show languages other than Polish. 6 signs are excluded from the analysis due to great difficulty classifying them (e.g. acronyms such as SAS, Sewi, and AKO, unclear messages, e.g. *zajawa* / *zayava*). The numbers show a clear trend: the official language is dominant on the board in the area under investigation.

The analysis of the multilingual minimal texts shows 2 homophonic signs, presenting the same content in Polish and English. 17 mixed signs combine at least two languages to convey a message, not in equal representation though:

15 Polish-English / English-Polish, 1 Polish-Portuguese, and 1 Spanish-English. The remaining 20 messages are written in English. This proves that English as a lingua franca is the secondary mode of communication on the board while other languages have limited visibility. Table 2 presents some examples.

Table 2. Taxonomy of Multilingual Signs on the Board

Sign type	Examples
Homophonic signs (1:1)	Gość / Guest, Wojskowa Akademia Techniczna / Military University of Technology Opalenica – miasto pierwszego polskiego motocykla „Lech”. Opalenica A City of the first polish Motorbike “Lech”
Mixed signs (more than one language)	I was here. Henryk w Terenie, Galactic Lesbian. Marsz Równości, Queer Power. New is coming... Parada Równości, Hardcore City Szczecin, Good night Left Side Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, Wisła Football Fanatics Wisła Płock, Anwil Ultras, Julia Róża Dąbrowska i Amelia Helena Górską BFF
Foreign language signs (English)	Wildstar riders, The Voytek Bear. Geocaching, I love nature. I love off-road, I <3 just gym, Music Extends Life. Sequel One Records, breaky vibes, yeah bunny, tube adventures, Shrex is good, I'm not lost. I'm geocaching

Source: own study.

Moving from the quantitative findings, the qualitative analysis of the *Leave No Trace* policy board reveals the ways in which tourists leave their linguistic and social traces legally. The findings can be understood by the notion of two “traces”: 1) personal trace: including names and surnames, e.g. *Łukasz, Staś*. Personal trace is sometimes left when following the phrase: *Byłem / -am tu* ‘I was here’, 2) group trace: referring to geographic or administrative names, e.g. *Leszno* ‘Leszno’, *powiat raciborski* ‘Raciborz County’. This dimension also relates to community trace, i.e. various worldview movements, shared interests or values.

Some instances of the minimal texts are collected in Table 3.

Table 3. Personal Trace

Personal Trace Patterns	Examples
Name + (optionally) Date (nm) / Where from (nm), Graphics (e.g. hearts, smiley-face)	Łukasz 2020, Kornel 29.01., Tatiana Rewal, Klaudia Paweł Szczecin 07.03.2020, Eliza 11-.08.2020 (written inside a drawn heart), Monika 😊 Szymon 😊 2020 (written inside a drawn heart), Justyna Gryfino 2020, Joachim 😊, Janetta i Daniel z Tych 😊

Diminutives (names) usually in sequence with other names + date (optional) + where from (optional) + graphics (heart, smiley-face)	Tu byłem. 10.08.2020. – Staś, Oktawka, Amelka <3, Karolinka 2020, Pati 2020, Hela 05.08.2020 (written inside a drawn heart), Asia <3, Miki z mamą 16.09.2020 (written inside a drawn heart), Mati, Tosia 2020 (+heart), Ania, Małgosia, Ania Bartek <3 Węgrów29/07/2020
Name and surname + family member (optional)	Helena Piechota 2020, Górską Amelia, Lena Grzelak, Norbert Sobiecki Wadlew 2020, Mama Aga i Tata Darek Maja Teclaw 23.07.2020 (written inside a drawn heart)
Name (full form, diminutive, subtracted) and last name initial letter	Konrad P., Meggi S., Ala F. Raf. F, Mateusz F., Lola S. Greg F. , Ela B., Klaudia F.
Initials + date / pseudonym (optional)	R.B. 2020. Gryfino, IG. Elektryk 😊
Pseudonyms	Shrexowny Michau i Sawkuż tu byli, Piorun 2020, Ruda z Kielc i Słoń 😊 10.08.2020, Byczki tu były <3 8.2020, Serek Danio, Leśny ent
„I” – sometimes double „I” with spelling modification	JA, Jaya

Source: own study.

Table 3 suggests that the most common patterns contain: 1) handwritten names, optionally with dates, places of residence and graphics (common in other patterns, too), 2) diminutive forms of first names: in sequence with other names, dates, place of residence, and graphics, 3) name and surname, 4) name, its diminutive form, and last name's initial, 5) initials with dates, 6) pseudonyms, 7) the singular first-person pronoun *ja* 'I'. A comment is needed regarding writings that may identify young people. Diminutives are used by different generations in Poland. However, the examples seem likely to be written by teenagers. This assumption is supported by the presence of emojis and other symbols typical of online discourse (Grzenia 2006). For instance, the names are spelled using both Polish and English, as seen in *Mich-au* (with letters *-au* as the sound is similar to /aʊ/) instead of *Michał*). Another illustration is an English-like diminutive *Meggie* for *Gosia* (English 'Maggie'). A comparison of names and diminutives with the rankings of the most popular names given to boys and girls in Poland over the last decade makes it reasonable to suggest that these names identify the young generation. The presence of youngsters is evident in pseudonyms as a result of the influence of *młodomowa* ('teen slang'). Examples include *Shrexowny Michau* and *Serek Danio*.

Another dimension of linguistic and social traces is "group trace" (presented in Table 4).

Table 4. Group Trace

Group Trace	Examples
Geographic self-expression: region / province + date / graphics (optional)	powiat raciborski, Racibórz, Ełk 8-08-2020, Gdańsk <3, 20.08.20 Chojnice, Ogorzeliny 10.08.20 r., Leszno, Mikowice
Institutional self-expression: name of the institution, i.e. school name, foundation name, sport club	Hospicjum Ojca Pio, Fundacja Dobre Jutro, Studenckie Koło Przewodników Góskich Harnasie, 1 Grunwaldzka Drużyna Harcerska. Dąbrowa im. Władysława Szafera, Wybierz I ŁO w Brodnicy, Miejskie Koło PTTK „Łazik” w Zdzeszowicach, Chuligani z Biedaszybów. Górnik Wałbrzych, Pogoń 1948, SKS Bałtyk Gdynia 1930, Władcy Trybun Białostocki Klub Sportowy, Stomil Olsztyn, Ciemna Strona Miasta ŁKS Łódź
Worldview self-expression: slogans, graphics typical of social movements, lifestyle	Wielka Polska, Wspieramy Polskę. Orlen, Good night Left Side Nowy Dwór, Queer Power. New is coming... Parada Równości, Młodzieżowy strajk klimatyczny, I love nature. I love off-road, Ziemia jest kobietą, Good night Patriarchat, dzisiaj wege dzisiaj homo parada równości, Wolne konopie Konopie dla wolności, Tu byłem, blanta spałem

Source: own study.

The examples show that geographic identification is pivotal, e.g. location of one's residence (towns, cities) because it often appears next to the name or separately. The sticker board indicates that Stołowe Mountains are a popular tourist destination for Poles from different cities and regions. No foreign geographic names were found on the board, meaning that either tourists represent a mono-ethnic group, or that foreigners leave no trace. Also, tourists express themselves through their institutions (e.g. names of schools, universities, student associations, hospice, foundations, etc.) let alone hobbies, particularly in leisure, tourism, and sports. Some of these writings are descriptive, e.g. *Ciemna Strona Miasta ŁKS Łódź* 'The Dark Side of the LKS Lodz', *Wybierz I ŁO w Brodnicy* 'Choose The Secondary School No. 1 in Brodnica', *Władcy Trybun Białostocki Klub Sportowy* 'The Owners of the Stands The Sports Club of Białystok'. Worldview self-expression is noticeable on the board as well. For instance, the board includes symbols from right-wing movements, such as *Wielka Polska* 'Great Poland' as well as symbols from left-wing movements, including feminists, e.g. *Ziemia jest kobietą* 'The Earth is a Woman' and the LGBTQ+ community. Some tourists sympathise with ecological movements *Młodzieżowy strajk klimatyczny* 'Teen Climate Strike' or a social initiative known as *Wolne Konopie* 'Free Cannabis'. Others manifest a generation gap, as seen in slogans such as *My jesteśmy rewolucją* 'We are the Revolution' and *New is Coming*. Visitors express global belonging and global trends by means of English as in *Music Extends Life*. These inscriptions are certain to be made by Poles because of the Polish names next to the writings and mixing

Polish and English. Those writings can be humorous: *Tu byłem, blanta spałem* 'I was here and smoked a joint'. The example extends the conventional 'I was here' phrase by adding unconventional content and a rhyme.

All in all, in a similar way to the macroscale, the microscale analysis on the Polish side of the border shows a gradual breakdown of the monolingual paradigm. Additionally, the *Leave No Trace* policy board gives information about the social context and personal or group traces.

5. GLOTTODIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS

Because of the nature of this journal, this part offers a few glottodidactic implications. Many scholars have examined LL in language teaching (Solmaz & Przymus 2021). As noted by researchers, "English language classrooms are ideal spaces for the inclusion of linguistic landscapes (LL) due to the significant presence of various forms of English language and culture in everyday life" (Solmaz & Przymus 2021: 10). This way students have a chance to extend their learning outside the classroom and observe language in real-life situations. In addition, from the ecological perspective, language learning should contribute to students' personal growth by coming into meaningful dialogue with the (language) surrounding (Wolanin 2021).

The classroom activities in the following section are designed to integrate the study data into the language class (preferably secondary school with Polish-speaking students) and outline some lesson ideas inspired by LL. Authentic minimal texts from the board serve as examples to illustrate how sticker boards (e.g. boards found in different tourist places) can foster both language learning and multilingual awareness in the classroom. The investigated material can be used in English classes as a correlation with Polish or geography (Polish term: *korelacja międzyprzedmiotowa*). Yet, the procedures can be applied to other language contexts. More general ideas on how to incorporate LL into the school curriculum demonstrate the ways to foster student agency and break the routine of textbook-centred lessons in ELT.

5.1. Lesson idea 1: The mini-analysis

As scholars such as Thornbury (2012) have suggested, the pedagogical potential of LL refers to its methodology. The lesson objective could be then to develop students' research skill, while covering a curriculum topic *Nature and Environment*, for instance. Before they do the research, students are introduced

to some hints to brainstorm and define keywords such as: *minimal text*, *sticker board*, *Leave No Trace* movement. Then students receive a picture with the board itself and guiding questions to carry out quantitative and qualitative mini-study. Suggested prompts might be as follows:

1. How many minimal texts can you see on the board?
2. How many are written in Polish?
3. How many are written in English?
4. How many are mixed signs (e.g. Polish-English or English-Polish)?
5. Are there any messages in other languages? Can you identify them?
6. Are there any messages unclear?
7. What messages do the minimal texts convey (e.g. names, places, dates)?
8. Can you group the minimal texts into categories? If so, what categories?

These questions represent just a sample. Students' answers may be compared with the original analysis. Question 8 could provide interesting reactions as students may apply different classification criteria and “traces” from the original findings. Comparing results reflect similarities and differences and trigger discussion. Students complete their analysis individually or in groups. They present the findings digitally (using Power Point, Canva, Genially, etc.) in the classroom.

Intended learning outcomes are to develop students' academic skills, linguistic knowledge, speaking and presentation skill, digital literacy, plus collaborative work and learning.

5.2. Lesson idea 2: The board content

Another lesson idea, which can be a follow-up to the previous one, is inspired by the board content. In the EFL classroom, the mixed and English-only minimal texts seem the most useful, although Polish-only texts may be valuable as well. The lesson objective is to raise students' awareness of the English-Polish language contact and multilingual practices. The lesson starts with a short introduction on English-Polish language contact and code-switching. Then students receive worksheets with selected examples retrieved from the board. For the mixed signs, students can be asked to identify English words and phrases in the messages chosen by the instructor. They can discuss the meaning, purpose, and necessity of using English and Polish at the same time.

For example:

- *I was here. Henryk w Terenie*
- *Good night Left Side Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki*
- *Hardcore City Szczecin*

Regarding the English-only stickers and inscriptions, students discuss their formal and semantic properties, i.e. grammar, accuracy, meaning, purpose, forms of expression.

Examples include:

- *I love nature. I love off-road*
- *Wildstar riders*
- *I'm not lost. I'm geocaching*
- *Music Extends Life. Sequel One Records*
- *breaky vibes*
- *yeah bunny*
- *tube adventures.*

If time allows, Polish minimal texts are reflected upon in this EFL lesson, helping students learn the form and purpose of diminutives and nicknames. Furthermore, the Polish material serves to compare and contrast capitalisation rules in Polish and English (e.g. when referring to group trace inscriptions). Also, it is used for translation practice.

The lesson concludes with a group discussion stimulated by the following questions: Do you like the messages on the board, why / why not? Why do people leave such writings in national parks or tourist places? Do you prefer Polish, English or mixed messages? Would you leave your trace in a national park or a tourist place, why / why not? Would you leave your trace in Polish, English or using Polish and English? What do people express with their writings or stickers? The group spokesperson reports back to the whole class.

Intended learning outcomes are to develop students' language awareness, language attitudes (L1, L2), and speaking skills (expressing opinions, debating). The activities can be used when celebrating the European Day of Languages.

5.3. Lesson idea 3: Students' minimal texts

A broader implication of LL is to ask students to create their minimal texts as a twist to regular textbook-based lessons. The lesson / activity objective is to practise summarising, expressing preferences. In this lesson students improve creative writing and learn degrees of formality.

For illustration, Figures 3-5 depict students' minimal texts as a follow-up activity to a reading comprehension exercise (using a text from the students' book). The stickers convey greetings and summarise the key information obtained from the text.

Intended learning outcomes are to develop students' critical thinking skill, text analysis, text summary, concise writing.

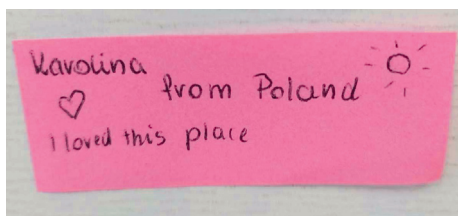


Figure 3. Students in Action

Source: own study.

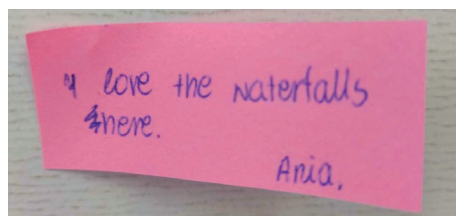


Figure 4. Students in Action

Source: own study.

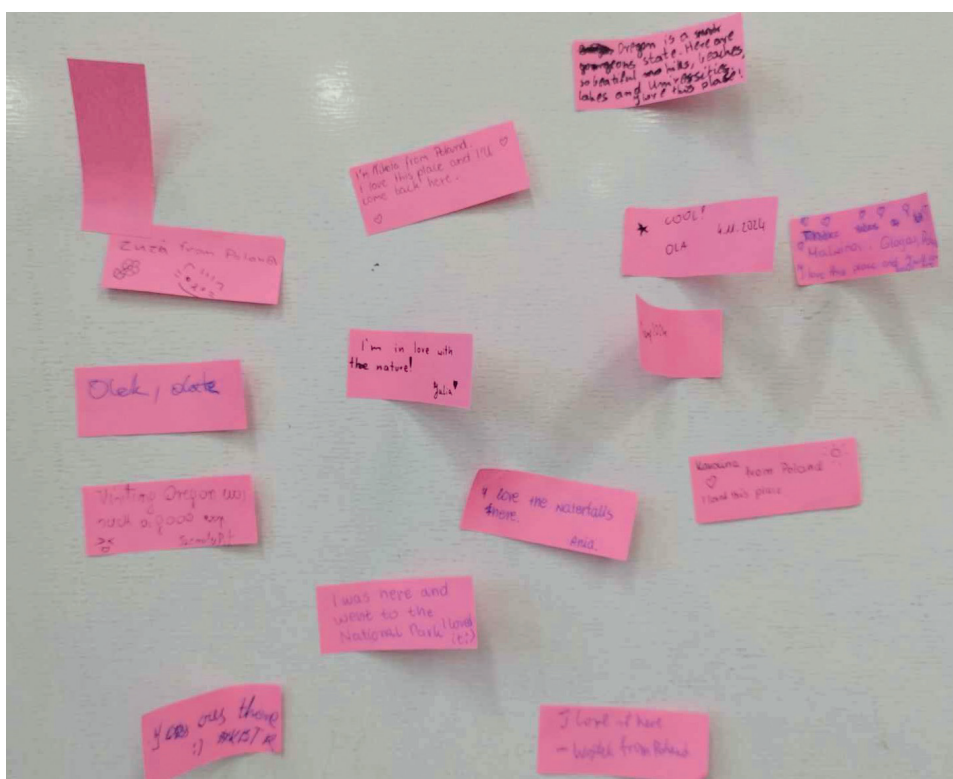


Figure 5. Students in Action

Source: own study.

5.4. Lesson idea 4: My city LL

Another glottodidactic implication of LL is the analysis of the linguistic landscape in students' towns or cities. Students are encouraged to take pictures

of various forms of public signage, including graffiti, slogans, and stickers. In EFL lessons, students are specifically instructed to identify language, their order, English elements in Polish signs and English borrowings. Students work individually or in teams to complete this task. The material collected can be used in the ESP classroom or regular English lessons for discussions about the language of marketing, advertisement, etc. Additionally, the linguistic landscape analysis may include virtual exploration of a chosen location worldwide (a digital walk) or even activities based on LL in games. As Sayer (2010, as cited in Dumanig & David 2019: 2) states, the linguistic landscape provides a “real-world experience” of language and culture.

Intended learning outcomes are to develop students’ research skill, decision-making, and student agency.

6. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the linguistic landscape of the Polish-Czech border area through the lenses of ecolinguistics and linguistic landscape studies. Its goal was to explore the languages displayed in this region along with semiotic and social contexts that surrounded them. The paper examined the macroscale of the linguistic landscape in the Polish-Czech border area and the microscale (a *Leave No Trace* policy sticker board located outside the entrance to a tourist hostel on Szczeliniec Wielki Peak in Stołowe Mountains National Park). The research involved both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the board. Glottodidactic implications supplemented the findings.

The quantitative analysis of the signs in the linguistic landscape of the Polish-Czech border area and minimal texts found on the sticker board depicts similar tendencies. In both semiotic macro and micro spaces, there is a gradual breakdown of the monolingual paradigm. An important difference between the micro and macro scales is the number of language configurations. As noticed, there are much fewer multilingual elements on the sticker board than on the information boards of the studied Polish-Czech border area. However, it is worth mentioning that the board appeared in 2020 when cross-border traffic and international tourism were significantly reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be one of the reasons for foreigners leaving “no trace”.

The analysis of minimal texts placed on the board in Stołowe Mountains National Park opened up new research opportunities. Namely, it was possible to identify tourists’ forms of self-expression on the board while their visit to the park. The minimal texts reveal that tourists express themselves through name

forms, age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and worldview. Notably, no racial, class, and religious self-expression signs were identified. This, however, does not necessarily suggest indifference. The result implies that social divisions reflecting these categories may not have been as pronounced in Poland at that time.

Several glottodidactic implications are suggested, including activities inspired by the research findings and LL. These activities or lesson ideas aim to provide students with authentic sources, break the routine of textbook-centred lessons in ELT, and add variety. They all define intended learning outcomes.

The study has its limitations. Firstly, the LL analysis is based on data from 2020. It should be complemented by more contemporary research to explore changes over time. Secondly, the classroom activities have been tested in school spaces many times. Yet, student spoken feedback has been used for evaluation. Further quantitative analysis is needed to verify the adaptability of the lesson ideas for teaching practice. These limitations might present opportunities for future research.

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„Nie pozostawiaj śladów”. Analiza krajobrazu językowego polsko-czeskiego pogranicza w skali makro i mikro

ABSTRAKT. Celem artykułu jest ukazanie krajobrazu językowego polsko-czeskiego pogranicza z uwzględnieniem założeń ekolingwistyki oraz badań nad krajobrazem językowym. Analiza dotyczy konfiguracji języków na tabliczkach występujących w tym rejonie oraz ich kontekstów społeczno-semiotycznych. Część empiryczna składa się z dwóch części. Pierwsza przedstawia krajobraz językowy polsko-czeskiego pogranicza w sposób ilościowy w skali makro, co jest punktem odniesienia do analizy ilościowo-jakościowej w skali mikro. Ta druga czyni przedmiotem zainteresowania zawartość tablicy na wlepy umieszczonej przed schroniskiem na szczycie Szczelińca Wielkiego w Parku Narodowym Gór Stołowych. Analiza materiału dowodzi, że w omawianym regionie następuje stopniowe przełamywanie paradygmatu jednojęzyczności. Ponadto mikroznaki utrwalają różne formy autoekspresji turystów. Artykuł wieńcza implikacje pedagogiczne inspirowane materiałem badawczym, które można zastosować w praktyce dydaktycznej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: krajobraz językowy, polsko-czeskie pogranicze, ekolingwistyka, analiza makroskali, analiza mikroskali.

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