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Renata Šamo – Lina Pliško University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb – Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, Faculty of Humanities in Pula renata.samo@ufzg.hr – lplisko@unipu.hr

THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN THE BRIJUNI NATIONAL PARK

Abstract

The current paper can be seen as one of the first Croatian contributions to Linguistic or Language Landscape (LL) research. It is based on a case study conducted at one specific field site, starting from the questions: What kind of signs are commonly used and why?; What languages and, how many, are publicly visible?; and Are the employees aware of the role that signs and languages have in addressing the target audience and, if yes, how much?. Applying a mixed-method approach, permanent, event-related, and noise signs have been recognised. Some of them perform landmark, recruitment or information functions, the others are used as public statements or muted signs. Croatian, English, German and Italian are the most visible languages, rarely followed by Latin, Russian and French. The findings have also shown that attention is not systematically paid to sign emplacement and language use, so it is needed to raise the linguistic awareness of employment staff members.

Keywords: Brijuni National Park; linguistic landscape; signs and inscriptions; language use; language awareness

1. Linguistic Landscape¹

Linguistic or Language Landscape (LL) is seen as a new branch of sociolinguistics that is interdisciplinary in its nature because of overlaps with social geography, urban studies, anthropology, sociology, etc. The term *linguistic landscape* ('of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration') was first used by Landry and Bourhis to refer to "the language of public road signs, advertising boards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings" (1997, 25), that is, publicly visible bits of the written language. Since then, there has been a growing interest among researchers, not only in sociolinguistics, but in different fields of applied linguistics. Many studies have been published on this topic, for instance, in a special issue of International Journal of Multilingualism (Gorter, 2006), in a monograph (Backhaus, 2007), and in an edited book (Shohamy and Gorter, 2009). Numerous papers have been presented at conferences around the world. International workshops were held in Tel Aviv (Israel, 2008), Siena (Italy, 2009) and Strasbourg (France, 2010). In each publication and presentation space represents the central object, while the social and political roles of language become of great interest to the relevant experts. Language is thus understood as part of the physical environment in which we live, meaning that we can discuss its spatiality (Gorter, 2006b, Grbavac, 2012b). However, LL is still under-researched in Croatia (Grbavac, 2012a, 2013; Gradečak-Erdeljić – Zlomislić, 2014).

There are some reasons for this development, such as: an increased attention to space, location and physical environment (ecology); a growing interest in urban multilingualism (linguistic ethnography, as well), and a focus on language policy in public spaces (in relation to dominant languages, esp. English). Technological advancements should be also mentioned in this context, above all, the development of digital

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camera technology². Being easily accessible/usable and having huge storage capacities at a relatively low cost, digital camera is the main tool for LL researchers (Gorter, 2006a).

Due to LL research, sociolinguistic descriptions are shifted from speakers to spaces (where speakers are exposed to language), significantly implying that a physical space is also saturated with available social, cultural, political and other circumstances. In other words, a space always contains different codes, norms and criteria that can be analytically approached and critically interpreted. We should learn how to recognise them, which is commonly labeled as our social skills or cultural competences. Since signs and messages they reveal are everywhere, it can be easily said that we live in a highly semiotised space. The crucial question from the LL perspective seems to be how we read them – how do we interact with the LL we inhabit?

Blommaert (2013) classifies signs into three broad groups: (1) permanent signs (e.g. road signs, permanent publicity signs, landmarks, graffiti); (2) event-related signs (e.g. posters, temporary shop signs, for-sale/ rent signs, smaller announcements displayed in public); and (3) noise (e.g. cars and vans parked for a while, readable objects left behind). It is obvious that the first two categories indicate people who are permanent residents in the neighborhood and their different activities performed there, but not necessarily as shown in our case study, whereas the third category points 'passers-by' in the neighborhood such as semi-permanent residents, visitors, etc. Speaking about function that signs may have in the landscape, the same author further mentions: (i) landmark functions (identifying some area in relation to history, tradition and customs, e.g. a famous monument with its Latin inscription); (ii) recruitment functions (inviting particular people into interaction with sign producers, e.g. a café sign); (iii) information functions (informing people about activities in some places, e.g. phone call rates); (iv) function of public statements (e.g. graffiti); and (v) muted signs (instruments for an indirect type of communication, e.g. plastic bags having inscriptions).

The first professional digital camera was produced in 1991 and its market consumption started three years later.

Public signs both reflect and regulate the structure of the space where they are used. Sociological, cultural, sociolinguistic and political characteristics of spaces will define how signs should look and function in them. On the other hand, signs will affect their structure and regulation by selecting audience, imposing some restrictions, inviting, determining norms of behavior to the selected addressees (Blommaert, 2013).

2. Case Study

The current paper presents a case study conducted at one field site – the Brijuni National Park (BNP)³ – and based on a three-day stay during the peak summer season. Its main aim is to analytically approach this physical space in terms of public sign emplacement and language use.

Therefore, the following research questions are posed: (1) What kind of signs are commonly used for communication within this specific community and for what purposes?; (2) What languages and how many of them are publicly visible at the site?; and (3) Are the people who work here aware of the role of signs and languages in addressing the target audience and, if yes, how much?.

This case study uses a mixed method approach, but our focus is on the qualitative data processing. We first took pictures of signs and/or inscriptions outdoors (a wide open area, i.e. parks, the zoo and the safari park, the main beach) and indoors (the Neptun Hotel, the souvenir shop, Tito's Museum) to identify their public visibility in this particular space, and then interviewed a marketing staff member to discover the basic principles behind their policy of sign emplacement and language use. Afterwards, the photographed signs and inscriptions were classified according to their type and function (Blommaert, 2013), as well as grouped with reference to the medium in which the messages are presented (image vs. text), and the use of languages (type, number, sequence). In order to put this case study in a proper context, we additionally had insight into the relevant literature on the BNP, which led to the

This abbreviation will be used interchangeably with the full name of the site under the current analysis.

following description. Such background information is helpful for introducing this special venue and seems to be unavoidable for presenting our case study from the LL aspect.

3. Brijuni National Park

3.1. Location and Nature

The Brijuni National Park is one of eight national parks⁴ in Croatia, and represents a true combination of natural, historical, and cultural heritage. Its boundaries⁵ encompass the surface area of 3,395 hectares, while the coastline length is 46,8 kilometers. Belonging to a relatively small⁶ archipelago, it comprises 14 islands. *Veliki Brijun* is the largest⁷ and surely the most important one. (www. np-brijuni.hr/en/general_info)

Due to an almost ideal geographical position, various autochthonous⁸ and imported⁹ plants can be found in this landscape, including one of the oldest trees in the Mediterranean, i.e. the ancient olive tree (about 1600 years old)¹⁰ which still bears fruit and produces olive oil. Mild micro-climatic conditions have also resulted in rich fauna¹¹, represented by: (a) open nature animals¹², (b) animals in the safari park¹³ (since 1978), (c) animals in the ethno park¹⁴, (d) birds in the Saline reserve¹⁵, and (e) submarine species¹⁶. However, the big yellow-crested parrot Koki, pre-

⁴ Proclaimed as such in 1983.

⁵ Set in 1999.

⁶ About 7 km².

Stretching across 561 hectares.

⁸ e.g. holm-oak, myrtle, etc.

⁹ e.g. Himalayan and Lebanese cedar, sequoia, etc.

¹⁰ The Ruđer Bošković Institute of Zagreb conducted research in the 1960s.

¹¹ Esp. on Veliki Brijun.

e.g. fallow deer, mouflon, etc.

e.g. llama, elephant, etc.

e.g. Istrian ox, goat, etc.

e.g. wild duck, black stork, etc.

e.g. dolphin, sponges, etc.

sumably more than fifty years old, has been the most attractive inhabitant for decades. (www. np-brijuni.hr/en/natural_heritage/flora)

3.2. History and Culture

This area is known for about hundred sites and buildings of archeological importance, from the first pre-historic settlements to the early 20th-century elitist resort facilities and the later presidential residency (1954-1979).

The sites that are worth mentioning certainly include: Hill-Fort, the fortified Bronze Age settlement on the hill; the Roman *villa rustica*¹⁷ testifying to this type of ancient architecture in its best light; the ruined Byzantine Castrum¹⁸ as the richest site here; and nearby St. Mary's Church from 5th-6th century (Fabjanović – Matijašić, 2005).

Veliki Brijun was continuously settled from 2nd to 14th century A.D., and ruled by the Romans (since 177), the Eastern Goths (476-533), the Byzantines (533-776), the Carolingians (787/788-2nd half of 9th c.), the patriarchs of Aquileia (1230-1331), and the Venetians (1331-1797). Its history was seriously influenced by the plague in 1312, when the number of dwellers dramatically decreased (even non-existent for certain periods). At the end of 17th century, however, some 50 inhabitants lived in 14 houses since the settlement was stimulated by the authorities from Venice. Austria ruled until 1805, when Napoleon Bonaparte included the islands in his Illyrian Provinces. A second period of the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian rule lasted from 1814/1815 to 1918. Nevertheless, all the time, they technically belonged to the Franzini family, who sold them to a Swiss in 1893 (48,000 guldens). One month later, he sold them further (75,000 guldens) to Paul Kupelwieser, the Austrian industrialist (Mader, 2005). During the First World War, 2,600 soldiers were stationed here. In 1920, the islands were annexed to Italy (the Treaty of Rapallo), although the Kupelwiesers were their owners throughout the Italian administration. Between the two world wars, after a shorter

¹⁷ Mentioned in Jules Verne's novel *Mathais Sandorf*.

¹⁸ Given its current name in 1977 since it was fortified during the Byzantine era (533-776).

period under different governments, the Italian Financial Ministry took control over them in 1936. Despite the crisis after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they became a popular destination for wealthy and famous people¹⁹ striving for a new film-influenced lifestyle. Their arrivals were regularly reported in the insular newspapers. At the same time, polo and golf²⁰ tournaments, tennis competitions, hunting and riding became pretty fashionable activities. But the Second World War began and a section of the Italian submarine school arrived from Sicily. When Italy capitulated, German soldiers set foot on the islands, where the Axis forces were based, so the archipelago was bombarded by the Allies at the end of April in 1945. This also meant a destruction of hotels, water pipes, electricity cables, reservoirs, and other things that made life pretty desirable in this location. The Partisans soon came, and a new era started. After the war, the islands were joined to Croatia, as a part of the federal Yugoslavia. On 20th June 1947, Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) visited this place, which was to become his summer residence in 1949 and remained so when he became the President of Yugoslavia in 1953. His last stay was recorded on 29th August 1979, before attending 6th summit of the non-aligned in Havana. This venue thus became ideal for new celebrities, esp. politicians²¹, film stars²², and other artists²³. Today, visitors can see a photo exhibition²⁴ showing Tito's official and private activities for over thirty years during which he received 90 representatives of 60 countries (Načinović, 2005).

Yet, the whole area was turned into a closed zone in 1953, which caused the relocation of 279 permanent residents. Common people, in particular foreigners, did not have access at that time, but the situation changed in the mid-1980s. After 1991, when the new state was established, the BNP became open to tourists although the first Croatian

e.g. G. B. Shaw, R. Strauss, J. Rockefeller, L. Rothschild, etc.

 $^{^{\}rm 20}$ $\,$ The golf course was one of the largest in Europe (18 holes over 5,850 meters).

e.g. Queen Elizabeth II, W. Brandt, Y. Arafat, I. Gandhi, F. Castro, etc.

e.g. E. Taylor, R. Burton, S. Loren, C. Ponti, etc.

e.g. J. Baker, M. del Monaco, etc.

Opened in 1984 in the Turkish baths, today J. B. Tito's Museum.

President Franjo Tuđman (1922-1999) still had many political encounters and held many talks here.

3.3. People and places

Paul Kupelwieser (1843-1919) had first stayed on the Brijuni islands in 1885, but bought them in 1893, when they were malaria-ridden. Although he could see a few buildings, piles of rocks from quarries, and sparse vegetation, he was not discouraged and changed the place tremendously, so that twenty years later there were five hotels and the first swimming pool with heated seawater on the Adriatic²⁵, in addition to other facilities (well-arranged parks and woods, archaeological sites, the zoo and ostrich farm; traffic connections with nearby Pula, Trieste, Zadar and Ancona)²⁶. Celebrating the centenary of his arrival in 1993, the authorities opened a permanent exhibition with his memoirs, photos, mineral rock collection, old postcards, books and magazines on display. Kupelwieser died in Vienna, where he was buried²⁷. His younger son tried to continue all the work, but without much success, so he shot himself on Veliki Brijun, where he lies next to his mother. The Kupelwiesers used to live in a 16th-century Venetian summer house, today the Archaeological Museum (temporarily closed during our visit).

Another person who should not be forgotten is 'the father of microbiology' and the Nobel Prize winner, Robert Koch (1843-1910). An important task for Kupelwieser was to exterminate malaria from the islands, so he wrote a letter to Koch, who came in 1900. His team fought against the disease and its carrier – the mosquito anopheles – for two years, when the danger disappeared. The microscope which he used for his research can be found at the Kupelwieser exhibition, while a monument in his honour was placed in one of the quarries when he received the prestigious prize (1905).

²⁵ Built in 1913.

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 26}$ $\,$ A small 'airport' for hydroplanes on Veliki Brijun.

²⁷ The archipelago's name is engraved on his tombstone.

The forestry expert and planner Alojz Čufar / Zuffar (1852-1907) was also important as he modified the landscape throughout clearing maquis, planting trees, and removing rocks from the old quarries to be soon transformed into attractive promenades. Meadows were also turned into vineyards, which yielded wine to be later sold to Vienna and Budapest. In order to express their gratitude for his contribution, in 1909, the Kupelwieser family set up a bronze tablet in one of the quarries. (www.np-brijuni.hr/en/cultural_and_historic_heritage)

3.4. Tourism

Visitors have many options available, so the Brijuni National Park is one of the most attractive Croatian destinations. Revenues mostly come from offering accommodation in 3 hotels and 3 residential villas (state property), as well as from organizing educational and recreational activities. Apart from shorter or longer stays and daily excursions, the BNP also provides facilities for congress tourism, which annually records around 50 national and international meetings in various fields. It should be added that nautical (30 – 40 berths) and cultural (esp. plays, performances, concerts, exhibitions) tourism has been steadily increased, drawing attention of versatile audiences. Organising special programmes, such as weddings, teambuilding activities, workshops, and alike is also possible in this area. Today there are no permanent residents any more, but around 200 full-time employees, helped by up to 100 part-time contractors (from March/April to September/October), are engaged all year round (Blažević, 2005).

4. Linguistic Landscape in the Brijuni National Park

4.1. Sign Use

We have found all the types of signs and inscriptions from Blommaert's classification (see 1.), which can be supported by the following:

- (1) permanent signs, such as: road signs (e.g. Čufarova staza/path 5 min), permanent publicity signs (e.g. the arrival & departure site), landmarks (e.g. the Dinosaur Footprints sign), graffiti (e.g. I ♥ Brijuni);
- (2) event-related signs, for instance, posters (e.g. the performance Kupelwieser on Brijuni), temporary shop signs (e.g. gourmet memories (local hand-made no GMO food products) 100% made in Istria), for sale and rent signs (e.g. what to rent sign), smaller announcements displayed in public (e.g. what is not allowed sign); and
- (3) noise, such as cars and vans parked for a while (e.g. the Oneness Georgetown yacht) or readable objects left behind (e.g. garbage bin).

Our analysis has further indicated specific functions that signs and inscriptions may have in a landscape (see 1.). Landmark function is quite clear, for instance, on the plaque of the Late Antique Cemetery 4th-5th century, while recruitment function is pointed, among others, by the Birikina animation poster. The underwater educational trail notice, for example, should inform visitors about a possibility to discover the underwater world (information function), whereas graffiti (e.g. Feel the History of Brijuni) function as public statements. The inscription, such as Old Golf Course Brioni²⁸ 1921 on T-shirts in the souvenir shop, exemplifies muted signs, whose function is to establish indirect communication with the target audience.

We have additionally differentiated messages revealed by the observed signs and inscriptions as only pictorial, such as symbols (e.g. no dogs sign) and maps (none found, though), and only textual (e.g. drop area on the golf course). The majority of them expectedly include both non-textual and textual information, ranging from very short (e.g. the wet floor caution sign, video surveillance sign) to more detailed (e.g. the instructions in case of fire at the hotel, the Byzantine Castrum sign). The Saluga Beach sign appears to be a good example in this sense because it combines image (a map and the key symbols) and text (e.g. how to behave properly at the beach) pretty well, being much informative for its potential audience.

²⁸ The Italian equivalent since 1421.

4.2. Language Use

Signs and inscriptions we have found at the site can be further grouped according to the number of languages included, so they are considered: (1) monolingual; (2) bilingual; (3) trilingual; (4) four-language, and (5) five-language. Their classification consequently reveals what languages are used and in what sequence.

Monolingual signs and/or inscriptions contain information only either in Croatian (e.g. stare baterije, eng. old batteries; izlaz, eng. exit; Etnografski muzej, eng. the Ethnographic Museum; Trg Prijateljstva, eng. the Friendship Square) or English (e.g. the golf course notice, instructions on how to operate an electrical vehicle), and no other language is included. Their combination (e.g. the summer cinema poster, info ticket and excursion sign, boat transfer schedule, beach equipment and price list) is extended to German (e.g. the exhibition materials on Kupelwieser at Tito's museum translated from Croatian to German) and Italian (e.g. the Grandi Magazzini Confezioni advertisement from an old issue of the newspapers in Italian and German, exhibited at the hotel lobby) although Croatian is not always included first (e.g. souvenir and coffee bar sign in English), just as there are signs without the use of Croatian (Italian-German, e.g. the article about the golf season taken from the old newspapers and exhibited at the hotel lobby, also in English). Trilingual signs and/or inscriptions include, apart from the previous languages, Latin. All of them provide information first in Croatian, then other combinations are noticed, as follows: Croatian-German-Italian (e.g. dinner menu at the main restaurant); Croatian-Italian-English (e.g. meal schedule at the main restaurant); Croatian-English-Italian (e.g. label on the electrical vehicle); Croatian-Latin-English (e.g. fauna and flora plaques); and Croatian-English-Latin (e.g. fauna plaques in Tito's Museum). Different combinations of the same languages (no Latin, though), along with French (e.g. autumn and winter season announcement in an old issue of newspapers in the hotel lobby), are seen in four-language signs and/or inscriptions, this time with Croatian almost always in the first place, e.g. the Roman Villa and the Bay of Verige sign, the currency exchange office sign, the excursion poster, etc. The last category

also presents various combinations of the already mentioned languages (Croatian, English, Italian, German, Latin), but they are extended to Russian (e.g. the golf course entrance sign, warning sign at the safari park entrance, the Koki sign). Croatian is the first in each sign and/or inscription, with the only exception of information about the famous parrot (see 3.1.), which follows the Latin – Croatian – English – Italian – German sequence.

Special attention in this analysis has been paid to the souvenir shop (only one) as an important indoor space in any tourist destination, including a national park. Different items on offer expectedly include inscriptions in Croatian and other languages. First of all, it should be said that the traditional tourist brochures are published in six foreign languages (English, German, Italian, French, Russian), each one obviously having different frequency of use in the given landscape, but they also include one language that has not been mentioned yet (Slovene). A brochure for children provides bilingual information about the Brijuni islands in Croatian and English, while Kupelweiser's diary is published in German and Croatian. A picture book about two elephants is available only in English. Different types of postcards (printed, 3D and magnetic) provide messages in English (e.g. Feel the History of Brijuni, I ♥ Brijuni), just as the inscription on T-shirts is only in English (e.g. Old Golf Course Brioni 1921), while other souvenirs like mugs include only Croatian (e.g. Nacionalni park Brijuni, eng. Brijuni National Park).

4.3. Language Awareness

Our interviewee filled in a semi-structured questionnaire, based on 11 items, regarding sign emplacement and language use. As confirmed, no particular department/office or person is responsible for such task despite the fact that public signs have been used since the Brijuni National Park was established (special records on the previous changes non-existent), and a few ones are annually added in a cooperation with their steady partners although companies offering the best options are also engaged in the sign emplacement procedure. There is a book of

norms, however, which regulates how to use only the official logo as an element of their visual identity and they do follow it. Being the main marketing staff member, the interviewee is in charge of publishing different promotional materials and advising other employees on the use of public signs, but there is no formal control over this practice. It is common to consult a relevant expert in the initial stage of designing and to engage an official (certified) translator in the later stage of writing public inscriptions in foreign languages. The Croatian language expert is not explicitly mentioned at all. Speaking about languages, our interviewee thinks that English should have priority, in other words, every sign and/or inscription should include this language, presumably apart from Croatian. When multilingual use is required and/or advised, which may depend on signs themselves, her opinion is that English should be followed by Italian and German. Indeed, English is the most common language, but the use of German and Italian is also often. No particular principles are suggested for determining what languages should be used, revealing that employees are not quite aware of these issues. On the contrary, their approach to language use is rather flexible, that is, different languages are randomly combined in public signs and/or inscriptions. We could not obtain precise data about the national and language structure of guests for the last five years since they are mostly daily visitors, and record is not kept on this. However, it is well-known that the largest number of Croatian tourists come from Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Germany, and recently, from the English-speaking countries, especially the United Kingdom. Since there has been a recent increase in their number, Asian and Russian people should be seriously considered, as well.

Conclusion

Following the research questions, this case study has identified a variety of permanent, event-related and noise signs performing landmark, recruitment and information functions, along with their applications as public statements and instruments for establishing indirect

communication (muted signs). Image and text (mostly combined) are used as media for the above-stated purposes. Since language is one of their essential conveyers, it is important to make messages understandable as much as possible, which consequently means to take into account their potential receivers seriously. Croatian is here visible in more or less haphazard combinations mostly with English, German and Italian although French, Russian and Slovene can be sporadically found. Their number is also accidentally chosen from two to five, of course, apart from monolingual examples. In this sense, the signs and inscriptions under this analysis may present relevant codes for ensuring a required interaction between different language users at the given site, but it is clear that there is no particular system to regulate this practice and, thus, organise the space itself in a better semiotic structure. It is not surprising then why the current case study has additionally led to the conclusion that it is needed to raise the language awareness of people whose job is significantly based on communication with rather specific target audiences (e.g. daily visitors, hotel and villa guests, vachtsmen, congress attendants, culture lovers, experts in natural sciences, professional politicians and people interested in politics, sportsmen, etc.) of different backgrounds (national being one of them). The responsibility for this task partially belongs to linguists, oriented to the exploration of language in its entirety, which also includes a semiotic perspective of language use in public places (space as a semiotic body). We believe that a co-operation between them and people who work in the given location could produce more reliable patterns of sign emplacement and language use, and improve the expected kind of communication in such a diversity-modelled setting.

To sum up, the Brijuni National Park truly represents a vast open space both as a real-world phenomenon and a conceptual tool that can help us define the productive nature of "spaces".

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Appendices

Appendix 1.: Permanent, event-related and noise signs







Appendix 2.: Landmark, recruitment and information function signs, public statement and muted signs







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Appendix 3.: Pictorial, textual and mixed signs







Appendix 4.: Signs and language use









