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What is the potential of linguistic landscape as a provision for language learning? Examples from language education contexts

This article explores the potential of linguistic landscape (LL) as a valuable resource for language learning, emphasizing its multifaceted role in fostering language acquisition, language awareness and intercultural competence. LL serves as an authentic, multimodal and socio-culturally embedded source of linguistic input that can enrich traditional pedagogical approaches. The paper highlights how English's pervasive presence in LL reflects global sociolinguistic trends, while also examining how minority and heritage languages are represented, often influenced by political and community practices, thus offering opportunities for language revitalization and identity affirmation. Further, engaging with LL promotes pragmatic competence by exposing learners to real-life language use, indirect speech acts and cultural metaphors, while its multimodal and translanguaging features support multiliteracies and intercultural understanding. The concept of the schoolscape extends these ideas to educational environments, where spatial and linguistic arrangements can reinforce or challenge language ideologies, impacting identity and power dynamics. Pedagogical applications, including classroom projects, virtual explorations and research initiatives, demonstrate LL's capacity to connect formal learning with everyday language environments. Overall, the article underscores LL's potential to make language learning more contextualized, socially relevant, and empowering, advocating for its systematic integration into



diverse educational frameworks to maximize its benefits across socio-linguistic contexts.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, language learning, second language acquisition, language awareness, pragmatic competence, multimodality, translanguaging, immersion education.

Słowa kluczowe: krajobraz językowy, nauka języków, przyswajanie drugiego języka, świadomość językowa, kompetencja pragmatyczna, multimodalność, translanguaging, edukacja immersyjna.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the linguistic landscape (henceforth LL) – the visible display of language in public spaces – has emerged as a compelling area of inquiry within applied linguistics and language education. Rather than being merely a reflection of linguistic diversity, the LL functions as a rich semiotic resource, revealing how languages coexist, interact and convey social meanings within given communities (Zabrodska, 2014). This article serves as an overview, which examines the potential of the linguistic landscape as a valuable provision for language learning, drawing on diverse examples from foreign, second and heritage language education. By exploring the intersections between language visibility, sociocultural dynamics and pedagogical applications, the paper highlights how engagement with linguistic landscapes can support language acquisition and learning, raise language awareness, as well as foster pragmatic and multimodal competencies.

The overview pays particular attention to the prominent role of English as a global lingua franca within linguistic landscapes, examining both its communicative functions and symbolic significance (Crystal, 1997). It also explores the visibility and representation of minority and heritage languages, highlighting how their presence in public space reflects broader socio-linguistic dynamics and offers unique opportunities for language learning and cultural revitalization. While English's visibility facilitates communication for global audiences, it also mirrors complex language ideologies and power relations that impact local language ecologies (Romanowski & Karras, 2024). Research from diverse urban contexts, such as Tokyo, European cities and North America, illustrates how English coexists with local and minority languages, often occupying a dominant position yet not always fully understood by native populations (Backhaus, 2006; Barni, 2025). This paradox underlines the importance of critically engaging with linguistic landscapes in language education to transform incidental exposure into meaningful

learning experiences. Such engagement can enhance learners' pragmatic competence and cultural sensitivity by fostering awareness of language use beyond grammatical forms. Equally significant is the visibility of minority languages within linguistic landscapes, which varies according to sociopolitical contexts and community practices. Case studies from regions such as the Basque Country, Galicia and Friesland demonstrate how official policies and grassroots efforts influence the presence and status of minority languages in public signage (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Basterretxea Santiso & Ornelles, 2025). In some localities, minority languages attain symbolic prominence and even majority status in linguistic landscapes, challenging assumptions about their marginality. This is the case of several Brazilian municipalities of the state of Rio Grande do Sul where Polish has gained a special status over the past few years (Szczysek et al., 2025). These findings reveal the LL as a dynamic site where language ideologies and identities are enacted and contested, also offer opportunities for heritage language learners to connect with their linguistic and cultural roots. Through such exposure, learners can develop a heightened language awareness that supports language maintenance and revitalization.

Beyond language identification, linguistic landscapes provide authentic, situated input, which is multimodal and pragmatically rich. Unlike traditional language teaching materials, LL texts encompass a wide range of communicative functions embedded in social and cultural contexts (Wiśniewska, 2019). Signs and advertisements present learners with real-life examples of indirect speech acts, culturally specific metaphors and symbolic meanings that contribute to the development of pragmatic competence. The multimodality of LL – combining visual, spatial and textual elements – further supports literacy development in contemporary, technology-mediated communication environments. Further, translanguaging practices evident in many linguistic landscapes underscore how multilingual speakers fluidly draw on their entire linguistic repertoire, encouraging learners to embrace multicompetence and intercultural understanding.

This paper brings together theoretical perspectives and empirical studies to illustrate the linguistic landscape's multifaceted role in language education. It addresses how LL can be integrated into pedagogical practice, including classroom projects, immersion education and virtual applications, thereby bridging formal learning with learners' everyday linguistic environments. By illuminating the LL's potential to enrich language learning and raise critical awareness of language diversity and sociopolitical issues, this article contributes to ongoing discussions about multilingualism, identity and empowerment in language education.

2. English as a global language within linguistic landscapes

The omnipresence of English within linguistic landscape studies is a widely documented and significant phenomenon, reflecting broader sociolinguistic trends tied to globalization, migration and cultural exchange. English occupies a prominent position in public signage, advertising and institutional displays worldwide, serving as both a practical means of communication and a powerful symbol of modernity, internationalism and economic progress (Hanzelmann, 2024). As noted by Cenoz and Gorter (2008), English functions in linguistic landscapes both informationally and symbolically, often transcending its role as a mere foreign or second language to become a non-foreign language in many contexts (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). This dual function underscores English's complex presence: while it facilitates access for international visitors or business, it simultaneously conveys status and aspirational values to local populations.

Research across diverse urban contexts, from Tokyo (Backhaus, 2006) to Europe (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006) and North America (Malinowski, 2010), consistently highlights the pervasiveness of English alongside local and minority languages. This multilingual coexistence often reflects sociopolitical realities, including the revitalization of minority languages and the effects of migration, but English frequently emerges as the *lingua franca* in these multilingual ecologies (Romanowski & Karras, 2024). However, the symbolic use of English does not always correlate with full comprehension among local populations, as studies in the Netherlands have shown that many individuals struggle to understand English texts on advertisements despite their ubiquity (Gerritsen et al., 2000, Hornikx et al., 2010).

The strategic deployment of English in public signage is also tied to its connotational values, such as sophistication, innovation and global connectedness (Piller, 2001). Advertisers and public institutions often employ English to signal these qualities, even when the communicative necessity is limited. This phenomenon contributes to complex language ideologies, where English is perceived both as a vehicle of opportunity and as a force potentially threatening linguistic diversity (Phillipson, 1992). Some regions have implemented policies to regulate or limit English usage in public spaces, as exemplified by France's Toubon Law (Blackwood & Tufi, 2012) and Quebec's Charter of the French Language (Gade, 2003), aimed at preserving national linguistic identity (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006).

From a language learning perspective, English in LL offers incidental and authentic input for learners, enhancing pragmatic competence and raising language awareness (Wiśniewska, 2020). The multimodal and multilingual nature of LL provides learners with access to diverse linguistic

resources embedded in rich social and cultural contexts (Hanzelmann & Hacı, 2025). Nevertheless, this exposure varies significantly depending on geographic and sociolinguistic factors, not to mention the fact that the mere presence of English signage does not guarantee effective language acquisition without pedagogical mediation (Malinowski et al., 2020).

3. Minority languages in linguistic landscapes

Minority languages in linguistic landscapes occupy a complex and variable position that reflects broader sociolinguistic dynamics, language policies and community identities. Research comparing contexts such as the Basque Country and Friesland reveals that the visibility of minority languages in LL is strongly influenced by official language policies and the sociolinguistic vitality of the languages involved (Fernández Juncal, 2020). In the Basque Country, where Basque enjoys robust institutional support and active revitalization efforts, the language appears prominently in both top-down (official) and bottom-up (commercial) signage. Basque is often given higher status through placement and font size in bilingual signs, signalling its symbolic importance and role in identity construction. Conversely, Frisian in Friesland, despite being an official language, has a much weaker presence, particularly in written form, reflecting its limited use outside oral domains and less intensive policy implementation (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006).

Further studies in rural Basque areas, e.g., in Ondarroa, illustrate that minority languages, i.e., Basque can even attain majority status in LL within specific places, subverting generalized assumptions of minority language marginality (Basterretxea Santiso, 2023). Here, Basque dominates shop signage both in quantity and symbolic prominence, indicating a community-driven reproduction of linguistic reality that may diverge from formal policy intentions. This suggests that LL reflects language policy, as well as the lived linguistic practices and identities of local populations (Hult, 2018; Lado, 2011). A good example of this increased prestige is the recognition of Polish as a second official language in several municipalities in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Polish signs and advertisements have appeared in public spaces, Polish is taught in schools, and some official documents are issued in two languages (Goczyła-Ferreira, 2022)¹. Nonetheless, minority languages in LL serve both informational and symbolic functions, contributing to language

¹ The initiator of Polish being granted the status of the second official language is Dr. Fabricio Vicroski (Wichrowski), a Brazilian historian and archaeologist of Polish descent representing the Polish ethnic group in the Sectoral College for Linguistic Diversity in Brazil (Colegiado Setorial da Diversidade Linguística do Rio Grande do Sul).

awareness and offering pedagogical opportunities for language learning and revitalization (Gorter et al., 2021).

4. Linguistic landscape as authentic input for second language acquisition and learning

The concept of linguistic landscape has also gained increasing attention as a valuable resource in second language acquisition (SLA). Unlike traditional classroom materials, the LL presents learners with authentic, contextualized, multimodal and often multilingual input embedded in real-world social and cultural settings (Barni, 2025). This authentic input, which learners encounter incidentally in their daily environments, offers a unique opportunity to supplement formal language learning by exposing them to language as it is naturally used in society. Further, the LL primarily provides authentic language input, which is not artificially simplified or restricted to pedagogical goals, but rather serves real communicative purposes, such as advertising, warning, guiding or identity marking (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). This genuine use of language enables learners to engage with diverse speech acts and pragmatic functions in situ, thus fostering pragmatic competence – a crucial but often underrepresented aspect of communicative competence in language teaching (Awal, 2025). For example, signs that employ indirect requests or culturally situated metaphors expose learners to the socio-pragmatic dimensions of language use, which are essential for effective communication beyond grammatical accuracy.

In addition, the LL's multimodality, combining visual, textual and symbolic elements, enriches the input by offering additional semiotic resources that aid meaning-making and literacy development (Barni, 2025). This multimodal input supports the development of multimodal literacy skills, which are increasingly relevant in contemporary language use. It reflects the interaction of languages within social ecologies, thus aligning with ecological and sociocultural perspectives of SLA that emphasize the situated, dynamic and embodied nature of language learning (Malinowski, 2024). What is more, the LL reflects the multilingual realities of modern societies, presenting input that is often translanguaging in nature – where languages and semiotic modes interact fluidly rather than in isolated compartments (Seals, 2021). This feature supports the development of multicompetence, acknowledging that bilingual and multilingual speakers leverage their entire linguistic repertoire in communication (Cook, 1992). Encountering such input in the LL can raise learners' awareness of language diversity and the sociopolitical dimensions of language use,

fostering language attitudes conducive to plurilingual and intercultural competence (Malinowski, 2024).

However, the role of the LL as input in SLA is often incidental, because learners usually do not engage with public signs with the explicit purpose of language learning and individual differences influence the degree of attention paid to such input (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008). Despite this, the pervasive presence and economic investment in public signage suggest that people do attend to these linguistic cues and their exposure contributes to language learning, especially when combined with explicit instruction (Burwell & Lenters, 2015). Research also indicates that integrating LL materials in language teaching enhances learners' pragmatic awareness, critical language awareness and motivation by linking classroom learning with real-world language use (Dagenais et al. 2009).

5. Multimodality and literacy development through linguistic landscape

Recent scholarship highlights the significance of multimodality in the development of language and literacy skills, particularly through engagement with the linguistic landscape. Research in diverse contexts, such as the Caribbean Creole environments (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings in Japan (Rowland, 2013), underscores the pedagogical potential of LL as a dynamic resource for fostering multiliteracies and critical language awareness. As the LL is inherently multimodal, combining textual, graphic and often auditory elements to communicate messages that operate simultaneously on denotational and connotational levels (Jewitt, 2009), its nature enables learners to engage with authentic, contextualized texts that extend beyond traditional print literacy, promoting a multiliteracies approach that reflects the social and technological complexity of contemporary communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Mills, 2011).

Engagement with LL materials facilitates literacy development by situating language learning within learners' lived environments, linking school-based knowledge to community contexts (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014). In Caribbean Creole contexts, this approach supports critical language awareness and pragmatic competence by exposing students to the coexistence and contestation between vernacular Creole languages and Standard English in public signage, thereby challenging prevailing negative attitudes towards Creoles and affirming their linguistic validity. Such exposure encourages learners to critically analyze linguistic choices, power relations and identity construction embedded in public texts (Bryan, 2010; Shohamy & Waksman, 2009).

Similarly, studies in Japan demonstrate that LL projects enhance EFL learners' symbolic competence by encouraging them to recognize the multimodal interplay of language, image, typography and spatial positioning on signs, leading to richer interpretations of social meanings encoded in public texts (Rowland, 2013). Through categorizing and analyzing English usage on signs, students develop pragmatic awareness, incidental vocabulary acquisition and an appreciation for the sociocultural functions of language in authentic contexts (Barrs, 2012). Also, multimodal analysis sensitizes learners to the affective and ideological dimensions of language use, such as English's association with modernity and 'coolness', further enriching their multiliteracy skills.

6. The schoolscape: A hidden curriculum

The concept of the schoolscape—the linguistic landscape of educational institutions—extends beyond the mere presence of signs and texts to embody a hidden curriculum that communicates and perpetuates language ideologies, power relations and social norms within multilingual learning environments. As Szabó and Laihonen (2025) elucidate, schoolscape materialize the complex interplay of language, culture and power, often reinforcing dominant language ideologies while marginalizing minority languages and cultures. This hidden curriculum is not explicitly taught but is enacted through the spatial arrangements, linguistic displays and semiotic resources present in schools, shaping students' experiences of language and identity in profound ways.

Schoolscapes can serve dual and sometimes contradictory roles. On one hand, the visible inclusion of minority languages and cultural symbols can create 'safe spaces' or 'nests' that foster identity work, language revitalization and a sense of belonging for minoritized communities (Brown, 2012; Harris et al., 2022). On the other hand, the ideological erasure of these languages in favour of national or dominant languages often reproduces hegemonic linguistic hierarchies and contributes to the invisibility of marginalized groups, reinforcing monolingual norms and limiting possibilities for multilingual educational practices (Brown, 2018; Irvine & Gal, 2009). Such spatial and linguistic compartmentalization is evident in the context of Finnish co-located schools where parallel monolingual tracks maintain strict language boundaries that are reflected physically and discursively within shared campuses (From, 2020; Szabó & Laihonen, 2025).

Further, the schoolscape's hidden curriculum is enacted through interactional practices and the mediation of language use in daily school

life. Participatory video projects with youth, as described by Szabó and Laihonen (2025), reveal how students negotiate and sometimes challenge or reproduce these ideological boundaries by documenting and reflecting on their multilingual environments. These projects highlight the schoolscape as a dynamic site where language practices and ideologies are continuously constructed, offering opportunities for learner agency and critical awareness. Ultimately, understanding the schoolscape as a hidden curriculum uncovers the subtle mechanisms through which educational spaces contribute to the socialization of linguistic identities, power dynamics and the (re)production of language ideologies within multilingual schooling contexts.

7. Developing pragmatic competence through linguistic landscape

Defined as the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in social contexts, pragmatic competence is a critical yet often overlooked aspect of second language acquisition (Bardovi-Harlig, 2010). By engaging with authentic signage and public notices, learners can gain insights into the cultural and social norms that govern communication in a target language community, thus the LL has the potential as a valuable resource for fostering pragmatic awareness in learners (Macías Borrego, 2025).

Studies have shown that analyzing LL can enhance learners' understanding of politeness strategies, indirectness and the influence of social roles and power dynamics on language use (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 2021). Students can critically examine how language choices in public signage reflect intentions, social hierarchies and cultural values, thereby developing a deeper understanding of the contextual factors that shape pragmatic meaning (Goffman, 1956). Furthermore, as Macías Borrego (2025) emphasizes, the use of LL as a pedagogical tool promotes cultural sensitivity by exposing learners to diverse linguistic expressions and communication styles. However, effective integration of LL into language instruction requires careful consideration. Educators should select signage reflecting a range of pragmatic functions and communication contexts and create interactive tasks that encourage learners to analyze, interpret and adapt language.

8. Raising language awareness through linguistic landscape

Linguistic landscapes serve as a potent tool for raising language awareness, particularly in educational settings (Malinowski et al., 2020). By directing attention to the languages surrounding them, learners become more attuned

to linguistic diversity and the sociopolitical contexts that shape language use (Shohamy, 2019). Incorporating LL into pedagogical practices can help challenge monolingual ideologies, expose hidden curricula related to language values and foster a critical understanding of language hierarchies (Barni, 2025; Laihonen and Szabó, 2017).

Exploration of the LL can heighten learners' consciousness of how language choices reflect power dynamics, cultural norms and historical influences (Halliday, 1978; Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Activities involving the analysis of public signage, advertisements and graffiti facilitate the development of metalinguistic skills, as learners decipher the intended meanings, identify potential misinterpretations and consider the impact on diverse audiences. In addition, LL projects can promote intercultural competence by encouraging learners to engage with diverse communities and explore the relationship between language and identity (Vinagre, 2022). By leveraging the LL as a dynamic and authentic resource, educators can cultivate a deeper understanding of language, culture and society, ultimately empowering learners to become more linguistically aware and interculturally competent citizens (Barni, 2025). In such contexts, the classroom becomes a nexus for languaging activities such as exploration of knowledge, discussion and reflection of their observations (Dagenais et al., 2009).

9. Selected educational applications and case studies

In the examples showcased below, various educational applications, including the aspects discussed so far, will be presented. Each case will underscore how LL can serve as a dynamic, authentic and multimodal source of language input that enhances learners' pragmatic competence, multiliteracies, as well as cultural and language awareness.

Example 1: Pedagogical use of linguistic landscape in FL teaching

The linguistic landscape presents a unique avenue for pedagogical innovation in English as a foreign language (EFL) / foreign language contexts (Chesnut et al., 2013). By engaging students with authentic, publicly displayed texts, educators can foster critical language awareness and connect classroom learning to real-world communication (Malinowski et al., 2020). EFL students can analyze the social meanings of English, explore cultural nuances and examine power dynamics inherent in language choices (Sayer, 2010). Such projects encourage learners to become 'language detectives', developing their analytical and observational skills while fostering

a deeper understanding of English in its sociolinguistic context (Rowland, 2013). Classroom-based LL projects can take various forms, from analyzing advertisements to examining public signage (Sayer, 2010). Students can document instances of English, categorize them based on function and purpose, and reflect on the intended audience and potential interpretations. These activities enable them to move beyond rote memorization and engage with language as a dynamic, culturally embedded phenomenon (Malinowski et al., 2020). Similar solutions have appeared in Polish language teaching, although not labeled as LL yet. Works addressing the issue of locality and regionality in Polish language teaching highlight the potential of these categories in language teaching overall (Łukaszewicz & Garncarek, 2024). Increasing learners' awareness of the presence of language in social spaces has increasingly taken place outside the classroom (Łukaszewicz, 2024; Jędrzejczak & Körpe Kremer 2024).

Example 2: Virtual applications

Virtual applications, particularly those providing street-level views, such as Google Street View, are transforming how we engage with urban linguistic landscapes (Malinowski, 2010). They offer unprecedented access to authentic texts embedded in lived spaces, seemingly breaking down geographical barriers for language learners (Goodman, 1984). However, this accessibility comes with caveats. While providing expansive visual data, these technologies can also iconicize the linguistic landscape, detaching it from its historical ground and rendering it into a commodified form (Kim et al., 2025). Concerns arise regarding a decontextualized experience, potentially alienating learners from the actual social and cultural fabric of a city (Kramersch, 1999). As such, educators should encourage critical engagement with these virtual landscapes, fostering the ability to deconstruct the power dynamics embedded within their representations (Rogoff, 2002). By promoting a balanced approach, educators can harness the potential of virtual tools while mitigating risks of cultural alienation (Dagenais et al., 2009).

In his project using images of Seoul's linguistic landscape, Malinowski (2010) engaged Korean language learners. He used Google Maps, but became aware of some potential concerns related to the tool. One such thread involved a bilingual sign, showing both Korean and English with the phrase 'keep off'. This prompted 30 students to remark on the social and pragmatic implications of this sign's phrasing, translation conventions, colouring placement and other factors, which led to the recognition that local people understood English as a way to relate and communicate more than tourists. Malinowski's idea is worth popularizing. It could be successfully applied

in teaching Polish as a foreign language in places distant from Poland, such as Japan, China, or Australia. Utilizing Google Maps as well as virtual guides to many places, which are increasingly being offered by museums, regional chambers and even cities, could spark numerous projects.

Example 3: Contextual applications

Linguistic landscape studies posit that the analysis of language in its natural setting can offer valuable insights into cultural and societal dynamics (Hancock, 2012). Connecting language to the everyday experiences of learners enhances their engagement and understanding, particularly within second language acquisition. As such, the value of incorporating authentic examples as the basis for language study has long been recognised in the field of applied linguistics.

Similarly, Rowland (2013) engaged Japanese university students in photographing and analyzing English signs in Japan, encouraging them to question how and why English is used publicly. He prompted them to take a closer look at the Japanese landscape to find reasons for English signs. His findings support the idea that authentic, multilingual visual texts enhanced students' symbolic competence and critical literacy, specifically when studying signs featuring English, as they came away with a deeper understanding of how language is used and influences pragmatic outcomes. However, he also noted the lack of other languages, besides the indigenous language, used on signs.

Example 4: Linguistic landscape for research preparation

Linguistic landscape offers a unique avenue for research, presenting a real-world snapshot of language use and cultural influence (Roos & Nichols, 2019). By engaging students directly with their surroundings, as facilitated by LL, they are prompted to take ownership of their learning. This active, ground-level involvement proves to be particularly efficient preparation for students to select a suitable research topic (Chern & Dooley, 2014).

Barrs (2016) outlines a project wherein university students collected and classified images of English present in the Japanese LL. The aim was to aid students in refining their research questions for a 4000-word thesis. The collected themes revealed insights into student awareness, aspects of multimodality, as well as symbolic competence. With its open-ended nature and accessible data gathering, the LL project proved to be beneficial in narrowing the students' focus in EFL, thereby making use of a readily available resource in the Japanese community.

Example 5: Inferring meanings and relations

Extending beyond mere language identification, the linguistic landscape serves as a vehicle for discerning deeper social meanings and cultural themes (Malinowski, 2010). Signs and texts within the landscape often operate as cultural indicators, reflecting societal values, power dynamics and community identity (Lisek, 2025). By analyzing these features, learners and researchers alike can gain valuable insights into the cultural ethos of a given context. In his study, Romanowski (2024) examined Polish in the public space of the Borough of Ealing, London, an area known for a high concentration of the Polish diaspora since the end of WWII, with the highest proportion of Polish speakers at 7%. It was argued that Polish indexes public spaces in different parts of this borough as places of identity and belonging, since Poles have been very active in their efforts to construct a space where they could function in their mother tongue and organise their social lives.

In his exploration of the linguistic landscape in Oaxaca (Mexico), Sayer (2010) identified recurring themes in the use of English, finding that it was prominently associated with notions of modernity, sophistication and even subversiveness. The analysis moves beyond merely identifying language choice to uncovering deeper implications about the perceptions and positioning of English within the local community. This approach emphasizes that through systematic observation and interpretation, the LL can serve as a valuable source for unveiling complex sociocultural narratives.

Example 6: Translanguaging and linguistic landscape

Translanguaging, as a theoretical framework, challenges traditional views of languages as separate, bounded systems by emphasizing the fluid and dynamic use of an individual's entire linguistic repertoire in communicative practices (García & Li, 2014). Originating in bilingual education in Wales, it has expanded to encompass a broader understanding of multilingual language use, where speakers draw simultaneously from multiple linguistic resources to construct meaning (Canagarajah, 2013). In relation to linguistic landscapes translanguaging highlights how multilingual and multimodal elements combine to create dynamic, interactive repertoires that reflect and shape social identities and communication (Gorter & Cenoz, 2014). Rather than viewing signs as isolated monolingual or bilingual texts, the translanguaging perspective considers the entire environment, including neighbourhoods or schoolsapes, as spaces where languages intersect, overlap and are negotiated in real time (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022).

Seals (2021) extends this theoretical approach through a micro-ethnographic study conducted at a Samoan early childhood education centre in New Zealand. Using extensive audio-visual recordings and photographic documentation, she examines the linguistic landscape of the centre as a living space that embodies translanguaging practices among children, teachers and parents. Her findings reveal that the schoolscape's multilingual signage – including Samoan, English, and Te Reo Māori – mirrors the translanguaging interactions observed in daily classroom communication. Beyond mere representation, LL actively supports multilingualism and cultural inclusivity, functioning as a dialogic space that normalizes and promotes the use of diverse linguistic repertoires from an early age. Furthermore, the collaborative creation of translanguaging educational materials underscores the role of activist, community-centred research in fostering equitable and culturally responsive educational environments.

Example 7: Language use in immersion education

Language use in immersion education reflects complex dynamics between languages, identity construction and educational practices. Immersion programmes, originally designed for majority-language speakers with limited exposure to a second language, aim to foster proficiency by using the target language as the medium of instruction across subjects (Swain & Johnson, 1997; Fortune & Tedick, 2008). This approach promotes bilingual competence, as well as shapes students' linguistic identities by positioning multiple languages as integral to their social and academic lives (Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2011; Musk, 2006). The linguistic landscape within immersion settings—comprising signage, student work and institutional texts – serves as a visible and semiotic resource that both reflects and influences language hierarchies and students' awareness of multilingualism (Brown, 2012).

Pakarinen and Björklund's (2018) qualitative case study of a Finnish primary school with an early Swedish total immersion programme exemplifies these dynamics. Through photographic documentation of linguistic signage and a focus group discussion with immersion students, the study found that Finnish and Swedish dominate the public signage of the school, whereas other foreign languages, e.g., English, French and German are primarily visible within language classrooms. Students demonstrated confidence in using multiple languages and associated their multilingual identities more with contexts outside school than with the linguistic landscape inside it. The study highlights the potential for schools to broaden the visibility of all languages used by students, thereby fostering more inclusive linguistic identities and supporting multilingual competence beyond formal instruction.

10. Concluding remarks

The exploration of LL as a resource for language learning reveals its significant potential across diverse educational contexts. The main points discussed underscore that it serves as a dynamic, authentic and multimodal source of language input that can enhance learners' pragmatic competence, cultural awareness and multiliteracies. The presence of English in LL exemplifies its dual role as a global lingua franca and a symbol of modernity, influencing both communication and sociolinguistic ideologies. While the visibility of English provides incidental exposure and opportunities for pragmatic and intercultural development, its dominance also raises concerns about linguistic imperialism and the marginalization of minority languages.

The visibility and representation of minority languages within LL are shaped by sociopolitical factors and community practices, revealing how LL can act as a site of language revitalization and identity affirmation. For heritage language learners of, for example, Polish, exposure to minority languages in public signage, its use by government officials (e.g., some mayors in municipalities of Brazil) offers meaningful links to cultural roots and supports language maintenance efforts (Goczyła-Ferreira, 2018). Similarly, LL is a valuable pedagogical tool in second language acquisition and foreign language learning in an endolingual context, providing real-world, contextualized input that fosters pragmatic awareness, critical literacy and intercultural competence. Its multimodal and translanguaging features further support the development of multiliteracies, emphasizing language as a socially situated and ideological practice.

Through educational applications it has been demonstrated how LL can be integrated into pedagogical practices to bridge formal learning with learners' everyday environments. The concept of the schoolscape extends these ideas into educational spaces, highlighting the hidden curriculum conveyed through spatial and linguistic arrangements. Last but not least, the development of pragmatic competence and language awareness through LL emphasizes its role in fostering effective, culturally sensitive communication. Pedagogical strategies that incorporate authentic, multimodal texts from LL can promote critical thinking, intercultural understanding and multiliteracy skills. Overall, the potential of LL in language education lies in its capacity to make language learning more contextualized, socially relevant and empowering. Future research should continue to explore effective methods for integrating LL into diverse pedagogical frameworks, ensuring that its benefits are maximized for learners across various sociolinguistic environments.

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