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URBAN STREET SIGNS IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF TUNISIA:
TENSIONS IN POLICY, REPRESENTATION, AND ATTITUDES

A Dissertation in
Applied Linguistics

by
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This ethnographic study of linguistic landscape (LL) (Landry & Bourhis, 1997),
describes the urban multilingual practices of Tunisia as evidenced by its policy statements, street
signage, and local perceptions. Data for this investigation were collected primarily from publicly
visible signage in both the capital city (Tunis), and in the suburb (La Marsa), but also from
Tunisian policy documents and perceptions of language use and meaning from the local Tunisian
population. Drawing on the frameworks of indexicality (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), dialogicality
(Bakhtin, 1981), and interpellation (Althusser, 1970), this study revealed that Modern Standard
Arabic (MSA) was the undisputed official language not only in terms of political status, but also
with respect to its visibility on public signs in the linguistic landscape, and in view of people’s
attitudes. However, it was also noted that despite its strong status in the city, there were still some
inconsistencies observed with respect to the suburban area of La Marsa, where MSA cedes its
supremacy to French on private signs. This inconsistency was explained as the result of additional
provisions made by the state which permitted the use of foreign languages, and the importance of
a large French expatriate population in La Marsa. The status of Tunisian Arabic (TA) was,
contrary to MSA, not institutionalized in political legislation, and was shown not to have a high
level of representation in the linguistic landscape. Respondents agreed that TA had to remain an
oral language in order not to ‘corrupt’ the quality of the official and more prestigious MSA.
Although not officially recognized in Tunisian legislation, French in Tunisia was shown to have a
substantial impact on the linguistic landscape, especially on private signs where it was used either
as a relic of colonialism, as a language interpellating (Althusser, 1970) a particular social group,
or as a language of commodification (Heller, 2003). Local informants valued French as the
second language of the country, and as a cultural heritage, or rejected it as a language marking a
prevailing status-quo of subjugation to French politico-cultural hegemony. English emerges as a
language slowly but surely growing in importance in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, and gaining more acceptance in people’s attitudes. While French was perceived by others as a language indexing colonial status-quo and dependency, English was experienced by some as a liberating or ‘third space’ (Kramsch, 1993) language which countered the hegemony of French because it lacked association with a colonial history.

This study demonstrates the need to diversify the range and types of data in LL research. In doing so, researchers interested in language policy and planning can develop a much more astute and comprehensive understanding of urban multilingualism. They can also address bottom-up as well as top-down linguistic practices. The linguistic landscape was also theorized as an example of ‘new literacy’ (Gee, 2007) modality. The type of literacy represented in the linguistic landscape which is multimodal, multilingual, multiscriptal, and hence multiliterate, provides the local population with the potential to develop multicompetence (Cook 1992, 2002) in reading and writing the multilingualism featured in their daily visual ecology. As shown by Cenoz & Gorter (2008), the linguistic landscape can also be a site which fosters the development of second language acquisition, particularly in the form of input to second language learners. In addition to the implications of the linguistic landscape as a site of literacy practices and language development, the linguistic landscape in Tunisia potentially represents a tool for pedagogy (Sayer, 2010) which can serve to sensitize the population about the languages spoken and encountered in the country. It can also raise people’s awareness about their linguistic repertoires, identities, and cultural heritage (Dagenais et al., 2009).
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

This dissertation is a report of an ethnographic study about urban multilingualism in Tunisia. The study was based primarily upon the examination of street signs constituting the Linguistic Landscape (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) of Tunis, the capital city, and La Marsa, a suburb of Tunis. This first chapter of the dissertation presents the topic and background of the study, states its objective, and describes its scope by presenting an overview of the methodology used. Subsequently, the rationale for the theoretical framework of this study is provided. The chapter ends with a brief description of the content of the dissertation.

Topic and Background

The Study of the Linguistic Landscape

In contemporary societies, dynamic urban environments literally surround inhabitants with visual images that form part of their daily experience. While these visual messages may have a variety of modalities (Kress & Hodge, 1998; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 2005), they usually involve either language or image, or a combination thereof. These can be thought of collectively as constituting the linguistic landscape. As stated in Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 25): “The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form
the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration”. The term ‘linguistic landscape’ (LL hereafter) is the physical domain or context where visual messages are displayed as signs and read by passersby. In the present study, the term LL will be likewise used to refer to the study and analysis of how language is manifested through visual interfaces rather than how language is articulated in the spoken mode. As explained by Landry & Bourhis (1997), the LL serves both an informative and a symbolic function. While the informative function aims at providing information about the linguistic characteristics and delimitations, as well as the geographical boundaries of a particular sociolinguistic group, the symbolic function, on the other hand, involves the LL as an index of the dynamics, ideologies, and social arrangements within the environment observed. While informative dimensions of signs in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa will be explored in the pages to follow, the present study will be concerned primarily with the examination of the symbolic aspects of the linguistic landscape of these two environments.

From this vantage point, the LL constitutes a unique platform for the study of multilingualism because it breaks away from an established trend within sociolinguistic research to investigate speech at the expense of written forms1. More specifically, a great deal of sociolinguistic research around the world (Ball, 2010) remains decidedly guided by traditional variationist sociolinguistic research models à la Labov (Labov, 1972, 1980; Trudgill, 1995, 1999), analyzing aspects of speech, such as pronunciation, accent, and other oral features, to determine how language varieties are expressed and represented within communities of practice. However, in light of the research in LL which aims to investigate multilingualism (Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2006; Gorter & Shohamy, 2009) it is clear that among the multilingual practices of a particular society, written/visual forms are of equal importance to their oral/spoken

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1 To understand how traditional sociolinguistics marginalizes the role of written language vis-à-vis spoken forms, see Chafe (1994, pp. 45-46).
counterparts, and provide useful contextual information pertaining to the sociolinguistic environment investigated. In this sense, an underlying bias and shortcoming of traditional sociolinguistic research is its over-emphasis on the role of spoken language to the exclusion of written forms. Further, by focusing exclusively on speech, mainstream sociolinguistic research has also reduced the context where languages are used and encountered. LL research, on the other hand, values the way in which written language can contribute to the constitution of a sociolinguistic context. In addition, with appropriate methodologies, LL studies can enable us to understand how languages are visually processed and experienced by people in linguistically diverse contexts – an area of analysis that is becoming important in this age of visual literacies (Burmark, 2003; Gee, 2007; Kress, 2003; Luke, 1994).

The LL can also provide complex insights into language policies and practices in a community. As Cenoz and Gorter (2006) put it:

The study of the linguistic landscape can also be interesting because it can provide information on the differences between the official language policy that can be reflected in top-down signs such as street names or names of official buildings and the impact of that policy on individuals as reflected in bottom-up signs such as shop names or street posters. (p. 68)

This field of study helps to understand how official policies are confirmed by the linguistic representation in the public domain, particularly on public signs. In addition, by using private signs as indices of linguistic representation, LL studies can also explain how state-sponsored policies are experienced at the bottom-up level. The use of the LL in investigating multilingualism and language policy is germane to this research and has been discussed in a number of studies which will be described in great detail in the literature review chapter. In the next section, I will point out the context of this study and how the use of the LL will inform it.
Examining Multilingualism and Language Policy in Tunisia through the Linguistic Landscape

This study examined the linguistic landscape of Tunisia and analyzed the multilingual practices of this country by primarily looking at the languages used on signs. The linguistic landscape was compared with the official language policy of the country as well as to the local population’s linguistic attitudes. Before presenting in detail how this analysis was carried out, an overview of the linguistic background, situation and policy of Tunisia is presented in the next section.

The Linguistic Situation in Tunisia

*Historical Linguistic Overview*

From a geographical standpoint, Tunisia is at the intersection of three continents and has a long-standing heritage of cultural and linguistic diversity. Situated in the Mediterranean basin (Figure 1-1), Tunisia has been successively occupied by *Amazigh* Berbers (Prehistory – 1100 BC), Phoenicians (1100 BC – 146 BC), Romans (146 BC – 439 AD), Vandals (439 AD – 533 AD), Byzantines (534 AD – half of the 7th century), Arabs (670 – 1534), Spaniards (1534 – 1574), Ottomans (1574 – 1881), and more recently French (1881 - 1956).
In view of these different invasions, Tunisia has witnessed a succession of influences that constitute its historical, cultural, and linguistic heritage. Among the languages which form part of the country’s legacy are Phoenician, Latin, Greek, Vandal, Arabic, Turkish, Maltese, Italian, French, and more recently English\(^2\). In addition to the languages which have been brought to Tunisia through occupation, other languages have arrived through migration from other countries to Tunisia. In this respect, migration from Andalusia to Tunisia has also brought Spanish as well as Hebrew to the Tunisian territory.

\(\text{\footnotesize\(^2\) While English has not been inherited via colonialism per se, it is gaining more representation in Tunisia due to its role in education, business, and other sectors of activity (Battenburg, 1997).}\)
Present-Day Linguistic Overview

Notwithstanding Tunisia’s rich multilingual heritage, the country initiated, following the independence from France in 1956, a policy of Arabization in order to preserve a strong tie with its Muslim culture, heritage, and identity. This policy has been framed itself as “the only politically acceptable solution” (Battenburg, 1997 p. 281) and Tunisia’s official language, as stipulated by the national constitution, is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). As described by Keil (1990, p. 178) Arabization has been a major event in the linguistic history of Tunisia. Political waves of Arabization in the Arab world can be compared to a ‘water splatter’ where Arabization is stronger in countries closer to the Arabian Peninsula and more attenuated in countries which are more remote from it. Bearing on this idea, Ben Ayed (1993) states: “Un fait est certain: l’arabisation a été, de moins en moins accentuée en allant de l’Orient vers l’Occident. La Tunisie, par exemple, a été plus arabisée que l’Algérie, et celle-ci plus que le Maroc” (p. 30). [One fact is undeniable: Arabization has been less successful when moving from the Orient to the Occident. Tunisia, for example, was more Arabized than Algeria, which was more Arabized than Morocco]. Despite state-sponsored initiatives, the flourishing circulation of western languages such as French and English in Tunisia can nonetheless be said to contradict the policy of Arabization started by the government in the 1970s, which could be described as a strong initiative to affirm a particular national identity/character by using Arabic more in administration, education, and the media. Daoud (1991) defines Arabization as “The process of promoting Modern Standard Arabic to the level of a fully functional language in educational, administrative, and mass-media domains, to replace the language of the former European colonial powers” (p. 7). Daoud also comments that:

3 My translation.

4 Daoud (1991) argues that the motive for implementing Arabization in the 1970’s was to allow the politico-economic ruling elite to pursue and maintain power.
Historically, Arabization was viewed throughout the Arab world as a fundamental component of the struggle for independence. The maintenance of Arabic was proclaimed by the leaders of the various Arab independence movements as the means to assert their countries’ national character vis-à-vis the colonial powers, to retrieve their people’s Arab-Islamic cultural identity, and to preserve their national unity as a community speaking one language (…) Since the various Arab countries achieved their independence, Arabization has been considered an essential means to remove the vestiges of colonialism which still permeate the governmental and educational systems as well as the cultural and social environment (p. 7).

The use of MSA has also recently been accompanied by a bottom-up ideological reaction of affirmation of the local Arab identity against the backdrop of a post 9/11 climate, the war in the Middle-East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This antagonistic reaction manifested itself through Islamization, the increasing popularity of the local variety of Arabic, Tunisian Arabic (TA), and the reclaiming of an Arab-Islamic identity, via the increasing use of MSA. However, the governmental stance with respect to Arabization has never been clear. In fact as Daoud (1991, p. 7) argues: “The official authorities have been quite inconsistent in promoting Arabization (…) they have encouraged bilingualism (Arabic and French) and biculturalism (Arab-Islamic and Western European, mainly French) much more consistently”.

While MSA is well institutionalized, the local spoken dialect, Tunisian Arabic (TA), is used in everyday conversations among and between Tunisians. However, TA is a spoken language which has neither undergone status nor corpus planning. It is a language which is associated with orality and has a more subaltern status in Tunisia as will be illustrated in this study.

The presence of French in Tunisia derives from its colonial occupation by France from 1881 to 1956, the period during which Tunisia was a French protectorate. For this reason, French is a widely-used language in Tunisia, although its status as a second language is also not recognized by the state legislature. Recently, however, the influence of the French language has
started to slowly decrease not only due to the state-sponsored policy of Arabization, but also as a result of the rising influence of English.

English, which has spread more tacitly in the recent years, was not imposed by colonial forces but is nonetheless gaining much currency and presence due to its growing importance in the fields of education, science, business and economy. In addition, in line with increasing globalization, the case of Tunisia is symptomatic of former North African protectorates and colonies, which are now slowly distancing themselves from dependence on the French language and turning to English as a tool for development. Although the influence of the French language in Tunisia is slowly diminishing, it is, however, still maintained to some extent by France’s influence over her former colonies. French ‘political’ resistance to American-led initiatives in Africa and the Middle-East is the outcome of fears about the loss of French influence in these areas of the world and loss of the accompanying economic benefits. In this light, the struggle between French and English in Tunisia can be conceived in terms of a ‘linguistic rivalry’ (Battenburg, 1997). The linguistic rivalry or tug-of-war between French and English is becoming more visible in Tunisia, particularly in the domains of education, business, science, technology, and tourism where English appears to constitute more linguistic capital than French. While French is a language which represents a colonial historical heritage, English on the other hand is becoming an incentive for upward social mobility as well as educational and economic opportunities.

Thus, the linguistic dynamics of Tunisia have created a complex multilingual environment which is evident in both spoken forms and, of more relevance to this particular study, in semiotic, written, and visual forms. In addition, the implementation of a policy of Arabization, while assumed to have been successfully achieved, will be shown to actually have not succeeded fully and the status of Arabization will be shown to be, as Daoud (1991, p. 8) argues, a language policy characterized by mismatches. This inconsistency will be shown in this
study not only through the discrepancy between policy documents and the linguistic landscape, but also through the examination of people’s linguistic attitudes.

The Linguistic Policy of Tunisia

Official linguistic provisions and linguistic ecology

Language of the State

By official decree (The Constitution of the Republic of Tunis, Chapter 1), the official language of Tunisia is Arabic. This is also the language used in administration, legislature, education, and posting. It is thus advocated as the official language of the state, but it also serves as the language of national identification and sovereignty.

Languages in the State

While Arabic is the only recognized language in policy documents, as we have seen, several other languages form part of Tunisia’s linguistic make-up: Languages such as French, English, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, and Hebrew are present due to the historical and political factors explained earlier, and while they do not have “institutional” visibility, as will be shown in this study, they are nonetheless significantly present in the linguistic landscape and in terms of actual use by Tunisians on a daily basis.

Objective and Problem Statement

The broad objective of this study is to describe, analyze, and develop a sound understanding of the multilingual communicative practices of Tunisia, by analyzing linguistic practices as expressed through official language policies, the language of street signs, and
people’s attitudes both to languages in the linguistic landscape and to the language ecology of Tunisia. Through the use of these three data sources to examine multilingualism in Tunisia, this study develops a perspective on the country’s linguistic landscape.

Research Focus: Inconsistencies between Policy and Practice

Although the official language of Tunisia is Arabic\(^5\) and despite the active role of the state in promoting Arabization, this study explores how particular linguistic inconsistencies remain between top-down linguistic advocacies and bottom-up language practices. More specifically, while the Tunisian language policy advocates Arabic monolingualism, the heteroglossic linguistic practices encountered on private or non-official street signs draw a different picture of the linguistic situation of the country. In addition, attitudinal data collected from Tunisian respondents provides supplementary evidence of the gap between state-sponsored language policy and plurilingual discourses encountered in the linguistic landscape. In this respect, the focus of the study is to show the discrepancy between linguistic policies on the one end and actual language practices on the other hand. This will be achieved by focusing on the relation between linguistic policy, linguistic landscape, and language perceptions.

Potential significance

This study was performed in order to reveal discrepancies between language policy and practice and to highlight the tensions and inconsistencies observed in visual representation of multilingualism, local people’s attitudes, and the state language policy in Tunisia. As Spolsky (2004) states: “the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices

\(^5\) This fact will be discussed with more details when presenting the official policy documents pertaining to language.
than in management” (p. 65). In line with this view, I argue that addressing tensions between discourses of authority, visual representation, and people’s perception is important to define a more appropriate language policy for Tunisia. This language policy would be more in harmony with the linguistic realities in situ or in vivo of the country rather than based on top-down speculative/symbolic engineering ex vivo. In addition, examining the discrepancies between policy, representation, and attitudes has intrinsic potential in informing policy makers, organizations, but also the local population about the complex linguistic dynamics taking place in Tunisia.

An additional potential contribution of this study is the ability to add to the body of LL research by providing additional layers of interpretation which go beyond the descriptive representation of the linguistic landscape. This is achieved by including other sources of data such as policy documents and people’s attitudes in order to have a better understanding of the sociolinguistic community examined. In this respect, adding additional sources of data in order to analyze language policy, planning, and practice has not been a widely used strategy in this field, and my study will likely yield some useful new orientations in this regard. In the next section, the scope and some methodological aspects of this study will be briefly discussed.

Scope of the Study and New Orientations

Examination of Linguistic Landscape

LL research can be situated within sociolinguistics and, even more broadly, within the larger framework of social semiotics (Kress & Hodge, 1998; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, 2006), due to the fact it starts from the premises that signs are embedded in a social environment and that their meaning is socially constructed (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2006).
However, as this study focuses specifically on the language planning and linguistic landscape of Tunisia, I will not provide a full accounting of social semiotic literature; instead I will focus my literature review on the LL and relate the significance of this study to the field of sociolinguistics and language policy and planning. In other words, this study is situated in the space between LL, sociolinguistics and language policy and planning. Therefore, since this study examines the linguistic landscape of Tunisia from a language policy and sociolinguistic orientation, it will not include analysis of other potential aspects of the LL such as commercialism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009; Onofri et al., 2008), tourism (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2009; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Kallen, 2009; Torkington, 2009), name classification (Edelman, 2009), analysis of the linguistic structure of signs (Martinez, 2004), mapping and typology (Barni & Bagna, 2009), virtual/digital communication (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009), or science (Hanauer, 2009). In addition, this study focuses only on street signage in urban/suburban contexts, more specifically in streets, and therefore does not aim to account for other types of LL environments or other forms of multimodal representations, such as newspaper advertisements or images in print media. At an even higher level, the signs as a whole can be in tension with the official policies and language ideologies of a community as they are stated in their policy statements and documents.

In expanding the context of analysis outside the structural and spoken forms of language and communication, by including visual and semiotic media, LL represents a new trend in investigating multilingualism.

**Post-colonial African context**

While studies in LL have examined a large array of countries and contexts, Africa remains a geographical area which has been underrepresented in this field of research, with the

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6 For an examination of recent LL research in other domains see Gorter & Shohamy (2009).
exception of a few studies which have examined the linguistic landscape of sub-Saharan Africa (Calvet, 1990; Dumont, 1998; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Reh, 2004; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009). Studies exploring the linguistic landscape of the north-African Maghreb have been even scarcer (Hassa, 2008). Taking account of this gap in the literature, my study will seek to overcome this underrepresentation in LL studies by exploring the linguistic landscape of Tunisia, a post-colonial North-African country in the Arab Maghreb.

**Signs in the Cities vs. Signs in the Countryside**

As stated by Gorter & Cenoz (2008): “The highest density of signs can be found in cities and towns, in particular in the main shopping streets, commercial and industrial areas” (p. 343). The crux of LL research seems to revolve around urban spaces, which are experienced as the optimal spaces for the investigation of street signage. Given this recognition that cities are favorable sites for the exploration of LL – to the point that some have proposed renaming the field ‘cityscape’ (Gorter, 2006), due to the considerable body of research performed in the city – this study will accommodate the need to examine linguistic representation in other ‘exurban’ spaces by examining not only a city (Tunis) but also one of its suburbs (La Marsa). In doing so, this research project will try to offer a methodological expansion in the study of the LL, one which compares linguistic representation across different spaces. It is important to bear in mind, however, that data presented in this study intended to be illustrative, rather than comprehensively representative, of the linguistic situation of Tunisia. As such, findings from this research cannot

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7 For an investigation of the LL within rural environments see Dal Negro (2009).

8 For a rationale of why LL should be limited to urban centres see Coulmas (2009, p. 14).
be said to apply to the whole country, but are rather ‘snapshots’ from the specific environments examined.

The City and the Medina

Within the capital city, two semiotic spaces will be further explored, namely a) the new city of Tunis, which is a modern capital modeled on French urban models, and b) the Medina of Tunis, which is a non-western semiotic space corresponding to the older area of the capital city, which was established in the advent of the Arab occupation and long before French colonization. The superposition of these two spaces within the same city may yield important and interesting research findings with respect to the representation of languages, cultures, and ideologies within the linguistic landscape of Tunis. In addition, while this perspective on the city was not examined in previous sociolinguistic research which examines street signs with the exception of Hassa (2008), the study and analysis of two markedly different spaces such as the Medina and the New City may yield interesting findings pertaining to how policy, languages, and attitudes are performed in these two spaces. In fact, together with the informative and symbolic dimensions of signs which Landry & Bourhis (1997) have discussed, Hicks (2002) offered a third dimension which he terms “folkloric” or “mythological”. This folkloric aspect of signs is said to mark the territory by assigning to it a sense of timeless, memory, and history\(^{10}\). Therefore, these dimensions of signs “give added sense of place and belonging of the in-group to its territory” (p. 3). The symbolic marking of the territory by the local population will be discussed further when

\(^9\) More information about the site of investigation and rationale for the selection of the city as a site of investigation will be given in the methodology section.

\(^{10}\) For a discussion of how the LL can be used as a historical artifact indexical of historical phases/episodes see Spolsky & Cooper (1991). On how the LL can serve to retrace different stages of the linguistic policy of a country see Backhaus (2005).
examining the linguistic landscape of Tunisia and the difference between Medina and New City. In this light, the differences in culture and history between the Medina and the New City may provide evidence of the difference in the ‘symbolic marking of the public space’ (Shohamy et al., 2006). The difference between these two spaces may also show how street signs and their linguistic content are indexical to the place where they are embedded (Scollon & Scollon, 2003).

**Examination of Linguistic Attitudes**

In addition to traditional methods of examination and study of the LL in the Tunis metropolitan area, this study includes an ethnographic dimension via an investigation into the attitudes of a sample of informants from the local Tunisian population. More specifically, attitudes collected from this pool of respondents consisted not only of attitudes to the languages featured in the linguistic landscape of the city of Tunis and the town of La Marsa, but also perceptions from these informants about the languages which they used on a daily basis independently of the LL. The following section presents a discussion of the theoretical models adopted for the analysis of the data, as well as the general research questions which guided the study.

**Framework and general research questions**

Signs are strongly targeted to the audience that they address, meant to ‘call out’ to their intended readers. In this respect, they are always in a relationship of interaction with their intended, and actual, audience. Whatever the intention of the producers, meaning always has to be negotiated with the audience. Signs can be said to participate in the interpretive cycle that includes text, context, writer, and reader. Signs also encompass a gamut of functions, from being
informative to conveying symbolic meanings and seeking affective responses (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). When catching readers’ attention by way of interpellation (Althusser, 1970), they are also ideological. They are calculated to appeal to the viewer and internalize the values that this viewer embodies. While this study will examine the dimensions of the relationship between signs and their audience, it will also try to show how signs are context-bound. In this sense, signs are indexical (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). By being situated in a particular social environment, signs provide a representative picture of the context in which they are embedded. Signs are also symbolic of wider social relationships and structuration. In this light, by examining signs in the context of broader discourses and social arrangements, one can get a rather complex view of the sociolinguistic practices and linguistic norms of a particular society.

Indexicality

A major concept which has been introduced in light of Peircean semiotics is indexicality. This concept was initially developed in philosophical terms by Peirce to refer to how our perceptual judgments and uses of language point to ‘external’ entities whether conceptual or material (i.e. existing in the real world). Indexicality is thus an attribute of all signs since the most fundamental form of reference is indexical. Describing indexicality, Peirce argues:

When I say I mean my discourse to apply to the real world, the word “real” does not describe what kind of world it is: it only serves to bring the mind of my hearer back to that world which he knows so well by sight, hearing, and touch, and of which those sensations are themselves indices of the same kind. Such a demonstrative sign is a necessary appendage to a proposition, to show what world of objects, or as the logicians say, what “universe of discourse” it has in view. Peirce et al. (1982)

When applying this concept to semiotic systems and signs, indexicality thus refers to how signs are used to refer to constructs and objects which are bound to a particular context. Scollon & Scollon (2003) have used this Peircean notion of indexicality to develop a socially-constructed
theory of signs which is known as ‘Geosemiotics’. This analytical theory, which uses some of the concepts developed by Peirce and applies them more concretely in the analysis of signs within social settings, is centered around the notion that signs are context-bound or dependent on the environment where they are situated.

Indexicality is mentioned by Scollon & Scollon (2003) as the property of the context-dependency of signs; they define their theory of Geosemiotics around this core concept.

Geosemiotics is thus characterized as: “The study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 211). What this framework offers to the analysis of signs is not only to look at the content, organization, structure, and layout of signs, but also to examine how signs are ‘framed’ and ‘situated’ within a particular social context. This dimension of semiotic studies, which takes into consideration the social context of signs, is in line with a perception of the LL as context-bound rather than a-contextual, and fits into a trend of research where “the experience of space is always socially constructed” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1977). In this regard, signs can only make sense if they are located within a particular setting. A stop sign is only meaningful ‘in-place’ when it is located where it will serve its contextual purpose, and is thus not operative when it is devoid of context.

Bearing on this definition, the connection between Geosemiotics and Peirce’s concept of indexicality becomes clear. While Peirce pointed out that a sign refers to its object (something outside itself, emphasizing the importance of the context or ‘Object’ in Peircean semiotics which the sign refers to) Scollon and Scollon (2003) mention that a sign only makes sense because of the context and situation where it is placed. It follows that the placement of signs in a particular space/place is a crucial notion since it allows sign readers to interpret the signs in view of the context in which they are situated. Hence, signs depend on their context for meaning.
Dialogicality

Peirce also introduced the construct of *dialogicality* by arguing that all thinking was dialogic in form. According to Peirce (1958) the self of one instant appeals to a deeper self for its assent. This idea was also developed by Bakhtin (1981). The dialogicality of signs has been a leitmotiv within social semiotic theories and has been mentioned in social/interactional analyses of signs and may thus be relevant to the understanding of the linguistic landscape. An idea which is introduced in the Geosemiotics framework of Scollon & Scollon (2003) is the idea that signs operate in a network of *semiotic aggregates*. Semiotic aggregates are defined by the Scollons as ‘the intersections of multiple discourses and the interaction order in particular places’ (p. 167). In addition, and in line with the Peircean tradition which has explored the construct of dialogicality, Scollon & Scollon (2003, p. 205) argue that while all signs operate in aggregate, once they are placed in a particular context or environment they become part of an interdiscursive, intersemiotic dialogic system. Within a semiotic aggregate, different discourses may interact and influence one another in such ways as for example a municipal regulatory discourse aimed at pedestrians and motorists which may interact with a commercial discourse. This idea is congruent with Peirce’s conception of the dialogical nature of signs and we will see in the next sections of this paper, how dialogicality in signs can also be referred to in light of the theories of ‘interpellation’ offered by Althusser (1970)\(^\text{11}\).

In the same line of thought, Kress (2005) also explains that signs are embedded in larger discourses and when designed they are framed in relation to other signs:

> Whomever they are made by, they (i.e. signs) are always also a response to, and an anticipation of, other signs. They need to be understood relationally, and to understand them thus is also to understand them as an enactment of *social* relations (p. 19).

\(^{11}\) Interpellation will be addressed in more detail in the subsequent section.
This important development contributed by Kress’s model of social semiotics not only explains how signs are embedded in a particular context of social action, but also how they reveal the discursive dialogicality between social actors. Following Scollon & Scollon (2003), the semiotic aggregate quality of signs (i.e. the fact that they are involved in a dialogue) is actually not limited to the dialogue (1) between signs and (2) between signs and sign readers, but also involves a third type of dialogicality which the Scollons did not refer to. That is (3) a dialogue between sign drafters, designers, and writers (whether governmental or particulars) on the one hand, and sign readers on the other hand.

As Kress argues, the sign is determined by who acts and in relation to whom; this idea can be used to explain the genre of discourse represented on signs since the type of discourse will be determined by who is speaking and to whom. In this regard, this idea echoes the notion that signs represent the interplay of the dialogicality of speaker/addressee or designer/audience. More specifically, the genre of discourse on signs not only communicates about the nature of the sign (e.g. administrative/formal language for institutional signs versus interpellative language for advertisements) but also gives us an idea about the type of audience these signs address.

**Interpellation**

According to Althusser (1970) ideology is a notion which has been present in different forms and different manifestations through time and across history. In this light, Althusser argues that ideology has no history because it has always been present despite its various manifestations. Althusser introduces the notion of *interpellation* in order to explain how ideology operates. The connection between ideology and interpellation lies in Althusser’s statement that ‘ideology interpellates individuals as subjects’ (1970, p. 13). Bearing on this notion, *interpellation* works in two distinct ways. A first literal interpretation of *interpellation* is by direct address; indeed, when
understood at its literal/surface meaning, interpellation can be understood in the act of hailing or calling out for someone in the same way as for instance a police officer would. In this particular meaning, the effect of ‘interpellation’ on the individual would see him turning back and answering this hailing. A second way of interpellating an individual is by indirect address. This second type of interpellation can be found in discursive practices such as advertisement and media discourses and more relevantly to this study in street signs which form part of the LL. In such cases, ideology constructs subject positions for social subjects and *interpellation* is the actual process or means by which ideology constructs these subject positions. As argued by Althusser, the recognition that the individual experiences, which results from the interpellation, is qualified as ‘mis-recognition’ (*méconnaissance*) and is the process whereby an individual identifies or recognizes himself as a subject. The concept of *interpellation* can thus be applied to the social sciences and to the analysis of street signs where messages are used on billboards to project identities and appeal to an audience. This notion is appealing in the field of media in general and can be applied to the analysis of the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa. In this regard, signs are used in order to interpellate subjects by using various linguistic devices and discourses. More specifically, signs usually address their audience in direct terms (e.g. use of the personal pronoun ‘you’), or appeal to emotions and target the audience not as part of a general social supercategory, but in terms of a particular subculture. Therefore, *interpellation* by the mere fact that it is more targeted can also have a stronger effect on the interpellated subject since the ‘hailing’ is made to appear more close, intimate or personalized. In this light, when the subject recognizes the fact he is being spoken to or interpellated, the direct consequence is that he will engage more deeply with the discourse and will accept the social role being offered to him. This notion will be germane to the understanding of messages on street signs and how the linguistic content of signs is designed to hail sign readers and represent various linguistic, cultural, historical, and social identities.
Organization of the dissertation

In Chapter 2, a review of the LL literature pertaining to language policy and planning is presented, followed by a discussion of the important findings and implications for the study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological approach used in the design and implementation of the study, and in the analysis of research findings. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study which are divided according to data source, namely policy data, linguistic landscape data, and respondents’ data. Following this, an interpretation of the results is discussed in Chapter 5 where the implications of findings are discussed in view of language policy and panning considerations in Tunisia. Finally, Chapter 6 will provide a concluding view of the implications of the study, its significance, and limitations.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Despite its relative infancy, the field of linguistic landscapes has triggered considerable interest and produced an abundant number of studies. The following selected literature includes LL research which has examined the relationship between the linguistic landscape, linguistic policy, and people’s attitudes respectively, and is thus in line with the interests of this study. This relationship is expressed in the following literature review in terms of a continuum where the linguistic landscape is experienced as a site of linguistic suppression on one end and as a site of linguistic acceptance on the other end. The literature on LL ranges from studies presenting tension within the linguistic landscape to studies demonstrating harmony. In the following review, the terms ‘tension’ and ‘harmony’ are used to express the interactional dynamics between policy, the linguistic landscape, and attitudes. However, due to the limited number of studies which include attitudes from people, the relationship of tension and harmony is predominantly captured in this review based on the linguistic landscape. There are four categories in this continuum where policy, linguistic landscape, as well as people’s attitudes are classified from more conservative to more accepting. While the labels chosen are used to describe attitudes, these attitudes are not only taken to represent the attitudes of the local population as elicited from interviews but also the attitudes of policy makers, and less directly, the implicit attitude as perceived from the street signs and as elicited from the experienced tension or harmony between languages in the linguistic landscape. The categories chosen to classify the LL literature are: (1)
Suppression, (2) Adjustment, (3) Instrumentalism, and (4) Acceptance. It is important to point out that this review of the LL literature is not meant to be inclusive or exhaustive of all LL research.

As has been discussed in the introduction, the linguistic landscape serves two basic functions, informative and symbolic. The informative function of the linguistic landscape provides cues as to the linguistic make-up of a particular region or area as well as to its national or territorial boundaries. The symbolic function, on the other hand, goes beyond this informative dimension and can use the linguistic landscape to index the status, power and weight of a particular linguistic group as well as the ethnolinguistic vitality of its population. When private practices of signage contravene public linguistic policies, there are tensions which are thus symbolically reflected in the linguistic landscape. In this first section, I offer a review of how the linguistic landscape can be experienced as a site of tension which results from the lack of representation of sociolinguistic groups. The following section presents LL studies which have illustrated how the linguistic landscape can be indicative of tensions and particularly of suppression.

**The Linguistic Landscape as a Site of Linguistic Suppression**

Tensions experienced between linguistic groups and sociolinguistic communities can result in a climate of conflict, hostility, and belligerence. The studies described in this section illustrate how the linguistic landscape can outwardly exhibit tensions between linguistic groups not only in light of rigid political circumstances, unyielding attitudes towards ethnolinguistic groups, but more importantly in the skirmish between languages on street signs. As it will be explained in these studies, the tension in policy, representation, and, attitudes results from the suppression of a sociolinguistic community and from its marginalization from the dominant community. This marginalization, takes the form of a lack of recognition of the languages and
identities of the suppressed community. As will be illustrated subsequently, this linguistic suppression is exerted by institutional support, on street signs, as well as in the conservative attitudes of the population.

A study performed by Trumper-Hecht (2009) exemplifies how linguistic suppression can be experienced in the linguistic landscape. The author examined the linguistic landscape of Upper Nazareth, Israel, a mixed city where the Jewish population is the highest but with an Arab population of about 20%. The main purpose of this study was to show how the linguistic landscape can be a site where identity is constructed by two different groups (Jews and Arabs) but more specifically how these identities are subject to contest and controversies. More specifically the author focused on the “language battle” between Arabic and Hebrew which reflects the overall tensions in Jewish-Arab relations. A fact pointed out by Trumper-Hecht, which is also mentioned in Shohamy et al. (2006), is that while both Hebrew and Arabic are official languages in Israel, Hebrew is ascribed more status and visibility than Arabic by virtue of the salience of the majority Hebrew-speaking group and their resistance to the Arab population. As a matter of fact, the visibility of Arabic on public signs has not been improved notwithstanding the official orders from the Supreme Court instructing the municipality of Upper Nazareth to add Arabic to all public signs in the city. Therefore the linguistic landscape of Upper Nazareth is replete with Hebrew-English bilingual signs. In this light, this study exemplifies a situation where there are discrepancies at the political level between a central governing body and local authorities. As argued by Landry & Bourhis (1997), the symbolic function of the landscape and its importance as to the degree of representation of a particular language can have an impact on the level of “positive social identity of ethnolinguistic groups” (p. 27). In this respect, discrepancies between policy and practice result in a situation where the linguistic exclusion of Arabic contributes to lower the ethnolinguistic identity of the Arab population and to its marginalization.
The author also incorporated in her analysis interviews collected from both Arab and Jewish respondents that asked these respondents about the languages they wished to see represented in the linguistic landscape of Upper Nazareth. The findings revealed the hostility towards Arabic in the linguistic landscape. More specifically, while the majority of the Jewish respondents stated that they wanted to see Hebrew as the most visible language and did not want to see Arabic in the linguistic landscape, the Arab informants on the other hand overwhelmingly stated that they wished to see both Hebrew and Arabic in the linguistic landscape thus displaying more accepting attitudes. These different perceptions from the Jewish and Arab populations of Upper Nazareth outline the hostility towards Arabic both from policy makers and the Jewish population, hostility which is reflected in the linguistic landscape and which according to Trumper-Hecht derives from a threat to and a fear of losing “Jewish hegemony”.

A study performed by Hicks (2002) also revealed clashes or tensions arising from unequal representation of minority languages vis-à-vis a majority language. In his research, which is more presented as a ‘state of the art’ descriptive report rather than a LL study, Hicks describes the current state of the linguistic landscape of Scotland in the United Kingdom and illustrates some of the tensions between the English language and Scottish Gaelic. These tensions arise from the unequal representations ascribed to these two respective languages in the linguistic landscape of Scotland. While English is described as “the automatic default language” (Hicks, 2002 p. 4) and is pervasive in every domain of representation from roads, schools, streets, and work, Gaelic on the other hand lacks visibility and has low status in the linguistic landscape. Similar to the situation of Israel (Trumper-Hecht, 2009) such tensions between English and Gaelic again point to how the linguistic landscape can be a site where languages are either promoted and overrepresented (English) or demoted and underrepresented (Gaelic). Hence, the under-representation of a particular language within the linguistic landscape, such as in the case for Gaelic in this study, negatively affects the power and status of the Gaelic population, which result
in a situation similar to the findings outlined in Trumper-Hecht (2009) where the linguistic exclusion of particular groups contributes to lower their ethnolinguistic identity.

Hicks also reported instances of graffiti use and judiciously pointed out that language used on graffiti was the subversive expression of under-represented groups whose languages lacked visibility in the linguistic landscape. In this respect, graffiti can be seen as a way for linguistically under-represented or repressed groups to achieve visibility by tainting or defacing a space monopolized by the ruling institutions/elite. As argued by the author who quotes Landry & Bourhis (1997) the defacing of public space by graffiti – a category of signs referred to as “transgressive” by Scollon & Scollon (2003) and Pennycook (2009) – is an act of linguistic appropriation of the space. This act is then countered by “dominant group authorities who often control the police and judicial apparatus needed to repress such graffiti campaigns” (Hicks, 2002 p. 3). Such a counteraction is a striking illustration of how Repressive State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1970) operate to tame the resurgence which threatens the stability of the established linguistic order.

The common characteristic of studies where the linguistic landscape is a site of linguistic suppression is the resolute or implicit unwillingness from both the political authorities and/or the local population to accept minority or non-established languages as part of the LL. The next section illustrates studies which exemplify how the linguistic landscape is experienced as a site of linguistic adjustment where the tensions vis-à-vis non-established languages is less avowed.

The Linguistic Landscape as a Site of Linguistic Adjustment

In this category of studies, the linguistic landscape is undergoing transitions which are experienced not only with respect to political changes but also in light of people’s attitudes as well as in view of the languages encountered on street signs. Bearing on this, the studies
described in the following section illustrate how policy, the linguistic landscape, and attitudes are adjusting to the emergence of non-established languages in the linguistic landscape. Thus, while these studies display less conservative attitudes to minority or non-established languages in the linguistic landscape, there are however cases where resistance is still present due to the transition which is taking place in the process of adjustment to non-established or minority languages.

A study by Banu & Sussex (2001) illustrates how the linguistic landscape can be indicative of the transition in linguistic acceptance of non-local languages from a more strict to a more lax stance. The authors examined the linguistic landscape of the capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka. In this light, they offered to analyze street signs on business names and commercial signs within middle-class and upper-middle-class neighborhoods. As argued by Banu and Sussex, following its independence from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh established Bengali as its national language and decreed Bengali as the prescribed language of posting and signage as a form of resistance to both Urdu and English. However, as the authors argue, instances of English-Bengali code-switching on signs represent defiance or challenges to such state-sponsored policies and hence constitute *prima facie* examples of how the state is adjusting to the representation of minority languages in the linguistic landscape. English is therefore slowly becoming more pervasive in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka. The use of English as stated by the authors is not always devoid of idiosyncrasies. However these “faulty” uses are deemed “creative”. In addition, the use of Bengali script to transliterate English was also a salient feature noted in the linguistic landscape of Dhaka and a supplementary instance of creativity and adjustment. Interestingly, the use of English as a vector of adjustment and challenge to the state-sponsored linguistic policy of the country mainly appears in middle and upper-class neighborhoods or in areas where expatriates live and where embassies and foreign missions are located. This presents two interesting findings. First, it is in more socio-economically privileged areas that challenges to language policy is not experienced as problematic and, as shown by Banu and Sussex, it is from
these areas that adjustments are initiated within the linguistic landscape; Second, in these areas English is more visible because it is supposed to be read and understood by the local residents. While the authors do not offer further explanations for this fact, this observation can be tied to the indexical nature of signs (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) and how they are contextual of the particular sociolinguistic community where they are situated. This type of indexicality as an important element in the analysis of signs will be particularly relevant when analyzing the linguistic landscape of Tunis.

In the same way as in Banu & Sussex (2001), a study by Ramamoorthy (2002) in the outskirts of Pondicherry, India, examines how linguistic adjustment can be experienced in the linguistic landscape. In this case, Ramamoorthy described the moderating role of the government and how it influenced the linguistic landscape. The available languages in Pondicherry are by number of speakers respectively Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu. French is also an official language and is still present especially within administrative use. The city of Pondicherry which used to be part of French India was officially reinstated to India in 1956. Due to the heterogeneity of this locality, English is used as a language of convenience by the local government in order to communicate with districts of different languages. English is used in the same way as in Banu & Sussex (2001) as a language of adjustment or “third space” language. More specifically, English in Pondicherry is used to ease and moderate the tensions between the various minority groups. Even though Tamil is considered by official decree to be the language of the Union Territory of Pondicherry (UTP), the author states that it is actually English which fulfills this role. The author thus notes a number of inconsistencies and adjustments in the linguistic landscape of Pondicherry. In this light, despite a resistance from the population and particularly from the Tamil majority who calls for the use of Tamil as the official language of the city, the local government uses English officially. Another manifestation of linguistic adjustment within the linguistic landscape of Pondicherry is due to the name of the city itself which is a relic from the French colonial rule.
The Tamil group has been exerting pressure on the government to reinstate the local Tamil appellation “Puducherry”. As stated by Ramamoorthy, these calls by the Tamil majority have neither been met by the governing authorities nor by the public. Remnants of French culture and imperial systems which are interestingly not rejected neither by the local population nor by the government can also be noticed in the linguistic landscape of Pondicherry both in the urban architecture of the city (the construction of the city is inspired according to the French colonial urbanization plans) as well as in its human geography (a canal built by the French separated the indigenous population from the colonizers and several areas of the city are defined in terms of caste, religion or ethnic group). In terms of linguistic representation, Ramamoorthy notes three categories of signs in Pondicherry, i.e. French-Tamil bilingual boards, Tamil-English bilingual boards, and Tamil monolingual boards. The first category of signs dates from colonial times and contains names of French officials, governors, and other personalities. On these signs, even though Tamil is present, French is clearly more prominent. With respect to the Tamil-English signs, they were from a later time period and featured Tamil as the dominant language followed by English. Some of these signs replaced the former French signs and included Indian political leaders, temple names, and caste. Despite the changes from French to Tamil on these official signs, the author noted that French was still prevalent both in private commercial signs as well as in the speech of people which suggests the remaining popularity of this language in the linguistic landscape of Pondicherry and its lasting prestige as a cultural heritage. The last types of sign (i.e. Tamil only) are featured on newly developed areas of the city and are named after Tamil political leaders, poets and convey a desire to assert a Tamil identity. Overall, the use of different languages in the linguistic landscape of Pondicherry - - even though displaying tensions within the local communities - - provides evidence that the government is adopting a policy of conciliation and adjustment or, as the author states, a “policy of plurality with fluidity” (p. 130). However this policy, as evidenced by the diversity of languages on the linguistic landscape is
inconsistent and incoherent. On the one hand, there is a noticed progressive shift from French and English to Tamil on official signs. On the other hand, the continued use of French and English in the linguistic landscape is aimed at accommodating the needs of the multilingual population, the non-Tamil minority groups as well as the tourist population. This is not a typical LL study since the findings focused not only on street signs but also on personal names and languages taught within the educational system. However some references to linguistic landscape of Pondicherry in terms of languages featured on governmental signs help to understand some of the tensions between local languages such as Tamil, English, as the moderating language, and French as the former colonial language.

Shohamy, Ben-Rafael, Amara, & Trumper-Hecht (2006) examined Israel’s use of language within both large and smaller urban areas. This study examined the linguistic landscape of Israel’s predominant languages within busy business streets. The objective of the study was to examine the degree of visibility of the three major languages of Israel (i.e. Arabic, Hebrew, and English) on urban street signs. The three central questions which this study sought to answer were: (1) How are signs representative of the ethnocultural and national divisions of the Israeli society? (This includes Israeli Jews, Palestinian-Israelis and non-Israeli Palestinians). (2) What is the relative importance of the three dominant languages in the areas investigated? (3) How do signs symbolically construct the public space? The theoretical framework adopted for this research combined ideas from three social theorists: Bourdieu (1983, 1993), to analyze the power-relations between dominant and subordinate groups; Goffman (1963, 1981), to show how identity markers of communities would imprint themselves quite strongly on the linguistic landscape; and Boudon (1990), to interpret the linguistic landscape’s structures and characteristics in terms of the interests of linguistic landscape actors vis-à-vis the public. The adoption of an integrated theoretical framework represents a departure from a tradition in LL...
studies to provide descriptive analyses of signs without corroboration from a strong theoretical underpinning.

The results of this study revealed that although both Hebrew and Arabic are the official languages in Israel, Hebrew overshadowed Arabic in the linguistic landscape. In addition, in East Jerusalem, where the Arab population was more important, Arabic was found to be the predominant language of representation and this language was much less salient in Jewish localities. Hebrew on the other hand was only found on governmental signs within Arab neighborhoods. With respect to bottom-up signs, Arabic and English were the languages most represented, and Hebrew was excluded from these signs. These observations are indicative of both resistance\textsuperscript{12} and adjustments in the linguistic landscape of Jerusalem. Resistance is manifested in the reluctance to Arabic and Hebrew on private signs by Jewish and Arab groups, respectively. Adjustment on the other hand, is represented by the use of English in both Jewish and Arabic neighborhoods, due to its role as a politically neutral language. In this light, even though both Hebrew and Arabic had equal governmental status, they nonetheless had a different status and representation in the linguistic landscape of Israel. These findings confirm the premise that signs are indexical of the social environment where they are situated and that the nature of languages found on signs is unfailingly connected to the human geography and area’s population. While these facts are attributed to “the symbolic construction of the public space” (Shohamy et al., 2006 p. 10), they also point to the tensions and discrepancies between linguistic policies and actual practices of signage. Adjustment, on the other hand, is illustrated by both groups and their willingness to use English as a language of ‘middle-ground’. In this regard, English – which is not an official language in Israel, unlike both Hebrew and Arabic, was solidly present in both

\textsuperscript{12} While the notion of resistance is expressed in this study, I do not use it in my classification of the literature as there are not enough studies which describe resistance in view of people’s attitudes. Rather it is manifested implicitly from the linguistic landscape.
predominantly Arab and Jewish localities. English is thus not only a status marker but also a language of adjustment used to regulate and ease tensions between groups in the linguistic landscape of Israel.

State-initiated linguistic adjustments can result in a complex linguistic situation on the ground and in the linguistic landscape. As an illustration of this linguistic situation, Curtin (2009) who examined the linguistic landscape of Taipei, Taiwan showed how the linguistic landscape can be a site where particular ideologies are promoted. This study, which is part of a larger doctoral project (Curtin, 2007), looked at collective national identity, and specifically examined how national identity is indexed in the linguistic landscape by the use of script and orthography. In this respect, Curtin examined the ways in which both public and private signs used in Taipei can index power and solidarity. Four major sections of Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan, were analyzed and the author included with linguistic landscape items street signs displayed on vehicles, thus broadening the scope of linguistic landscape items. Despite its various ethnic groups (i.e. Aborigines, Hakka, Hoklo, and Mainlanders) Mandarin Chinese remains nonetheless the de facto official language and lingua franca of Taiwan. However, recently, a series of alternative measures by the government has tried “to open the public space wherein all languages are equally valorized” (Curtin 2009, p. 223) and aimed at recognizing all languages as official “national languages”. One of these measures has been to incorporate Romanization on public signage.

The findings were categorized according to four major language groupings, namely, traditional Chinese characters, European/romance languages, Japanese and Korean, and Romanization systems of Chinese. The findings revealed that in accordance with the de facto official language policy, Mandarin written with traditional Chinese characters was the overwhelmingly represented language in the linguistic landscape of Taipei. The use of this script indexes a push-pull relation between two different ideologies, a nationalist ideology which
advocates resistance to a potential reinstatement of Taiwan to China and a “mainlander” ideology which uses the linguistic landscape to mark or index a return to an authentic Chinese national identity and culture. The resistance from nationalists is also indexed by the use of traditional characters rather than simplified ones. The use of European and romance languages on international businesses is second to mandarin Chinese in terms of salience. However, Curtin argues that these signs should not be simply seen as a manifestation of globalization and internationalization as other studies have argued (Backhaus, 2007, 2009; Hult, 2009; Mc Arthur, 2000) because international firms too display an affirmation of local identity alongside romance script. In this light, the author mentions that most international chains display local informal translations of the European brand name and this phenomenon is seen by Curtin as a sign of “glocalization” whereby “consumers are localizing transnational signs within a framework of local cultural practices. Curtin moreover reports the use of “vogue English” particularly on scooters, which in the same way as in other LL studies (Backhaus, 2007; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Mac Gregor, 2003; Ross, 1997) is meant to be decorative and not intended to be read or understood. The decorative and creative uses of English convey “cosmopolitanness”, a feeling of “being cool and fashionable” (Curtin, 2009 p. 228) while at the same time preserving a local Taiwanese identity. English in the linguistic landscape of Taipei is adapted and “reterritorialized” in a Taiwanese context where it indexes a local image of modernity. Some instances of “display” Japanese are also noticed in Taipei’s linguistic landscape and are symbols of “authentic” Japanese culture. However the use of Japanese in the linguistic landscape indexes different ideas depending on the readership. For instance, while for mainlanders it represents a threat to the Sinicization of the linguistic landscape, for the Taiwanese population as well as for the younger generation of Taiwanese, Japanese is seen positively because it is used as a form of resistance to the hegemony of the pro-China Kuomintang (KMT) party but also because it represents a modern “pan-Asian” image. In light of these findings, it seems that while Mandarin Chinese is the unequivocal
language of representation in Taipei, other languages are also used in the linguistic landscape as either a form of resistance (Traditional Chinese, Japanese) or as a way to index cosmopolitanism (English, Japanese), authenticity (Japanese) while at the same time asserting a local Taiwanese identity. These linguistic dynamics are indicative of the linguistic adjustments which are taking place in the country and which are noticed first-hand on the linguistic landscape. In addition, controversies can be noticed in the linguistic landscape and on both private and public signs, particularly when it comes to how mandarin Chinese is Romanized. The linguistic landscape of Taipei displays disparate systems of Romanization which are indicative of the political tensions between mainlanders and nationalists. Regarding this issue, the government policy has decided to leave it up to the local authorities of each province to select their appropriate Romanization system. It is important to note that with respect to the display of non-local scripts and languages, no such regulations exist and the display of languages such as English and Japanese is seemingly non problematic. In this respect and bearing on similar findings from Banu & Sussex (2001), Ramamoorthy (2002), and Shohamy et al. (2006), it can be argued that the use of non-local languages in the linguistic landscape may represent a space for negotiation or a neutral space of expression circumventing the tensions in Romanization.

Investigating the linguistic landscape of the downtown and main shopping areas of Mekele, Ethiopia, Lanza & Woldemariam (2009), in the same vein as Curtin (2009), examined how the linguistic landscape is indexical of linguistic ideologies. More specifically they investigated data from the local population as well as from the authorities, and presented the resulting linguistic adjustments expressed in the linguistic landscape. The languages involved in this study are Tigrinya (the official regional language and language of the majority group), Amharic (the national working language), and English (the most widely spoken foreign language in Ethiopia and a de facto second language). The data involved linguistic landscape items but also interviews in which the authors asked shop owners about the reasons behind the choice of
languages as well as the clientele of shoppers who visited their stores. In this light, this LL study is one of the few studies which aimed at examining the collected responses of sign designers and incorporated them in the analysis of the linguistic landscape. Due to its multilingual and multiethnic make-up, the government of Ethiopia has made flexible concessions and adjustments to allow the regional government to issue local legislation with respect to linguistic practices. Although the national policy states that Amharic is the language of the state, depending on the regional population’s salient languages and ethnicities, the local authorities make informed decisions on which languages to implement within the regional educational system. This observation points to the discrepancy between advocated language policy and observed linguistic practices and reflects similar linguistic landscape contexts whereby “… the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in management” (Spolsky, 2004 p. 65, quoted in Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009 p. 194). In this light, it is in view of these “practices” that the authors offer to analyze the linguistic landscape of Mekele and the ideology behind the use of languages on both private and public signs within the linguistic landscape. The results confirm the linguistic flexibility and accommodations consented to by the government especially since the authors showed that the majority of signs were bilingual rather than monolingual. English was found either as a second or as the only language on these signs. The frequent use of English in this multiethnic environment may be explained due to the linguistic adjustments made by the local authorities and may also be caused by willingness from the local population to use languages with a growing global sphere of influence. Interestingly, in addition to its mediating role, English in the linguistic landscape of Mekele was also for “decorative” purposes. The authors corroborate this finding with interviews collected from shop-owners who claim that their use of English was symbolic and aimed at attracting customers. As regards the distribution of languages on private signs, the salient languages were Amharic and English while on public signs the most represented language was Tigrinya. As explained by the authors, Tigrinya was used on
governmental signs and was explicitly displayed in messages conveying the expression of regional identity. The strong felt presence of Tigrinya is contrasted to the almost invisible presence of other minority languages such as Kunama, Irob, and Agaw. As stated by Lanza and Woldemariam, this lack of visibility may contribute to the exclusion of these ethnic minorities but also to a low ethnolinguistic group identity (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). It is important to note that while the authors do not mention this as part of their analysis, the use of English in the linguistic landscape of Mekele could be a way of easing tensions between the multiple ethnic groups and regional languages in the same way as mentioned in Ramamoorthy (2002) and (Shohamy et al., 2006). However the use of English as a moderating language is not clearly mentioned as part of the analysis by Lanza and Woldemariam.

In the studies of the LL where linguistic adjustment is witnessed from street signs, rigid language attitudes are slowly giving place to more accepting views despite the prevalence of a divide based on ethnic (Banu & Sussex, 2001; Ramamoorthy, 2002), political (Shohamy et al., 2006), or ideological (Curtin, 2009) divergences. In such environments, either policies or people start to adjust to minority or non-local languages as part of the linguistic landscape, and may even use non-local languages for commercial purposes (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009). In the next section, a review of the literature on studies describing the linguistic landscape as a site of linguistic instrumentalism is presented.

**The Linguistic Landscape as a Site of Linguistic Instrumentalism**

In studies which describe the linguistic landscape as a site of linguistic instrumentalism, the pockets of resistance which were described in the previous category of LL studies are no longer visible in policy, street signs, and attitudes. In this respect the adjustments are now giving way to an institutionalized accommodation of non-local or minority languages whereby these
languages are manipulated both by stakeholders and local businesses, appear more visibly in the linguistic landscape, and are positively perceived by the local population. As will be shown in the following LL studies, this accommodation of languages in the linguistic landscape is often performed for instrumental purposes such as commodification (Heller, 2003).

One of the earliest LL studies reported by Rosenbaum et al. (1977) examined the exploitation of English in the linguistic landscape of Israel. This study focused mostly on the English language, which was described by the authors as a lingua franca with a “special place” (p. 179) in Israel. Indeed, the authors characterize English in Israel as “a language with important local scientific and technological uses (…) the language most closely associated with tourism from abroad” (pp. 179-180). While the main shortcoming of this study was the absence of a theoretical framework for the analysis of the data, a key asset of this LL research was that the data did not only consist of street signs but was triangulated with three other data sources in order to provide a stronger analysis of multilingualism in urban centers. The other data sources however were geared towards evaluating the exclusive use and spread of the English language in terms of observed spoken use which makes this study only “partly” a LL study. While English is indeed a key language within the linguistic landscape of Jerusalem, the exclusive attention which the authors attributed to this language in this study downplayed the role of the official languages in the linguistic landscape of Israel, specifically Arabic and Hebrew. The results revealed that despite the fact that in one data source English did not rank high in terms of spoken use by Israelis, visual data revealed that in terms of the degree of representation in the linguistic landscape of Jerusalem, English was as popular as the national language (i.e. Hebrew and Arabic). This fact points to the importance of data triangulation in LL research and to the idea that having only one type of data may lead to hasty conclusions which do not reflect the reality of linguistic situations. The popularity of English in the linguistic landscape of Jerusalem and more specifically on businesses delivering services at a higher per-unit cost has been explained by
Rosenbaum et al. (1977) on grounds that merchants “attempt to exploit the snob appeal of English” (p. 187), hence pointing to the status or prestige symbol of English in Israel and to its commodification by business owners (Heller, 2003). In addition, it was revealed that private signs contain more roman script than governmental signs which are more written using the official Hebrew language. This study by Rosenbaum et al. provides an illustration of how the English language is used in Israel not only due to its role in fostering science and technology but more importantly as a commodity that helps businesses to sell their advertised products.

In a similar vein, the strategic use of foreign languages for instrumental purposes of commodification has been referred to in a study by Ross (1997). This study aimed at exemplifying the degree of linguistic instrumentalism witnessed in the linguistic landscape of Milan, Italy. Ross found that a considerable number of signs (up to 50% on some blocks according to the author) were written in English only. More specifically, the study indicated that most English signs used American spelling. The majority of English instances on shop signs consist in what Ross calls “nuclear English” (p. 32) consisting of brief and simple instances of the language. The instrumentalism of non-local languages in the linguistic landscape of Milan are accounted for by Ross due to the appeal associated with American popular culture (films, pop music) and technology (pp. 31-32). The author argues that the use of English in the streets of Milan is not playing the role of a lingua franca, nor is it used to address tourists. It is used merely because it is “an attractive and fashionable language” (p. 31) and conveys “an aura of chic prestige (…) following the latest trends (…) and up to date with the newest ideas” (ibid). It is important to note that the use of English in the streets of Milan does not mean that it is widely understood by the local population. In fact, Ross reports that some signs contain what Backhaus (2007) later calls “idiosyncratic” uses of the language which include false, misleading, innovated expressions and oftentimes misspellings. However, notwithstanding these idiosyncrasies the use of English points to the instrumentalism of this language in terms of visibility and representation
in the linguistic landscape of Milan. Thus it appears that the use of non-local languages such as English in Milan is not used to index a particular ethno-linguistic group but for ‘instrumental’ purposes of commodification (Heller, 2003). Ross however falls short on substantiating his postulations with data collected from interviews about the status of English in Milan’s suburban community. In addition, it is not clearly stated in this study whether government policy makes provision for the use of foreign languages in its legislative documents.

In a closely related study, Griffin (2004) examined street signs in Rome, Italy. The results also revealed that street signs in Rome contained a considerable amount of English and the range of contexts where English appeared ran the gamut from exterior signs on windows to graffiti on walls. The presence of English on street signs, while described negatively as a parasitic language from the author’s perspective, and reported to act as a “juggernaut” and “invader” (Griffin, 2004 p. 3), is nonetheless an indicator of desired linguistic instrumentalism. However, despite the interpretative hypotheses presented by the author, it is not clear how this language is experienced by the local population. In this light, this study also fails to provide perspectives other than the ones offered by the author as an outsider to the sociolinguistic community. This fact outlines the need to include an additional dimension to LL studies by providing the local population’s attitudes to signs rather than solely relying on the author’s subjective analyses. Interestingly, the author noted that the distribution of English on signs obeyed a consistent pattern whereby areas most remote from tourist centers contained less English signs while the areas closer to tourist attractions had more English signs. This finding again emphasizes the importance of the space where signs are situated as well as how signs are reflective of the contexts where they are embedded, thus different sociolinguistic contexts produce different signs with different languages featured on them. Parallel to similar findings observed by Ross (1997), the use of English on signs was more limited to short and simple words rather than longer stretches of words. As explained by Griffin, urban areas and streets as a context lend themselves more to brevity and
hence to signs with shorter messages regardless of the language used. The use of English in shorter forms was found both on signs intended for tourists as well as locals.

The use of the linguistic landscape as a space of instrumentalism has similarly been the focus of a study by Mc Arthur (2000). Examining street and store sign in city centers, the author investigated the linguistic landscape of Switzerland (Zurich) and Sweden (Uppsala). In both cities, the pattern revealed that the local or official language was the most represented in the linguistic landscape followed again by haphazard, unstructured or as the author calls it “macaronic” linguistic uses involving a diversity of language mixes. Despite these seemingly similar findings for the two cities, there were however some differences. In Zurich, there was a considerable amount of language mixing involving mostly German, French, Italian, and English. English was prominent with 58% of all sign types (monolingual/bilingual/multilingual) having some English. The large number of immigrants in Uppsala did not necessarily reflect a proportional representation in terms of linguistic diversity on street signs, hence corroborating findings from Ross (1997) which suggest that the use of non-local languages does not necessarily emerge from the need for certain minorities to feel a sense of recognition. In addition, English was not the major language of representation in Uppsala. While other studies have focused on how English is becoming pervasive in some European urban centers, this study by Mc Arthur actually reveals that it is not English but the mixing of languages that is noticeably pervasive and well integrated in the linguistic landscape. The author explains that while the encountered linguistic mixes may have English in them, they are not English-inspired but contain several other additional languages. The point made by Mc Arthur in this study is that it is actually the “macaronic” — defined by the author as the jumbled use of different languages — and not the use of English per se that indexes economic globalization in the linguistic landscape of Zurich and Uppsala. In this light the use of English as well as other languages, which is described in this study as an established practice, reveals how these languages are used for strategic/instrumental
purposes of commodification (Heller, 2003) and to convey “internationalism” rather than to index particular linguistic groups and sociolinguistic communities.

The use of non-local or minority languages in the linguistic landscape to achieve an atmosphere of globalization was also the focus of a study by Hult (2009). The author examined the code-switching witnessed on signs between the majority language (Swedish), English, and the minority languages of immigrants in the linguistic landscape of Malmö, Sweden. The areas investigated involved commercial areas of two contiguous neighborhoods (Centrum, and Södra Innerstaden). Overall, all linguistic landscape items collected in this study were of private nature and consisted in store-front signs. The types of signs examined in Centrum were mostly commercial and touristic and involved restaurants, bars, theaters, and cinemas. Signs in Södra Innerstaden on the other hand, despite also being of commercial nature, were collected from a neighborhood with a more important immigrant population. Using a theoretical framework which combined language ecology (Haugen, 1972), and nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), this study by Hult revealed that despite the different ethnic make-up of the two neighborhoods, Swedish was by far the most represented language in the two localities of Centrum and Södra Innerstaden. In this respect, by looking at the use of Swedish in the linguistic landscape of these two areas, it transpires that it is the “common denominator language” and its dominant status is visible from the linguistic landscape. English, on the other hand, was more represented in Centrum than in Södra Innerstaden. With respect to the minority languages, they were more salient than English in the Södra Innerstaden neighborhood and considerably less visible than English in Centrum. Overall, minority languages were clearly more represented in Södra Innerstaden. These findings show that while the national language is promoted in both neighborhoods, these locations differed in their representation of English and minority languages. In this light, Hult explains that the results are indicative of the ecolinguistic environment and context where these signs are situated and that more English in Centrum is not meant to be used
as a lingua franca targeted towards the important population of tourists in this area, but achieves a symbolic function which indexes “values associated with globalization” (Hult, 2009 p. 100). The prevalence of minority languages in Södra Innerstaden is also explained by the heterogeneity of the ethnic make-up of this area of Malmö. This study again confirms the context-bound and indexical nature of signs which are suggestive of the environment where they are situated. Hult uses an ecolinguistic framework in order to show how areas of Malmö which were more commercial and touristic displayed more English to index globalization. The more pronounced use of minority languages in the linguistic landscape of Södra Innerstaden was defined in terms of the more diverse local ethnic-makeup of this neighborhood.

Hornsby (2008) examined the role of Breton, in the linguistic landscape of Brittany, France, by looking at both signs and people’s subjective impressions. In this light, Hornsby’s study was also in line with the study by Landry and Bourhis (1997) because it looked at how in-group members reacted to their local language as represented in the linguistic community’s linguistic landscape. More specifically, the study examined the use of minority languages on public signs and the effect of the symbolic uses of language on young Bretons. In this light, together with linguistic landscape images, the data consisted furthermore in questionnaires collected from both primary and secondary school Breton pupils. The pupils were from an immersion school where Breton was used as a primary language of instruction. The survey asked pupils about their perceptions of Breton as featured on shop signs. An interesting distinction drawn in this study is the difference between “espace public” (public space or sphere) and “espace privé” (private space or sphere). While focusing mainly on public spaces in Brittany, Hornsby explains that minority or foreign languages are usually more saliently found on private spaces. The results revealed that although official governmental decree allowed Breton to be represented on street signs, and while this language was accommodated in the linguistic landscape and becoming more visible in Brittany, its use was not necessarily indicative of the
empowerment of the local community. In this light, Breton in the linguistic landscape of Brittany is hypothesized by Hornsby to be thriving not only due to its role in promoting regional Briton identity but more importantly as a result of economic factors, globalization, and McDonaldisation (Ritzer, 2000) all of which as Hornsby mentions citing Broudie (1995, p. 444) have become more important than political factors. In this light, the instrumental use of Breton by local authorities as well as by business owners is explained due to its role as a commodity and use as a marketing gimmick “intended to attract the attention of buyers outside of Brittany” (Hornsby, 2008 p. 133). The use of Breton on bilingual (French/Breton) signs is subject to controversies. Authorities perceive Breton positively especially due to its commodification and strategic use in selling “authenticity” and local products to tourists. Locals on the other hand, have a negative perception of this strategic use of Breton, especially due to the fact that official city names, for instance, do not match the traditional pronunciation (p. 133). Interestingly, data from respondents’ interviews revealed that the use of Breton on signs was still seen as a constructive initiative. These trends in the results of this LL study revealed that globalization in Brittany is both celebrated for its potential to open a window on the global world but also frowned upon for jeopardizing local culture and identity. In this respect, these seemingly contradictory results corroborate the importance of data triangulation in LL studies as well as the need of having a ‘diversity of methods’ (Kirk & Miller 1986, p. 30) to collect sources in order to explain linguistic landscape findings with more accuracy. As argued by the author, globalization has not only led to the imposition of linguistic uniformity on minority languages but has furthermore created a backlash effect of opening spaces of self-definition and self-expression for these minority languages. In this light, Breton has flourished in the recent years in the linguistic landscape of Brittany but its use is not serving the needs of the local population but to reproduce an artificially authentic Breton culture sought by tourists.
In a study investigating the instrumentalism of non-local languages in different regions of India, Dhongde (2002) investigated the status of local and global languages on roadside hoardings. The author studied signs in a big city, Pune; two large pilgrim towns, Kolhapur and Banaras; and a small town, Aligarh. In both small and large towns, the regional languages were used with more frequency and featured local products; the language which was featured after the local languages was English. In Aligarh, for instance, most advertisements used the most popular local languages Urdu and Hindi, and English was only found in “very fashionable shops” (p. 110). Similarly, the big city of Pune which was considered as a cultural center and involved a bigger proportion of non-local population, nonetheless displayed similar patterns whereby the two local languages Marathi and Hindi were omnipresent in the linguistic landscape. As explained by Dhongde, all four locations featured a similar pattern with local products advertised in the local languages and national and international products advertised in English. What this study reveals is that languages are associated with particular spheres of influence and targeted at specific social classes, and that the instrumentalism of non-local languages, such as English in this case, can be used not only to achieve commercial purposes, but also to target a more privileged social strata of the population. In addition to corroborating the notion that street signs are indexical of the physical environment where they are located, this study thus shows that signs are also designed to tally a particular audience. Both of these findings are evocative of the context-bound properties of signs. In this respect, while the local languages were used to advertise in local domains such as house building and for a less affording socio-economic population, global languages such as English are used to address the more “well to do” middle and upper classes and conveys a multinational inclination. In addition, the author states that culture and cultural values are often represented in order to sell products thus corroborating similar findings from other LL studies (Hornsby, 2008; Mac Gregor, 2003; Schlick, 2003).
In studies about LL where street signs index a context of instrumentalism, concessions are made to minority or non-local languages as part of the linguistic landscape but this fact is not explicitly formulated either in policy or in people’s attitudes. More to the point, the use of non-local languages is neither aimed to achieve an interceding function as in the case of studies which index the linguistic landscape as a site of linguistic adjustment, nor to be symptomatic of a politically institutionalized practice. On the contrary, the instrumentalism of non-local languages is an isolated occurrence, in the sense of happening only in particular geographical locations, which is used to achieve instrumental economic purposes such as commodification (Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Ross, 1997; Dhongde, 2002; Hornsby, 2008), and globalization (Mc Arthur, 2000; Hult, 2009). In the following part, studies which illustrate how the linguistic landscape is used as a site of linguistic acceptance are discussed.

The Linguistic Landscape as a Site of Linguistic Acceptance

In the following category of LL studies, non-local or minority languages are fully accepted in the linguistic landscape not due to the economic incentive which they provide but because they are part of the linguistic identity of the examined environment.

Barni (2006) focused on the linguistic landscape of Rome by examining more specifically the multiethnic neighborhood of “Esquilino”. This urban center was characterized as a migratory area with the greatest number of foreigners in the Italian capital city and involved Italian as a language of prime representation but also a variety of other languages. Following Italian, the most represented languages in this aforementioned area of Rome in terms of occurrences were respectively Chinese, English, Bengali, Sinhalese, and Spanish. Barni hypothesizes that the different languages of immigrant groups in Rome serve as a factor which “restores” multilingualism in Italy. The author examined the degree of visibility of foreign languages by
looking at three different neighborhoods of Rome of which only the “Esquilino” neighborhood is reported in the findings. The findings of this LL study revealed that possible combinations of signs ranged from monolingual signs to bilingual signs to sign with as many as eight different languages on them. This diversity in languages featured in the linguistic landscape can be explained in light of the “symbolic” function of signs (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In this regard, the choice of languages on signs may be used either to “restrict the users of a given message, representing the closure of the linguistic community towards other” (Barni, 2006 p. 12-13) or on the contrary to show linguistic acceptance and “the openness towards linguistic contact” (p. 13).

In addition, the use of foreign languages within the linguistic landscape of a given territory can again hint to the symbolic marking or appropriation of the territory (Shohamy et al., 2006). In this respect, the growing use of foreign languages in the streets of Rome has been hypothesized by Barni to be caused by both local provisions made to meet the needs of a rising foreign population as in the case of Chinese, but also due to the willingness from the local population to use languages whose global sphere of influence is growing such as in the case of English.

Huebner (2006) examined how the use of English in the linguistic landscape of Thailand was indicative of the attitudes of acceptance to non-local languages. In this light, the author examined the urban centers and business streets of Thailand by investigating 15 neighborhoods of Bangkok. The focus of this study was mainly on private and public signs, and in the same way as other LL studies (Rosenbaum et al. 1977; Smalley, 1994) this research was mostly centered on the use of script. The predominant languages represented in Bangkok’s linguistic landscape were mainly Thai and English. With respect to script choice, the dominant scripts used were Thai, Roman, Japanese, Arabic, and Chinese. Huebner’s study hence revealed that public signs predominantly used Thai script (60% of official signs) and this fact provided evidence for the enforcement of the government policy of Thai as the official language of the country. Private signs on the other hand, showed a different pattern and contained predominantly either Roman
(i.e. English) script or a combination of Roman and Thai script. Huebner also showed that the
growth and visibility of English was slowly starting to replace other long-established second
languages such as Chinese. English in the linguistic landscape of Bangkok is becoming the major
second language of wider communication. This study highlights how the linguistic landscape
displays attitudes of acceptance towards institutionally non-recognized languages such as
English. With respect to the use of English as a language of wider communication, the author
mentions that this language has started to influence the Thai language as well, not just with
respect to lexical borrowing, but also in the areas of Thai orthography, pronunciation, and syntax.
Thus Huebner provides evidence for a nascent variety of Thai English, which is interesting in that
it shows that the acceptance and adoption of non-official languages both in everyday uses but also
in the linguistic landscape can be contribute to the creation of other varieties of English. The use
of English in Bangkok parallels the situation described in Taiwan by Curtin (2009) where English
is adapted and “reterritorialized” in the local context, thus indexing a local image.

Another finding that this study corroborated was that the use of languages on signs
differed considerably depending on the neighborhood where these signs were located. Linguistic
content was found to be highly correlated with the ethnic makeup of the examined
neighborhoods. Thus, neighborhoods with a higher western population, for instance, had more
signs containing roman script. In the same way as in the above study by Banu & Sussex (2001),
languages found on signs may be correlated with the human geography and area’s population, are
indexical of the social context where they are located, and may provide considerable information
(religious, identity, ethnicity, attitudes, ideology etc.) about the space they occupy and the people
within this space. Even though the Thai government provided a tax incentive for including Thai
on commercial signs in Bangkok, not all businesses took advantage of these incentives and often
relegated Thai to small print in a corner of the sign. This important finding provides more
tangible evidence of the resistance towards official linguistic policies as evidenced from bottom-
up linguistic practices, and reveals that state-sponsored linguistic policies are not systematically applied by people in their practices of signage. Interestingly, while this study is prototypical of the use of the linguistic landscape as a site of linguistic acceptance and in this respect can be situated at the more accepting end of the continuum, it nonetheless reveals attitudes of resistance vis-à-vis the official language of the country.

State provisions may also contribute to the acceptance of minority languages in the linguistic landscape. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) focused on both large urban centers and smaller urban areas in their study of minority languages in the linguistic landscape of European countries. The authors looked at the role of two minority languages (Frisian and Basque), two national languages (Dutch, Spanish), and the international language (English) and their cohabitation in the linguistic landscape. The countries where this study took place were the Netherlands (Friesland: Leeuwarden) and Spain (The Basque Country: San Sebastian). The domain of inquiry consisted in urban contexts (both large and smaller cities) and more specifically commercial streets. The results of this research revealed that in Leeuwarden the languages most represented in the linguistic landscape were hierarchically Dutch, English and Frisian. The order from most to least represented languages in the linguistic landscape of San Sebastian was Spanish, Basque, and then English. These findings show that in both cities the dominant languages of representation are the official languages and that in both contexts, minority and official languages are in harmony with respect to representation and the visual space they occupy in the linguistic landscape. More specifically, when compared to Friesland, the government in the Basque country made more provision to promote the minority language and provide it with more space and representation in the linguistic landscape. While English is still not in the highest rankings in both cities, it nevertheless scores quite high in relation to other European languages in the linguistic landscape of the two European cities. The visibility of English in these two cities is explained by the authors as a shift from French to English as the language of international communication. In the same
way as in Huebner (2006) and other LL studies, the subtle shift to English in diverse contexts and communities in the study of linguistic landscape is indicating the manner in which this language is gaining importance under the radar of nationalist language policies and consciously held linguistic ideologies.

As shown in Cenoz & Gorter (2006), official linguistic enactments may actively contribute to the creation of a context which is more accepting of linguistic diversity, multilingualism, and where linguistic cohabitation is highly desired and harmonious. The linguistic situation in Tokyo, Japan, as described in Backhaus (2007) evokes the same level of acceptance when closely looking at the linguistic landscape. The examination of street signs in Tokyo showed that Japan is changing from a traditionally monolingual to a multilingual country. Backhaus notes that languages other than Japanese, particularly English, are often used in the linguistic landscape of Tokyo not to achieve an informative function, but for the symbolic purpose of “visibility”. The use of English is more “decorative” than informative and provides the city with a cosmopolitan and welcoming look. In the same way as posited by Barni (2006), multilingualism in Tokyo is facilitated by three essential factors, top-down changes encouraging the internationalization of the city, a growing non-Japanese population, and openness to and acceptance of foreign languages and particularly English in the linguistic landscape on the part of the Japanese population. Although this last finding is not actually corroborated by data interview and is only taken from administrative external sources, Backhaus still shows that within the linguistic landscape of Tokyo the government is creating an environment where multilingualism is progressively becoming the current political agenda.

In a more recent study which further illustrates the acceptance of linguistic diversity and comments on the linguistic situation of Japan, Backhaus (2009) substantiates the fact that the linguistic landscape of Tokyo is illustrative of the active involvement of the government in encouraging the posting and visibility of minority and foreign languages. In this respect,
Backhaus explains that efforts from the Japanese authorities to adapt the linguistic landscape to
the need of a minority (i.e. 3.1%) of the population (i.e. foreign residents, businessmen and
tourists) but also to accommodate “internationalization” took place in Tokyo in 1991. This
resulted in a policy whereby all public signs were bilingual, displaying English alongside
Japanese. Moreover, Backhaus notes that alongside a policy of acceptance of foreign languages,
the status of Japanese was unequivocally safeguarded as the dominant language by guaranteeing
that Japanese was to be written first or higher on the signs and with a font double the size of
English. In addition, the Japanese government made provision to also display additional
languages on signs where these languages were deemed necessary such as in areas where Chinese
and Korean minority groups were prominent for instance.

Within studies describing the linguistic landscape as a context of linguistic acceptance,
studies illustrate how policy or the local population have accepting stances towards foreign or
minority languages. These languages are accepted as part of the official languages of the state and
are guaranteed representation within the linguistic landscape. Notwithstanding this fact, the status
of the official language of the state is unaltered and remains unequivocal.

Synthesis

In light of these examined studies, the continuum of LL research which has been
classified between the notions of ‘tension’ and ‘harmony’ generates a number of important
observations. On the more conservative end of this continuum, some studies have shown that
multiethnic spaces (Trumper-Hecht, 2009), national boundaries, or geographical frontiers (Hicks,
2002) are key sites of linguistic struggle or ethnic division where linguistic suppression is exerted
on minority groups. While this linguistic suppression is visible from the linguistic landscape, it
also transpires in the rigid attitudes of policy makers and the local population. When suppression
in the linguistic landscape gives way to linguistic adjustment, street signs, policy, and attitudes start to fine-tune to the appearance of non-established languages in the linguistic landscape. In this regard, linguistic adjustment within the linguistic landscape is characterized by less conservative attitudes to minority or non-established languages, yet pockets of resistance may still be present due to the transition which is taking place in the process of adjustment to non-established or minority languages. When resistance to non-established languages fades away, the linguistic landscape is characterized by instrumentalism. During this process, non-local languages undergo institutionalized accommodation by having an official status in governmental decrees, appear more visibly in the linguistic landscape, and are positively perceived by the local population. This instrumentalism of languages in the linguistic landscape is predominantly performed for instrumental purposes such as commodification (Dhongde, 2002; Hornsby, 2008; Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Ross, 1997) and the aim of conveying a sense of globalization (Hult, 2009; Mc Arthur, 2000). Finally, on the more accepting end of the continuum, studies which have exemplified how the linguistic landscape can be used as a site of acceptance have shown that harmony in the linguistic landscape is created as a result of the integration of minority languages on street signs, but also in political legislation, as well as in view of people’s attitudes. This accepting stance is due to the fact that these languages form an integral part of the linguistic identity of the environments examined.

It becomes evident from looking at the above LL studies that there is a substantial gap with respect to research eliciting people’s attitudes to the linguistic landscape. A majority of LL studies have been content with eliciting linguistic dynamics by a subjective and etic (culturally-neutral) analysis of street signs. In addition, the few instances of inclusion of voices from local people in order to substantiate top-down linguistic provisions with bottom-up language perceptions have resulted in incomplete explanations in the literature. In this respect, due to the lack of voices from the local population the notion of resistance to state-sponsored linguistic
planning has been invisible from LL research. This considerable gap will be addressed in this study by including attitudes from Tunisians and by examining how policy statements pertaining to language are experienced by local members of the sociolinguistic community. In this respect, this study is unique in presenting tangible evidence of resistance from bottom-up populations. These voices may subsequently substantiate the more subtle and implied resistance represented on signs. Additional gaps of LL studies are indentified in the following section.

**Gaps in the LL Literature**

In view of these reviewed LL studies, a number of shortcomings in the LL body of research can be identified and will be addressed in my study. A pronounced shortcoming in LL research has been the absence of theoretical models to substantiate the descriptive analyses of visual data. In this respect several LL studies (Backhaus, 2007; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Huebner, 2006; Rosenbaum, Nadel, Cooper & Fishman, 1977; Schlick, 2003) have been resolute in providing subjective analyses of the linguistic landscape without theoretical yardsticks. However, recent developments in LL research (Gorter & Shohamy, 2009) have been exploring ways to examine the linguistic landscape in view of a plethora of theoretical models from historical perspectives (Coulmas, 2009), to sociological (Ben Rafael, 2009), economic (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009), ecological (Hult, 2009), and sociolinguistic (Huebner, 2009) frameworks of analysis.

Another significant flaw in most LL studies is that visual data by itself is treated as sufficient to provide full evidence of the linguistic situation of the contexts investigated. Very few studies (Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Hornsby, 2008) have tried to triangulate data by using other data sources or to substantiate the findings collected from visual data with other types of data. My study will aim at filling this methodological gap in LL research. Rather than imposing the researcher’s own perspective on the reading of these signs, I will adopt
an emic approach to describe the local population’s own reading of these signs. In addition to the perspective from human subjects, which has been heretofore largely overlooked in LL research, my study will aim for a holistic treatment of signs by situating them in the context of policy documents and official statements on language policy. The three different forms of data—street signs, people’s opinions, and policy documents, constitute the ethnographic approach adopted for this study and will help in triangulating the findings effectively.

With respect to the inclusion of informants, a few studies have pointed out that the languages represented in the linguistic landscape may either provide positive self-identification for sociolinguistics groups when the in-group language is highly encountered in the linguistic landscape (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) or contribute to a “malaise” when the in-group language is used for lucrative purposes (Hornsby, 2008), under-represented or even demoted in the linguistic landscape (Hicks, 2002). Including respondents from the site where linguistic landscape artifacts are collected can provide an added layer of analysis to this research by showing how people perceive languages in the linguistic landscape where they live and the status, power, prestige and other qualities they ascribe to languages within their sociolinguistic communities. In fact Rosenbaum et al. (1977, p. 179) argue that:

> By observing the proficiency, usage, and attitudes of urban dwellers with respect to a single language or language variety, confining the initial investigation, perhaps, to one or two restricted social contexts, a beginning can be made in disentangling the complex web of interrelationships which exist between urban linguistic and social organization.

While a few studies have incorporated respondents’ attitudes to the linguistic landscape - - whether these informants were shop owners (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009) or part of the sociolinguistic group investigated (Boudreau & Dubois, 2005; Hornsby, 2008) - - this crucial inclusion of respondents remains an under-investigated aspect in LL research and one of its major shortcomings.
An additional gap in the field of LL research is that no studies have examined street signage in the context of North Africa. More specifically, while the majority of LL research has taken place in western countries, this study will introduce new insights into the field of LL research by exploring the Maghreb, an area of the world with its own particularities blending a mix of African, Arab, and Islamic identities. In addition, due to the right-to-left directionality of Arabic and to the fact that it belongs to a language family which has not been examined in the field of LL, the study of the Maghreb and of Tunisia in particular, will constitute a shift in the field since the majority of LL studies have analyzed environments were writing systems and directionality are left to right, as is the case with several Indo-European languages, Japonic and Chinese language families. In this respect, research performed in the field of visual semiotics has been based on left-to-right language systems and the conclusions which have been devised regarding code-preference and directionality of signs may not be valid for other language systems such as Arabic where the writing directionality is right-to-left. In fact, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) mention that their theoretical frame of analysis is “largely concerned with the description of the visual semiotic of Western cultures,” adding that “cultures which have long-established reading directions of different kind (right to left or top to bottom) are likely to attach different values to these positions” (p. 199).

Research in LL has mostly centered on examining street signs from large urban environments. In fact LL scholars (Gorter, 2006; Coulmas, 2009; Spolsky, 2009) argue that a more appropriate word to qualify this field would be ‘cityscape’ rather than LL due to the fact that the majority of LL research evolves either around capital cities or large urban centers. In order to provide a more balanced and representative picture of street signage in urban centers within the field of LL, this study will include, in the same vein as Shohamy et al. (2006), data from both a large capital city (Tunis) as well as from a smaller suburban town (La Marsa). In addition, due to the particular urban characteristics of Tunis where a modern post-colonial new
city and a more traditional older city (Medina) are side-by-side, I will investigate the impact that
different historical spaces have on modeling the linguistic landscape of this city in particular. This
division of space within the same city has rarely been examined in the LL literature. In fact, a
study about urban sociolinguistic variation in Morocco, Hassa (2008) examines differences
between old and new areas of the city. Furthermore, the different ‘histories’ which the space
indexes could also yield different uses of the linguistic landscape. In line with the study by Hassa
(2008) who argued that Arabic would be found more in the Medina while French would be more
present in the Modern City, I will examine whether different locations trigger different uses of the
language in the landscape.

**Identified Trends**

Based on this literature review, I identify the main trends to both inform my study and
problematize these trends for further analysis. Based on a number of LL studies, (Backhaus,
2005; Banu & Sussex, 2001; Barni, 2006; Curtin, 2009; Huebner, 2006; Landry and Bourhis,
1997; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Leclerc, 1989; Rosenbaum et al., 1977), there seems to be
greater language diversity on private signs than on public/governmental signs. The present study
examines whether this trend is valid with respect to the linguistic landscape of Tunisia. Related to
this finding is the notion that there are tensions between national linguistic policies advocating the
exclusive use of one or more languages and the bottom-up linguistic practices which oftentimes
do not adhere to the strict governmental linguistic policies. Several LL studies, to the exception of
Stewart & Fawcett (2004), have indeed shown that public signs are usually written using the
official or local language of the state and that diversity in language representation was found

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13 While Hassa (2008) investigated sociolinguistic variation in Morocco, her study is not part of LL research due to the
minor focus on street signs.
more on private signs than on public or governmental signs. A number of LL studies revealed that bottom-up signs which are designed and established by “individual, associative or corporative actors who enjoy autonomy of action within legal limits” (Shohamy et al. 2006, p. 10), often promote languages other than the official one(s) in their selection for display in the linguistic landscape. As pointed out by Landry & Bourhis (1997, p. 27) the relationship between private and public sign can be one of cohesion or tension. More specifically, when language display on both types of signs is similar there is cohesion or coherence in the linguistic landscape. On the other hand, when there are differences or divergences in language display on private and public signs, this signals either resistance, tensions or social discord. These relationships of cohesion and tension will be a central issue to be explored when examining the practices of signage in Tunisia.

Another fundamental idea which seems to be relevant to the field of LL is how languages can be commodified depending on the purpose of the sign designer. In this respect, there seems to always be an intention behind the use of languages in the linguistic landscape, and linguistic choices as to which languages to post on signs are strategic, not haphazard. While some studies argue that using the local language is directed to serve the benefits of the people and to contribute to their positive social identity (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006), another set of studies argue that the use of the local language can be a mere ploy to create a sense of authenticity directed only at tourists rather than locals (Hornsby, 2008). In this regard, the use of authenticity as a way of commodifying languages is a strategy which intends to use particular languages in order to mirror specific cultural values, stereotypes and economic incentives (Mac Gregor, 2003; Schlick, 2003). In addition, the commodification of languages and their strategic use in the linguistic landscape seems to be particularly true for English. In this light, whether this language is intended only for tourists (Smalley 1994, p. 204) or for the local population, this language “sells” and is instrumentally used to target their audience. Several LL studies have shown the effect of English on sign readers as providing a “cosmopolitan flair” (Huebner, 2006 p.
a “snob appeal” (Rosenbaum et al. 1977, p. 187), as being “the international language of trendiness” (Schlick, 2003 p. 6), as having “visual charm” (Mac Gregor, 2003 p. 21), as “a device to establish a trendy cosmopolitan image” (Griffin, 2004 p. 7) or as Mac Gregor (2003) says the use of English on shop signs “elevates the status of these shops” (p. 21). Certain studies have also shown that using non-local languages can serve both the interests of the local population as well as tourists (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Griffin, 2004) and in such cases non-local languages are used in order to ease tensions between existing languages or minorities. In light of these diversified results, my study will seek to determine the motivations behind the use of local, foreign and global languages in Tunisia. I will do so by surveying local people themselves for their attitudes.

As argued by Landry and Bourhis (1997) signs have an informative dimension as they provide evidence for the territorial limits and linguistic boundaries within a given territory. This informative dimension will be used when analyzing Tunisian signs, and will provide a preliminary informative description of which languages are used in the landscape of Tunisia. In addition, beyond the informative dimension of signs, several LL studies (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Shohamy et al., 2006) have also shown that signs are used to convey a symbolic function. Examples of the symbolic function of signs include the use of languages on signs as a way to draw the boundaries within a restricted or private linguistic community (Barni, 2006; Stewart & Fawcett, 2004) or to symbolically mark a particular space (Shohamy et al., 2006) as belonging to the domain of the public or the private (Calvet, 1994; Hornsby, 2008). This symbolic function of sign will be of use when analyzing Tunisian signs and will not only help to identify the languages which are dominant in the linguistic landscape of Tunisia, but also to understand the relative status, power, and hierarchy between these languages within the Tunisian context. The “folkloric/mythological” dimension of signs introduced by Hicks (2002) will also be investigated in light of the Tunisian linguistic landscape particularly when examining the old city of Tunis.
Some studies have also revealed that the LL can symbolically mark the territory where
signs are located (Huebner, 2006, Shohamy et al., 2006). The symbolic marking of the territory
which signs perform is related to the indexical nature of signs. In this light, several studies have
provided evidence that signs index the sociolinguistic context in which they are embedded and
thus the presence or absence of particular languages provide an open window into the
sociolinguistic, economic, and political state of affairs within a particular context (Coulmas,
states that the LL not only marks the territory but that it consists of “the set of behaviors,
assumptions cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, ways of
thinking about language, and religio-historical circumstances associated with a particular
language”. This characteristic of the LL as being indexical of certain norms, beliefs, identities,
and ideologies is revealed in the results of Huebner as well as several in other LL studies
(Shohamy et al., 2006; Hassa, 2008; Hult, 2009). As explained previously, this study will offer to
examine the validity of this claim in view of the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa by
specifically contrasting three different LL environments, the medina, the new city, and the
suburb. In this light, I will analyze the ways in which languages are used in three different spaces
for three different audiences. While the LL literature has shown that signs may be used for
different purposes, whether as a badge of identity (Curtin, 2009), to attract tourists, or to provide
a sense of sophistication and cosmopolitanism, I will use the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La
Marsa to show that variation in the linguistic landscape is the outcome of the space and context
(people, identities, type of neighborhoods) where these signs are placed. With respect to the use
of and visibility of English in the linguistic landscape of certain countries, several studies have
hypothesized that this language is used in the linguistic landscape to index a progressive shift
from long established foreign languages to English as the language of international
communication (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Huebner, 2006; Mc Arthur, 2000; Schlick, 2003) or as an
index of globalization (Shohamy et al., 2006; Backhaus, 2006). Other LL researchers have stated that English is used for symbolic purposes in the LL, in this regard; Gorter & Cenoz (2008) argue that:

At first sight, the use of English in commercial signs could be interpreted as informational mainly aimed at foreign visitors but it is obvious that its increasing presence has a strong symbolic function for a non-English speaking local population. The use of English can activate values such as international orientation, future orientation, success, sophistication or fun orientation. Nevertheless, the use of English can also raise issues of identity and power and can have consequences regarding the balance between the languages in bilingual and multilingual situations (p. 348).

I will examine these notions in the context of Tunisia. The question will throw additional light on the status and relationship between two colonial languages, French and English, in the linguistic landscape of Tunisia.

Finally, the LL literature provides typological categories whereby visual data can be classified and which can be used to organize data from the Tunisian linguistic landscape. The dichotomy public, governmental or top-down signs versus private, unofficial or bottom-up signs seems to be rather consistent in the literature (Backhaus, 2007; Ben Rafael et al., 2004; Calvet, 1990; Huebner, 2006; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Shohamy et al., 2006). When classifying languages in terms of linguistic content, several LL studies have relied on a straightforward three way division of signs as unilingual or monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual (Mac Gregor, 2003; Mc Arthur, 2000; Schlick, 2003). Much of the linguistic landscape data in these studies has been classified according to these categories. Following this precedent, the data from Tunisian street signs will also follow classifications from the LL literature.

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Chapter 3

Procedures and Methodology

This chapter provides a description of the methodology of this study. While presenting numerical trends, this study is predominantly qualitative in nature. In this respect the broader objective of this research is “to preserve the form, content, and context of social phenomena and analyze their qualities, rather than separate them from historical and institutional surroundings” Lindolf (1991, p. 24). More specifically, building upon interpretive and naturalistic qualitative methods, this case study uses critical ethnography in order to examine the multilingual practices in Tunisia through the dynamics of language policy, signs, and people’s attitudes. The following sections will present the research problems, objectives, and research questions addressed by this study. Subsequently, the research methods and sampling procedures used for data collection and analysis will be described in detail.

Research Problems

As explained in the previous chapter, despite including a variety of countries and contexts, the LL literature falls short of studies exploring African post-colonial environments. While Africa in general has been under-represented in the LL literature and most studies have been limited to sub-Saharan Africa (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Calvet, 1990; Dumont, 1998; Reh, 2004; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009), countries with an Arab and Islamic heritage in the northern part of the continent (such as nations in the Maghreb) have been particularly absent.15 Moreover, although several LL studies have provided surface-level descriptions of signs, only a

15 Hassa (2008), with her examination of the LL of Fes, Morocco, provides the only sustained study in the Maghreb.
small body of LL research has linked microlinguistic to macrolinguistic issues and has showed connections between the linguistic landscape and broader implications for language policy and planning issues.

By better understanding the linguistic landscape of post-colonial North-Africa in general and Tunisia in particular, this research seeks to reveal how linguistic policies advocated by governmental decree ignore both linguistic diversity as encountered in the linguistic landscape but also as expressed in the attitudes of local people. More specifically, this study makes three contributions to the method of studying LL: First, it takes into account people’s attitudes and cross-examines them with findings from LL data as well as from official policy documents. By performing a close cross-examination of three sources of data – signs, policy documents, and people’s attitudes – I will provide a more holistic understanding of the linguistic landscape of Tunisia. Second, it offers to analyze linguistic landscape in urban centers by examining three different sociolinguistic environments embodied in the modern city of Tunis, the old neighborhood or medina, and the suburban area of La Marsa. Third, by examining the differences between Medina, New City, and Suburb, this study provides evidence for how signs are co-indexical with the social environment where they are situated and also products of their environment.

Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to understand whether the linguistic landscape of Tunisia is a site of linguistic tension or harmony. Expressions of tension and harmony will be examined by paying attention to the languages encountered in the urban and suburban centers of Tunisia and will be assessed against the four categories presented in the previous chapter. Bearing on these categories, it will be determined whether the three environments investigated in this
study provide evidence for linguistic suppression, adjustment, accommodation, and acceptance. In addition, I will not limit my investigation to street signs only. Therefore, tension and harmony will be examined by investigating the relationships between the linguistic landscape, language policy, and the attitudes of the Tunisian people. While tension and harmony have been clearly illustrated in the LL literature in view of the four level categorization continuum, this study will go on to explain how these trends can be analyzed in view of the interplay between multilingual representation, language policy and planning, and the linguistic perceptions of Tunisians.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been divided into four categories, and they will be investigated both through observations as well as a questionnaire.

General Research Questions

(1) What is the relationship between (a) linguistic policies, (b) sign representations and (c) people’s language attitudes in Tunisia?

(2) How does one explain the possible tensions or inconsistencies between the advocated linguistic policies and the actual linguistic practices of the Tunisian people?

(3) What are the implications of street signage for Tunisian multilingualism in terms of social conditions, geopolitical realities, and historical changes?

To answer the above questions, the data were analyzed according to three specific orientations: linguistic content, modality, and relation of signs to their audience. The data was analyzed in terms of three important questions: (a) what do the signs say and which language is used on these signs?; (b) what do these signs represent in terms of symbol systems?; and (c) what
is the relationship between signs and their audience? I spell out the specific questions posed within each orientation below:

**Linguistic Content**

Considering Modern Standard Arabic, Tunisian Arabic, French, and English

(1) What is the hierarchy and ratio of signs from each respective language in Tunisia?

(2) What is the extent of linguistic diversity on public signs?

(3) What is the extent of linguistic diversity on private signs?

(4) What are the informative and symbolic functions of each respective language on these signs?

**Modality**

(1) What is the degree of multimodality of signs in Tunisia?

(2) What is the relative status of multimodality on public signs versus private signs?

(3) How does language relate to other symbol systems in conveying meaning in these signs?

**Relationship between Signs and their Audience**

(1) How do signs display a Tunisian (multilingual) identity?

(2) How are people interpellated based on the linguistic choices and use of semiotic symbol systems of signs?
(3) What are people’s attitudes toward both the public and private representations of multilingualism in Tunisia?

(4) How do people interpret the meanings and messages of signs?

(5) What is the relative focus of readers on language versus other symbol systems when they process signs?

Methodology

Categories of Data

In order to triangulate the findings pertaining to visual multilingualism in Tunisia, three different sources of data will be considered. Triangulation will allow for a comparison between documentary, observational, and interview data.

Primary Data Source

Visual data consisting of photographs of signs collected in the streets of Tunis and La Marsa

Secondary Data Source

Policy data: Official documents articulating the linguistic policies of the country with respect to official languages, languages of print, and other policies pertaining to the respective status of each language in the context of Tunisia. In addition I will consider the regulations
pertaining to the form of signs in addition to the content, for example the size, placement, and physical characteristics of signs.

Attitudinal data: Collected from Tunisian informants through a survey questionnaire which aims at investigating their reactions to the signs database.

**Rationale for Including Informants**

The inclusion of data from local informants will not only bring a new dimension to the study of LL, but will also provide an additional layer of interpretation of the results of this study. The understanding of languages on signs will not be limited to the interpretations of an omniscient researcher’s insights - as is the case in most LL research - but will be moderated with and balanced by the perspectives of insiders about their local sociolinguistic communities. This will allow for an interpretation of the linguistic landscape in light of data which prioritizes people’s voices. In addition, local knowledge provided through informant data will constitute a non-centralized and independent theorization which is not contingent on the endorsement from top-down/institutionalized régimes of thought (Foucault 1980, p. 81).

Bearing on these explanations, this study will be based on the examination of three different data sources which will provide each one in its particular way, a different “voice” or representation, of linguistic diversity in the context of Tunisia and more specifically within the urban poles of Tunis and La Marsa. These three types of “voices” or data sources are specifically, (1) the voice of the signs, (2), the voice of the official documents, and (3) the voice of the people. In the following sections, the procedures for collecting visual, official, and attitudinal data will be described with more detail.
Primary Data Collection

Research Site

This study will examine the linguistic landscape of Tunisia by specifically focusing on
the Gulf of Tunis (Map 1) in the northern part of Tunisia and more specifically on the urban areas
of Tunis and La Marsa (Map 2). This deliberate geographical delimitation and exclusive attention
on urban zones is explained by the scope of this study which will only investigate multilingualism
in urban centers. In addition, the choice of two urban areas is also motivated on the grounds that
large cosmopolitan urban centers are often culturally and linguistically diverse and composed of
separate and identifiable neighborhoods. Furthermore, because urban contexts are relatively
larger, more impersonal, and heterogeneous, there is a greater need for signs to direct people to
places and services. Since rural contexts are relatively more homogeneous, there is less need for
signs, as the community shares the local knowledge pertaining to relevant information. In fact
Coulmas (2009, p. 14) asserts that:

Sociolinguistics is the study of language in urbanized settings, its proper object
being the multidimensional distribution of languages and varieties in the city, as
opposed to the regional distribution of varieties of language investigated in
traditional dialectology. Linguistic landscape is a fertile field of sociolinguistic
investigation, both in the narrow sense of seeking correlations and co-variation of
language use and social class, and in the wider sense of unveiling the nexus
between language and other social attributes (...). Thus, it is on cities that LL
research must be focused.

Cities, then, are poles of economic development and so they have a larger population than
the countryside, thus they are more likely to contain visual messages and other modes of visual
communication. In addition, Gorter & Cenoz (2008, p. 343) add: “The highest density of signs
can be found in cities and towns, in particular in the main shopping streets, commercial and
industrial areas”. In this light, the combination of these factors creates the need for governmental
agencies and marketing businesses to target larger audiences in cities more so than they would in
rural areas when using signs. By virtue of having more socioeconomic activity (i.e. business, tourism, etc.) the use of signs is even more encouraged in cities than in the countryside. While the label ‘cityscapes’ may be used to refer to several LL studies (Gorter, 2006; Ben Rafael, 2009; Coulmas, 2009) it is not suited for this study as one of the two sites of investigation, La Marsa, is not big enough to be categorized as a city and still large enough not to fall under the descriptor of rural area. With respect to access to these investigation sites, it is important to mention that being a multilingual Tunisian speaker and having familiarity with these two cities will represent crucial advantages and thus be assets in executing the project.
Figure 3-1. Map of Tunisia highlighting the Gulf of Tunis.

I have chosen to focus my research on the capital city of Tunis and its close suburb La Marsa because they represent two aspects of linguistic landscape in urban areas, respectively a
capital city (Tunis) and a smaller suburban center (La Marsa). Tunis is the largest and most densely populated city in Tunisia with a population of 1,200,000 and over 3,980,500 in the municipal area as of 2008. As the capital city of the Republic of Tunisia, Tunis is the centre of economic, administrative, and political life and thus has a large number of businesses, administrations, commercial buildings, and shopping areas. The recent expansion of the Tunisian business and economy is, in this respect, reflected in the booming development of the outer city where the social challenges brought about by rapid modernization can be witnessed in the capital city of Tunisia. These factors which contribute to making Tunis a busy urban center will also contribute to providing the study with a copious amount of visual signs. In addition, the capital city is a considerably convenient site for this study as it is easily accessible and has a variety of means of transportation. As the largest city in Tunisia, Tunis is comprised of a cross section of the entire population of the country. Tunis offers a microcosm of the Tunisian population. Furthermore, Tunis is home to the greatest number of universities with foreign language schools and departments in the country and accommodates the largest concentration of foreign businesses, foreign embassies and international government agencies, making the city one of the most linguistically diverse in the country. Given these and other factors, Tunis likely has the highest concentration of foreign language use in Tunisia. Thus the inhabitants of Tunis are more likely to be exposed to the foreign languages used in Tunis through the linguistic landscape and interpersonal relationships.

La Marsa is a coastal Mediterranean town in the northern suburb of Tunis with a population of 65,742 as of 2006. Only 17 kilometers away from the capital city, La Marsa is an upscale residential area as well as a popular vacation site for high and middle-class Tunisians. Even though it is considered more suburban and residential, the large town of La Marsa has also various numbers of businesses, administrations, and shopping areas. The proximity of La Marsa to the capital city and its location near the seashore makes it a much sought-after residential area
for foreigners, both tourists and employees of foreign companies, institutions, and schools. The most important foreign population in La Marsa consists mostly of French nationals. Given the size of this population, La Marsa is among the few cities in Tunisia which has a French educational institute, which provides both primary and secondary instruction in French and confers a French diploma.

Figure 3-2. Tunis (Capital City) and La Marsa (Suburb).
Spatial Determination of the Survey Area

As mentioned above, visual samples of photographs were collected from the cities of Tunis and La Marsa. With respect to the city of Tunis, data collection was performed from two specific geographical areas, the new city (Map 3), and the old city or Medina (Map 4). This distinction between old and new areas of the metropolitan area of Tunis is inspired from a study performed by Hassa (2008) which examined a similar partition new city/medina within the city of Fes, Morocco. In this respect, Hassa (2008) reveals that such a division between old and new areas of the city or as she states between a ‘pre-colonial’ and a ‘postcolonial’ (p. 14) space respectively, is characteristic of North-African cities, and reveals considerable differences in the linguistic landscape between new zones and older areas. In fact, Hassa (2008, p. 6) mentions that:

L’hypothèse avancée est que la rupture entre la Ville Nouvelle et la Médina (…) peut influer sur les choix linguistiques permettant ainsi aux individus d’exprimer leur appartenance à une communauté linguistique spécifique. (…) la dichotomie spatiale entre la Médina et la Ville Nouvelle, deux espaces sémiotiques bien distincts sera visible au niveau des pratiques langagières et plus particulièrement des choix codiques. Dans les espaces plurilingues, les individus acteurs sociaux inscrivent leur identité territoriale et sociale dans leur choix de langue exprimant ainsi leur adhésion ou encore leur rupture vis à vis d’un groupe donné.

[The hypothesis is that the gap between New City and Medina (…) can influence the linguistic choices which allow individuals to express their belonging to a particular linguistic community. (…) the spatial dichotomy between the Medina and New City, two distinct semiotic spaces will become visible with respect to linguistic practices and particularly with respect to the choice of codes. In multilingual spaces, the social actors inscribe their territorial and social identity in their choice of language thereby expressing their adherence or shift vis-à-vis a particular group]. In this light, the implications of this notion for this study are that the exploration of the New City and the Medina may yield important differences in the linguistic landscape with respect to linguistic codes adopted but also in the way street signs index these two different semiotic spaces.
In the new city, the data was collected from different points as shown on Table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Areas of Data Collection in Tunis, Centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Avenue de Carthage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Avenue de France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Avenue de la Liberté</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Avenue de la Ligue Arabe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Avenue de la République</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Avenue Habib Bourguiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Avenue Habib Thameur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Avenue Jean Jaures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Avenue Khereddine Pacha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Intersection le Passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Rue de Londres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Rue Moncef Bey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Rue de Rome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More specifically, pictures of street signs were taken mostly from large Avenues, which constitute the important transit areas within the city of Tunis. The modern city, or Ville Nouvelle, has been built during the French protectorate and starts from Bab El Bhar and stretches towards the large Avenue Bourguiba, a straight two-way heavily trafficked thoroughfare which forms the backbone of the modern city and stretches from the onset of Tunis Marine into the entrance of the Old City or Medina. Designed by the French to be on a par with the Parisian Champs-Elysees, this avenue is replete with restaurants, local and international chain hotels, cafés, cultural sites, and shops. Buildings on the Avenue Habib Bourguiba date back from the French colonial protectorate of the end of the nineteenth century and contrast considerably with the smaller older structures of the Medina. Other important avenues of data collection include Avenue de Carthage, Avenue de France, Avenue de la Liberté, Avenue de la Ligue Arabe, Avenue de la République, Avenue Habib Thameur, Avenue Jean Jaurès, and Avenue Khereddine Pacha. In addition, signs were also collected from smaller streets such as Rue de Londres, Rue Moncef Bey, and Rue de Rome. An important transit passage, Intersection le Passage, was also one of the sites of investigation within Tunis centre.
The medina, which starts at the Bab El Bhar or Porte de France, lies at the historical heart of the city and is an area of Tunis which is older and more traditional than other areas of the city. The medina has numerous traditional markets or Souks, which is composed of several covered alleys and passages and where traditional marketplaces are replete with boisterous, active trade areas offering vivid colors and intense scents. A feast of goods on offer ranging from fragrances,
to leather, from plastic to tin, from the finest filigree, to tourist memorabilia and souvenirs to the tiny crafts-shops and works of artisans. In addition, within the medina’s more religiously observant community lies a world-renowned place of worship which is Jami’atul-Zaytuna or Zaytuna Mosque, founded in 698 and which is also a university of theology and religious studies. With a population of more than 100,000, the Old City comprises about a tenth of the population of Tunis. The Medina’s planning is distinct from the grid lines and formal geometric compositions of the Modern City. This structure, although appearing to be random and chaotic, is nonetheless based on complex socio-cultural codes regulated by the types of complex human relations within the old city. In this light, the modern conception of public space and urban centers may not apply within the medina, hence the inappropriateness of the label ‘cityscapes’ to describe this research project, as the conception of the city is based on western metropolitan model. In the case of the Medina, streets are perceived to be an extension of the houses and subject to social tags. The concept of ownership is also idiosyncratic as traditional markets often spill out onto public roads. The data collection in the Medina was performed in the following streets: Rue de la Commission, Rue de la Kasbah, Rue de La Montagne, Rue de la Verrerie, Rue des Tamis, Rue El Azafine, Rue Jamaa Ez Zitouna, Rue Sidi Ali Azouz, Rue Sidi Ben Arous, Rue Sidi Morjani, as well as within commercial areas which specialize in traditional artisan crafts such as Souk de la Laine or Souk of Wool also known as Rue des Chechia or Souk of the Chechia¹⁶, Souk El Attarine or Souk of the Fragrances, Souk El Berka (Souk El Blat) which specializes in jewelry, gold, and silver. These streets are shown in the following table.

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¹⁶ The Chechia is a Tunisian brimless red/maroon cap which is made out of wool. Craftsmanship of the Chechia dates back five hundred years, from the time when Andalusian Arabs arrived from Spain (Maghrebia).
Table 3-2. Areas of Data Collection in Tunis, Medina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Rue de la Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rue de la Kasbah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Rue de La Montagne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rue de la Verrerie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Rue des Tamis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Rue El Azafine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Rue Jamaa Ez Zitouna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Rue Sidi Ali Azouz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Rue Sidi Ben Arous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Rue Sidi Morjani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Souk de la Laine (Rue des Chechia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Souk El Attarine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Souk El Berka (Souk El Blat)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3-4. Tunis (the Old City or Medina).

The collection of data in La Marsa (Map 5) was performed on sections of large avenues such as Avenue Habib Bourguiba, Avenue de la République, Avenue Taieb M'Hiri, Avenue du 07 Novembre, and Avenue Ali Belhaouane, as well as on the following streets: Rue Hedi Saidi, Rue Abdelahfidd El Mekki, Rue Abou El Qacem Al Chebbi, Rue Cheikh Tayeb Siala, Rue de la Mosquée, Rue du Sapin, Rue du 09 Avril 1938, Rue du Stade, Rue Imam Chfai, Rue Kabadou,
Rue Mohamed Abda, Rue Mohamed Ali, Rue Omar Ibn Sheikh, and Rue Tazarka. Some other
data collection sites comprised the tourusty Place Saf-Saf, the public park of La Marsa - Sidi Bou
Said, the La Marsa TGM train station, the Zephyr mall. The collection of data by street names is
shown in Table 3-3.

Figure 3-5. La Marsa.

Table 3-3. Areas of Data Collection in La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
<th>Street Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avenue Habib Bourguiba</td>
<td>Rue Chayachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue Taieb M'Hiri</td>
<td>Rue Hedi Chaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue Ali Belhaouane</td>
<td>Rue Oued Mellegue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue du 7 Novembre</td>
<td>Rue de l'Afrique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue de la République</td>
<td>Rue Ibn Chabat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue Abderrahmane Mami</td>
<td>Rue Imam Ibn Hanbel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue de l'Archevêché</td>
<td>Rue Tazarka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue de L'Independence</td>
<td>Rue des Ecoles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue Hedi Saidi</td>
<td>Rue Assad Ibn Al Fourat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue Abdelahfidh El Mekki</td>
<td>Rue des Hafsides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue Abou Al Qacem Al Chebbi</td>
<td>Rue Ezzine Ben Achour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue Cheikh Tayeb Siala</td>
<td>Rue El Cheikh Hmida Bayram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue de la Mosquée</td>
<td>Rue Taki Eddine Ibn Zeidoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rue des Sapin</td>
<td>Rue Slim Hayder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Techniques

As mentioned by Backhaus (2007, p. 65), if one needs to guarantee a sound data collection procedure, two fundamental points need to be taken into consideration, namely the determination of the survey items, and the geographic limits of the survey area. The survey items were confined to the definition of LL as provided by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and hence includes “public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” (p. 25). With respect to the second point, while it has been made clear that the geographical survey area is limited to the cities of Tunis (Medina and New City) and La Marsa, the collection of data was conducted while taking into consideration both the major busy axes of the cities as well as the more residential areas. This was performed in order to guarantee a more representative coverage of the investigation sites. However, even though data was collected at different points in the three research sites and despite the fact that Tunis was even further subdivided into a modern and a more traditional area, the data does not claim to be a holistic and exhaustive representation of the two cities because other sections of the cities of Tunis and La Marsa have not been included in the data collection. In addition, this study does not aim to perform an across-the-board survey of the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, such as is the case in geographically-comprehensive LL studies (Barni & Bagna, 2009), but to select a cross-section of streets in these cities in order to describe the observed trends of these two LL contexts.
Some LL studies have offered to dovetail the central circular railway or bus line of a city, as in Backhaus (2007). This methodology while appealing is problematic as it does not account for all areas of the cities but only the ones accessed by transportation facilities. On the other hand, collecting data from only one street as performed in several LL studies (Edelman, 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Rosenbaum et al., 1977) is again not devoid of methodological hurdles as limiting the data collection to an exclusive street, not only excludes other areas of the cities, but also makes the study weak in terms of the city’s holistic representation. Based on these parameters, it is necessary to find a middle ground between these two data collection procedure and perform the data collection in a structured manner. The data was collected from not only one but several pre-selected streets within the cities of Tunis and La Marsa as mentioned above. Snapshots of street sign were collected from each street within an area delimited by two consecutive traffic lights. Despite having the limitations of not being statistically accurate, the advantage of this selection principle is that it combines the methodologies of Backhaus (2007) on the one hand who used traffic lights as points of geographical reference, and other researchers (Edelman, 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Rosenbaum et al., 1977) who collected signs over long stretches of streets. In this respect, this collection procedure will provide a disciplined and non-biased way to determine the survey area.

**Sampling and Types of Signs Targeted**

The data collection was not limited to any particular type of sign, but included the range of signs which are characterized in terms of the definition of LL offered by Landry and Bourhis (1997) quoted above. Choosing to select a bigger range of sign types rather than to focus on only one type of sign is motivated by the desire to capture the diversity of the linguistic landscape of the investigated cities. In addition, choosing to have a more inclusive and balanced representation
of sign types in the cities of Tunis and La Marsa will enhance the validity of this study by providing a more representative and holistic account of the linguistic landscape of Tunisian urban centers. In fact, including different types of signs may positively contribute to the investigation of the LL; Backhaus (2007) supports this idea by stating that:

Many aspects of a city’s linguistic landscape are not captured when focusing on one type of sign only. In this respect, qualitatively oriented studies such as Calvet (1990, 1994), Scollon and Scollon (2003), or Spolsky and Cooper (1991) have a much wider scope, including both official and non-official, and both commercial and non-commercial signs. (p. 61)

Determining the exact size of signs to be collected and analyzed represents an ongoing problematic methodological issue in LL research. Indeed, LL experts have constantly drawn attention to this problematic question. Gorter and Cenoz (2008) for instance, observe that:

The unit of analysis. The large number of language signs next to each other makes it difficult to decide what each linguistic sign is. Are all the linguistic items in a shop window part of ‘one’ language sign or should they be considered separately? What about other ads, graffiti or posters next to the shop window? Can a whole street be considered a unit of analysis? There are indeed advantages and disadvantages with each of these choices. Decisions regarding the unit of analysis are important because it is a crucial methodological issue to allow for comparability between studies. (p. 351)

Based on this difficulty to determine the exact size, and delimitation of signs, Griffin (2004, p. 6) offered for instance to collect signs based on the criterion that they had to be legible from one arm’s length, and thus anything too small was not included in the data. While such a methodology might seem to be subjective, it nonetheless offers a systematic way to collect signs. The data collected for this study thus included signs visible/readable from one arm’s length with both text and images.

Based on these considerations, the data from linguistic signs from Tunisia and La Marsa will also follow the characteristics mentioned by Griffin (2004).

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17 While siglas, logos, and brands may also be subsumed under this definition, they have not been included in this study. For a theoretical grounded and thorough discussion of siglas, acronyms, and abbreviations see Calvet (1980).
As stated earlier, this study will consist of a descriptive and an interpretive section. In the descriptive section street signs will be described, policy documents analyzed, and the attitudes of Tunisian respondents elicited and transcribed. In the interpretive section these diverse forms of information will be employed to throw light on each other.

**Secondary Data Collection**

*Language Policy Documents*

Data from governmental sources which attested of the policies pertaining to languages in Tunisia were accessed from two different sources.

The Constitution of Tunisia, available electronically from the website:
http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/Tunisiaconstitution.pdf

The Official Journal of the Tunisian Republic (*Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne* or JORT) contains electronic versions of articles initially drafted in Arabic but which are also available in French. These articles are available in PDF format from the governmental website of the University Centre for Scientific and Technical Documentation, *Centre Universitaire de Documentation Scientifique et Technique* (CNUDST) which is consulted at the following link: http://www.cnudst.rnrt.tn The relevant policy documents kept for the purpose of this study were from the periods of 1956 to 2010.

The Tunisian Jurists Website was accessed at the following address
http://www.jurisitetunisie.com/textes/index.html and groups Tunisian codes of law and legal texts in integral form. In addition to these documents which are grouped by theme, there are also forums and discussion boards organized by specific field of law.
Respondents

A survey questionnaire was administered to a group of 12 Tunisians from different areas of Tunisia and was dispensed on a one-to-one basis. All informants in this study were multilingual and spoke at least two languages in addition to their native language. The selection criterion for respondents was based on convenience or opportunity sampling. In this respect, respondents were selected in view of ease of accessibility and geographical proximity to the researcher. In addition, in order to guarantee an equal representation of the Tunisian population across ages and gender, respondents were also selected using quota sampling. As a result, the pool of 12 informants included a balanced representation of male and female respondents, with 7 female and 5 male respondents. With respect to age, the questionnaire included informants from different age strata, respectively 20-30. The population sample is described in the following table.

Table 3-4. Repartition of Informants by Age and Gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 – 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the interview data does not include a significant number of respondents, this category of data does not as such constitute the primary data for analysis in this research. In this regard, interview data will be merely used as a sample of people's opinions to provide additional support for the analysis of language policy documents and street signs which are the main data in this study.
Survey questionnaire

The survey consists of two sections. The first section includes a factual questionnaire involving subject descriptors and aimed at eliciting demographic information from the respondents. In order to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the findings from the survey questionnaire, the informants were asked to provide information about their gender, age, nationality, level of education, occupation, residential location, and knowledge of specific languages. The second part of the survey involves a questionnaire which consists in a list of open-ended attitudinal questions aimed at triggering respondent’s impressions and attitudes towards multilingualism in Tunisia and about the linguistic landscape of the cities of Tunis and La Marsa. This questionnaire was administered after the informants were shown five different signs from the two cities investigated and they were asked to answer questions based on these pictures as well as on the languages which are part of their linguistic repertoire. Some of the questions which were included in this survey questionnaire (see Appendix C) were: Which language do you read first on sign #1? When exposed to sign #2, do you look at the visual content or read the language(s) first? In your opinion, should English and French be used in official signs such as in sign #4? In your opinion, what is the importance of non-Arabic languages on the private signs #1 and #5? Are non-Arabic languages (found on signs) intended to serve locals or foreigners? Please explain your answer with reference to Sign #3 and #5.

In addition, the informants were prompted to classify a set of languages from most to least important. They were asked to classify these languages based on two criteria. The first criterion was the importance of these languages for Tunisians in general, while the second criterion asked about the importance of these languages for the respondent in particular. Following each classification, the respondents were asked to justify their hierarchical choice and provide justifications for their choices. The downside of open-ended questions in survey
questionnaires, as explained by Dörnyei (2003, p. 14), is that respondents may feel a superficial engagement with the topic which could result in brief or dismissive answers. In order to circumvent such effects, respondents were informed prior to taking the survey questionnaire that there would be a follow-up session where the researcher would ask them to explain their answers.

Field notes collected from the interview were taken by the researcher during this consultative follow-up interaction. The interview field notes were then typed. Among the interview field notes some were integral reinstatements of the original declarations from the informants while other testimonials where paraphrased using my own words. Due to the fact that this interview data was not audio recorded the transcription conventions do not contain pauses, fillers, and other discourse features. In this light, since this category of data was only used to supplement the analysis of street signs, no discourse properties were paid attention to and the analysis was limited to the content of ideas. For this reason, the use of punctuation is arbitrary and not aimed at representing discourse markers.

*Interview Procedure*

Following this survey questionnaire which lasted about 15 minutes to complete, the investigator conducted a follow-up interview to get a more refined idea about informants’ answers but also to rule out obscure answers which might have been provided by the subjects. The rationale behind using this ‘stimulated recall’ (Kasper, 1998) follow-up technique was that: “the participant’s own item responses serve as prompts for further open-ended reflection and, at the same time, the coverage of all the items ensures systematicity and comprehensiveness” Dörnyei (2003, p. 130). The interview which also lasted about 15 minutes was conducted in Tunisian, French, and English and the responses were collected in the form of written notes.
**Data Analysis**

While this study is predominantly of qualitative nature being of a critical ethnography type, there are however numerical components which enlighten the analysis of the data. In this respect, I plan to quantify some of the following characteristics of signs:

- Proportion of Languages Featured on Signs;
- Proportion of Languages on Official Signs;
- Proportion of Languages on Private Signs;
- Proportions of Private versus Public Signs;
- Proportions of Monolingual versus Multilingual Signs;
- Proportion of Linguistic Diversity on Official Signs;
- Proportion of Linguistic Diversity on Private Signs.

The numerical dimension will be advisory only; it will supplement the more important qualitative dimension which will constitute the focus of my analysis.

**Coding Scheme for the Analysis of Street Signs**

Developing a data analysis scheme for the analysis of street signs is not devoid of difficulties and hurdles. As a starting point, it is important to mention that as Backhaus (2007) mentions, the distinction between LL *Data Coding* (i.e. languages used on signs, order of appearance of signs, amount of information, etc.) and LL *Data Categorization* (e.g. top-down, bottom-up, etc.). This distinction has helped to organize data with respect to (1) linguistic properties (e.g. languages and scripts contained) and (2) source (Private vs. Public). Several LL studies have effectively used this classification (Huebner, 2006).
When analyzing the signs from the Tunisian linguistic landscape, a sign coding scheme was developed and focused on three important dimensions: (1) Linguistic Content, (2) Source or Status of the sign, (3) Degree of modality on the sign. The first level of this scheme is used to analyze how language appears on the sign, the number of languages on the sign, the order of languages on multilingual signs, and the relative importance of languages to check whether a text has been translated (fully or partially). The second level of analysis helps to understand such matters as how the status of the sign can be related to its location, the size of the font used, and the hierarchy of languages on these signs. The third and final level of analysis focuses on the relationship between the different symbol systems used in the sign, and the strategies used on the sign to appeal to its audience. In this light, when analyzing the Tunisian street signs, the following three categorization levels were considered:

**Linguistic Properties of Signs**

This variable examines the degree of linguistic representation on signs and answers the question: *Which languages can be seen on the sign?* The three levels of analysis included under this variable have been adapted from Mc Arthur (2000), and Schlick (2003).

(1) Monolingual or Unilingual Sign

(2) Bilingual Sign

(3) Multilingual Sign (containing three or more languages)

In this light, determining language can only be based on the choice of scripts used (Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Smalley, 1994; Huebner, 2006) and in this respect signs will be categorized according to the following 6-way division\(^\text{18}\)

(1) Arabic Script Only

(2) Roman Script Only

\(^\text{18}\) Adapted from Rosenbaum et al. (1977, p. 183).
(3) Arabic Dominant but also some Roman Script
(4) Roman Dominant but also some Arabic Script
(5) Arabic Script Representation equals Roman Script Representation
(6) Other Scripts

However, the subdivision based on script use is not as evident as it may look. Indeed, in Tunisia, the use of script consists of several possible combinations. For instance the Arabic script may be used to write Roman languages and vice-versa. Several LL studies have talked about this issue (Backhaus, 2007; Mac Gregor, 2003) and whenever instances of such idiosyncratic uses of script are encountered in this study’s data, the analysis will take into consideration this issue.

*Degree of Multimodality of Signs*

This variable will include two levels

(1) Monomodal sign (including either language or pictures but not both)
(2) Multimodal sign (including both language and pictures)

*Status of Signs*

This variable will include two levels and will be mostly concerned about which source signs are derived from

(1) Official sign
(2) Private sign

*Space where Signs are placed*

This category pertains to the space where signs are located. This dimension of analysis is connected to the notion of indexicality which emphasizes the ideas that signs attest to the environment where they are situated. This level of analysis is particularly important in
distinguishing between the different parts of the city of Tunis which is separated between an older and a newer city\textsuperscript{19}.

(1) Public Space (e.g. city hall, malls, libraries)

(2) Private Space (e.g. Garage, house, backyard)

\textsuperscript{19} These categories were developed in light of Scollon & Scollon (2003).
This chapter presents the legislative data and numerical results of the study which will be discussed in more detail and triangulated with other data in the subsequent chapter. These results show the trends which have been observed in light of the three data sources of this study, namely policy documents, street signs, and people’s attitudes in Tunisia.

**Data from Policy Documents**

The policy data was accessed from two different sources, the Constitution of the Republic of Tunisia and the Official Journal of the Tunisian Republic (JORT)\(^\text{20}\). The Constitution is a document which was adopted on June 1\(^{st}\) 1959, three years after Tunisia’s independence from France in 1956. It also serves as a document which establishes the sovereignty of the Republic of Tunisia. The excerpt which is included in this study is from the introductory section on general provisions and involves basic legislature, fundamentals about the culture and identity of the country, the language used, the religion of the state and additional stipulations guaranteeing the basic rights of Tunisian citizens. The JORT is a state-issued biweekly publication which contains all legislation, decrees and laws enacted by the official authorities. This journal has been published since July 22\(^{nd}\) 1822. In conformity with the Tunisian law pertaining to the languages used in legislation (see Table 4-2), the JORT is officially published in the Arabic language, a French version also exists for reference and is only issued for informative purposes.

\(^{20}\) The acronym JORT stands for the full title of this journal in French: ‘Journal Officiel de la République Tunisienne’.
Table 4-1 displays the general provisions for language regulation which explicitly declares Arabic as the official language of the Republic of Tunisia. The table shows excerpts of the constitution and the various sections where they can be retrieved. The bold type has been added to represent the clauses which specifically pertain to language. Not only in the Preamble section but also in Chapter 1 of the constitution, the sovereignty and independence of Tunisia are affirmed. In the Preamble and in Chapter 2, Tunisia is recognized as part of a larger group of nations belonging to the Maghreb, and to the Arab world. The use of Arabic as a state-sponsored language is established in Chapter 1. These three excerpts from the Tunisian constitution serve to provide a context for the understanding of the national profile of Tunisia but also as a ground to understand the linguistic practices of the country as conveyed by the official discourse. These general provisions clearly demonstrate that authorities wish to mold the basic defining characteristics of the country as Independent, Muslim, Arab, and Arabic-speaking. These defining features are helpful in understanding not only how the linguistic landscape may reflect these values, but also in understanding how local informants relate to the identity described in these introductory statements from the constitution.

Table 4-1. The Constitution of the Republic of Tunisia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Adopted June 1st 1959 – Amended in 1988 and 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>General Provisions for Language Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Preamble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 1</td>
<td>Chapter 1 – General Provisions Article 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 2</td>
<td>The Republic of Tunisia is a part of the Great Arab Maghreb, an entity which it endeavors to unify within the framework of mutual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>‘In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful, We, the representatives of the Tunisian people, meeting as members of the National Constituent Assembly, Proclaim the will of this people, set free from foreign domination thanks to its powerful cohesion and to its struggle against tyranny, exploitation, and regression; To remain faithful to the teachings of Islam, to the unity of the Greater Maghreb, to its membership of the Arab community, and to cooperation with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Tunisia is a free, independent and sovereign state. Its religion is Islam, its language is Arabic and its type of government is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4-2 through 4-4 present more specific regulations relating to language use in the domains of legislation, administration, and education, respectively. In the JORT the date refers to the time of publication of the issue. In addition, the reference includes the section number and articles that are relevant to language legislation. While these regulations give more details as to the use of languages in the judiciary, administrative, and educational sectors, they are solely advisory and aim at providing more background to understanding the use of languages across domains in Tunisia. Legislation in the three domains enumerated above echoes the statements introduced by the constitution whereby Arabic is the language of the state. However, all these legislations make allowance for the use of foreign languages even though there is no explicit mention of the languages involved.

Table 4-2. Languages Used for Legislation, Law, and Legal Documents in Tunisia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>July 5th 1993</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>Judiciary/Legal (Pertaining to the Languages Used in Legislation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td># 93-64 - Article 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Text       | 1) The laws, the Orders in Council, the decrees and the regulations are published in the Official Journal of the Republic of Tunisia in the Arabic language.  
2) They are also published in another language, and this, only for informative purposes. |

Table 4-3. Languages Used in Administration in Tunisia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>August 8th 1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>Administrative (Pertaining to the Language Used in Administration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td># 94-1692 - Article 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Arabic language is adopted in the elaboration of models of administrative printed papers form. It is agreed, if necessary, to add its translation in one or more foreign languages.

Table 4-4. Languages Used in Education in Tunisia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>July 29th 1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>Education (Pertaining to the Language Used in Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td># 91-65 - Article 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Within the frameworks of Tunisian national identity and belonging to Arab-Islamic civilization, the educational system aims to achieve the following purposes: [...] 4) to give pupils mastery of the Arab language, as a national language, so that they can use in learning and production, in the various fields of knowledge: social sciences, exact sciences and technology; 5) to guarantee that pupils have command of one foreign language, in order to allow them to access the productions of universal and technical thought, as well as human values, and to prepare them to follow its evolution and to contribute to it in a manner suitable to achieve the enrichment of the national culture and its interaction with universal human culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In the two levels of basic education, all the subject matters concerning the humanities, sciences and technology are taught in Arabic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) The first cycle of secondary education aims at allowing young people to acquire a balanced training which cultivates their interest for languages, humanities, sciences, whether theoretical or experimental and for technology; and which balances between cognitive, practical and emotional dimensions; in the same way, this training makes it possible to consolidate and further the knowledge acquired by pupils during basic education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-5 introduces the legislation pertaining to street signs in Tunisia. The national legislation did not regulate the use of languages of posting; however, a decree of the municipality
of Tunis (August 6, 1957) had compelled owners of public corporations to Arabize their signs before April 1, 1958. As can be seen in Article 1, while Arabic is again confirmed as the national language, there are still provisions for the use of additional languages on signs. Article 2 tackles the issue of font size and again confirms the privileged status of the Arabic language in terms of hierarchy on street signs vis-à-vis foreign languages. Articles 3 and 4 provide additional information about the conditions under which signs should be produced/written whereby it is indicated that only authorized calligraphers are allowed to design and make these signs.

Table 4-5. Languages Used on Signs in Tunisia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>August 6th 1957</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domain</td>
<td>Posting (Pertaining to the Language Used in Posting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Decree of the Municipality of Tunis – Article 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 2</td>
<td>Article 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>All commercial, industrial, or other categories of signs, which are in the public space, must be written in the Arabic language. These signs can however still be bilingual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The size of the Arabic letters in these signs must be at least equal to that of the size of the letters of the foreign language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The specimen written in Arabic must be approved by a calligrapher recognized by the municipal administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A municipal agreement must obligatorily precede the realization of all the signs in compliance with the regulation of the organization of the streets of the city in force.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Linguistic Landscape Data**

**Sign Counts**

The visual data consists of 477 pictures from all areas surveyed (Table 4-6). Figure 4-1 presents the data in percentage by area.
Table 4-6. Sign Counts by Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunis (Old City – Medina)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Marsa (Suburb)</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>477</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4-1. Proportion of Signs by Area.

**Linguistic Content**

Table 4-7 presents the distribution of linguistic representation on street signs in the cities of Tunis (old and new areas) and La Marsa. For each area examined the table presents the number of signs in a given language. The percentages presented are in relation to the total for each city (not the total for each language). The number of languages encountered was 136 for Tunis (Old City), 257 for Tunis (New City), and 713 for La Marsa.
Table 4-7. Languages Displayed on Billboards and Shop Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Examined Areas</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA)</td>
<td>67 49%</td>
<td>93 36.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (TA)</td>
<td>2 1.47%</td>
<td>15 5.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>49 36.03%</td>
<td>92 35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>11 8.09%</td>
<td>43 16.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1 0.74%</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>1 0.74%</td>
<td>9 3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>1 0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>3 1.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1 0.74%</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idiosyncrasies</td>
<td>4 2.94%</td>
<td>1 0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136 100%</td>
<td>257 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4 present the distribution of languages for each city. For the Old City area, it can be noticed that Arabic (MSA) is the most present language on street signs (49%) thus confirming the legal provisions which endorse Arabic as the state language. MSA is followed in order of importance by French (36.03%), English (8.09%), and Tunisian Arabic (1.47%) which does not achieve high representation despite being the local vernacular.
Figure 4-2. Languages Displayed on Billboards and Shop Signs in Tunis (Old City).

With respect to the language representation on street signs in the New City of Tunis, MSA achieves again the highest levels of representation (36.19%). The presence of French in the New City (35.8%) is even more marked than in the Old City and achieves levels of representations which nearly equal the levels of MSA. English is also highly present (16.73%) and achieves nearly three times more representation when compared to the low level of TA representation (5.84%). Other languages such as Italian (3.5%) and Hebrew (1.17%) are more present in the linguistic landscape of the New City of Tunis.
Figure 4-3. Languages Displayed on Billboards and Shop Signs in Tunis (New City).

In La Marsa, French is the most represented language on street signs (40.11%), which marks a departure from the policy provisions on the languages of posting. This fact might be explained by the presence of French primary and secondary schools, as well as to the presence of the residence of the French ambassador in this town. Both the schools and the ambassador’s residence employ an important population of French expatriates. These factors may be used to explain the higher representation of French in La Marsa. MSA is thus ‘dethroned’ from its privileged position and ranks second in representation (37.45%). English is again in third position (12.62%) and ranks much higher than TA (4.49%). This may be explained because TA is a dialect and is used mainly for verbal communication, thus using TA on signs is a relatively new trend and has rarely been used in the past particularly for written messages. English, on the other hand, is very popular in advertising as it is used for purposes of commodification and connotes modernity, and dynamism. Additional languages such as Italian (2.66%) and Spanish (1.26%) achieve decent levels of representation.
The following table lists the ranking of languages by frequency of occurrence for each area investigated. One (1) corresponds to the most frequent language while seven (7) represents the least frequent language. While Arabic (MSA) was the most represented language on the street signs of Tunis (Old and New City), it was overshadowed by French, which was the most frequent language on street signs in La Marsa. As a result, Tunis (both Old and New city) are more likely to abide by the legislative provisions on linguistic representation than La Marsa. This may be explained due to the role of Tunis as the administrative and political centre of the country and to its role in gate keeping the linguistic identity of the country. In all three areas examined, English ranked third, coming only after Arabic (MSA) and French, which indexes a desire to display this language more in the linguistic landscape; however, it was more frequently represented than the local Arabic vernacular (TA), a language which is only starting to be used on advertisements.
Table 4-8. Order of Languages in Tunis and La Marsa by Frequency of Occurrence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arabic (MSA)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>Arabic (MSA)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>36.32</td>
<td>40.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Arabic (MSA)</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.12</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arabic (TA)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>Arabic (TA)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Arabic (TA)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Tunis (New City)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>709</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to linguistic content, instances of language idiosyncrasies perceived on signs were of different types. For instance, they included signs where the distinction between MSA and TA was not clear. One example includes proper names such as دار بالحاج or بوزكري وليد (House of Belhadj) (Figure 4-5). In such cases, the sign was counted as both MSA and TA.
Other examples of less common or innovative linguistic instances, which have also been counted as idiosyncrasies, include acronyms (ATEM) (Figure 4-6) semantically opaque graffiti expressions (Lab – where there is no presence of a lab in the neighbourhood) (Figure 4-7), spelling mistakes (Fisch instead of Fish) (Figure 4-8), use of fake language forms (imitation of Japanese characters) (Figure 4-9), and expressions which either do not belong to any particular language or can be instances of more than one language (taxiphone, publitel) (Figure 4-10, and 4-11). It is important to mention that even though idiosyncratic uses of the language were included in the quantification, they are not part of the interest of this study and are just referred to for informative reasons.
Figure 4-6. Example of opaque acronym.

Figure 4-7. Example of opaque graffiti.
Figure 4-8. Spelling mistake (Fisch).

Figure 4-9. Example of fake Japanese.
In addition to the multilingualism observed in the two cities through the languages represented in the linguistic landscape, the use of multiple scripts or multiscritpalism as well as digraphia - the use of different scripts for the same language (Coulmas, 2003) - a crucial indicator of linguistic diversity on street signs (Coulmas, 1996 cited in Asfaha et al. 2008), was another
dimension of linguistic diversity that this study addressed. The term ‘script’ refers to the ‘graphic
form of the units of a writing system’ (Coulmas 2003, p. 35-36). The following table and figures
present the distribution of scripts in the two cities investigated. Arabic script is the most
represented script in the Old City of Tunis (47.4%) and comes before Roman script (38.31%),
which confirms the linguistic provisions advocating the use of MSA on street signs. However in
both the New City and the Suburb, Roman script achieves the highest level of representation on
street signs (45.55% in the New City, 46.97% in La Marsa) coming even before Arabic (34.59%
in the New City, 35.32% in La Marsa). This observation may be explained by the combined
numbers of languages which use Roman script (i.e. French, English, Italian, Spanish, and
German) vis-à-vis MSA and TA which are the only languages which use the Arabic script, but
also due to the important use of French in the New City and in La Marsa as explained previously.

Table 4-9. Scripts Displayed on Billboards and Shop Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripts</th>
<th>Examen Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tunis (Old City)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>73 47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>59 38.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Transliteration of Roman</td>
<td>2 1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Transliteration of Arabic</td>
<td>20 12.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Transliteration of Hebrew</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake Japanese</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Transliteration of Japanese</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Transliteration of Japanese</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>154 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Old City of Tunis, four different levels of script representation can be noticed.
Arabic is the most important script found in this environment (47.4%), this fact is in conformity
with the national policy supporting Arabic as the language of the state. The second script in order of importance is Roman (38.31%) and groups languages such as French, English, and Italian. Following this script, instances of Roman transliteration of Arabic were noted (Figure 4-17) (12.99%), followed by Arabic Transliteration of Roman (Figure 4-16) (1.3%).

![Figure 4-12. Scripts Displayed on Billboards and Shop Signs in Tunis (Old City).](image)

In the New City of Tunis, there were five different levels of script representation found. Arabic (34.59%) was this time second to Roman script (45.55%) in terms of representation. However, since Roman is used to write all the foreign languages on street signs (French, English, Italian, Spanish, etc.) this fact could account for the importance of this script vis-à-vis Arabic. Similarly to the Old City, transliterations were also present in the linguistic landscape of the New City with samples of Arabic Transliteration of Roman (13.01%), and Roman transliteration of Arabic (5.82%). Finally instances of Hebrew script were noted as well (1.03%)\(^{21}\).

\(^{21}\) The use of transliteration particularly in Arabic and Roman script will be discussed in the next chapter. Findings pertaining to Hebrew script do not form part of the interests of this study and are mentioned here for informative purposes.
With respect to La Marsa, several degrees of script representation were collected. In the same way as in the New City, Arabic (35.32%) was also ranked second after Roman script (46.97%). In terms of representation, other script options were Arabic Transliteration of Roman (6.31%), and Roman transliteration of Arabic (10.68%). La Marsa also featured several transliterations of non-roman languages such as Hebrew, Chinese, and Japanese. The idiosyncratic use of fake Japanese script was also noted in La Marsa. Hebrew script was also found in La Marsa, although to a lesser extent than in the New City (0.12%).
Street signage in Tunisia consists of several combinations of languages and scripts where the use of Roman or Arabic script does not automatically equate with Indo-European or Arabic languages respectively. More specifically, Arabic script is often used to transliterate French or English and Roman script on the other hand may be used to transliterate Arabic words and
expressions. These instances of transpositions and transliterations involve the use of the script of one language to spell out a word or expression that phonetically belongs to another language. An illustration of this observed linguistic practice is shown in Image 8 for Type 1 transliteration (Arabic script and Roman language phonetic characteristics) and in Image 9 for Type 2 transliteration (Roman script and Arabic language phonetic characteristics).

Figure 4-16. Arabic Transliteration of Roman.
Figure 4-17. Roman Translation of Arabic (the Arabic word means ‘eternal’ or ‘infinite’).

The phenomenon of transliteration on street signs, which has not been addressed for Arabic script in LL research, has nonetheless been mentioned in a few LL studies (Huebner, 2006; Curtin; 2009; Rosenbaum et al., 1977). Examples of script transliterations are presented in Table 4-10.

Table 4-10. Examples of Transliteration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Transliteration</th>
<th>Original Term</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type 1: Arabic Transliteration of Foreign Expressions</td>
<td>Milano</td>
<td>ميلانو</td>
<td>Milan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maquillage</td>
<td>الماكياج</td>
<td>Make-Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electro</td>
<td>الكترو</td>
<td>Electric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type 2: Roman Transliteration of Arabic</td>
<td>فرات</td>
<td>Fourat</td>
<td>Euphrates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>الياسا</td>
<td>Le Pacha</td>
<td>The Pasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>المرحية</td>
<td>Marhaba</td>
<td>Hello/Welcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another interesting finding observed in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa was the combination of different languages on the same sign. The following table presents these linguistic mixes for each city, showing the number of instances per combination. Percentages are relative to instances of combinations in each city, not to the total number of signs. In the old city
of Tunis, the most frequent combination involved the bilingual pair Arabic (MSA) + French, followed by the bilingual pair Arabic (MSA) + English. Following this combination, the most frequent languages combined on a sign were the trilingual combinations of Arabic (MSA) + French + English followed by Arabic (TA) + French. In the new city of Tunis, the most frequent combination involved the bilingual pair Arabic (MSA) + French, followed by combinations of three languages: Arabic (MSA) + Arabic (TA) + French or Arabic (MSA) + French + English. With respect to the city of La Marsa, Arabic (MSA) + French was also the most recurring language combination. Other important linguistic combinations involved Arabic (MSA) + English, French + English, and the trilingual set Arabic (MSA) + French + English.

Table 4-11. Combinations of Languages on the Signs of Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Combinations</th>
<th>Tunis (Old City)</th>
<th>Tunis (New City)</th>
<th>La Marsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + French</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + Arabic (TA) + French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + French + English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French + English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + French + Italian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (TA) + French + English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian + English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (TA) + English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + French + English + German + Italian + Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (TA) + Italian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French + Italian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French + Hebrew</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + Arabic (TA)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + French + Spanish</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (TA) + French + English + Italian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French + English + Italian + Spanish</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA) + French + Latin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-12 lists the signs where only one language was represented. In the same way as in Table 4-11, the percentage of signs is relative to the instances of monolingual signs in each city, not to the total number of signs collected. In Tunis (Old City), Arabic (MSA) was the language most represented monolingually and had the largest representation in this area of the city (73.53%) compared to the new city (35.08%). For both the new city and La Marsa, monolingual French was the language most represented on street signs and preceded Arabic (MSA) in terms of frequency of occurrence. As will be explained in the subsequent chapter, these numbers may indicate that Arabic is more represented in more traditional sectors of the city of Tunis whereas French is more present in the New City and the Suburb due to a larger presence of touristic activity, expatriate residences, embassies, and foreign schools.

Table 4-12. Monolingual Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Tunis (Old City)</th>
<th>Tunis (New City)</th>
<th>La Marsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>43.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisian Arabic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>192</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Status of Signs

Table 4-13 represents the instances of public and private signs for the cities of Tunis and La Marsa. The distinction between public and private signs is straightforward and relatively noticeable. In this respect, while public signs are monochrome, are designed using the same dark blue colour, and contain letters which are printed, private signs have a larger degree of variability, contain usually more than one colour, and are often manually designed. The percentages shown are in relation to the total number of signs collected in this study.

Table 4-13. Proportion of Public versus Private Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Sign</th>
<th>Tunis (Old City)</th>
<th>Tunis (New City)</th>
<th>La Marsa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occurrences %</td>
<td>Occurrences %</td>
<td>Occurrences %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>88.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The languages featured on both public and private signs for the three areas investigated are presented in the following table and diagrams. Percentages are relative to the instances of the particular languages within each sign category (private/public), not to the total number of signs.
Table 4-14. Languages Contained on Public and Private Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Public Signs (n = 139)</th>
<th>Private Signs (n = 1038)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tunis (Old City) (n = 16)</td>
<td>Tunis (New City) (n = 34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (MSA)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic (TA)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 4-18 to 4-20 offer an illustration of the content of private signs in the Old and New City of Tunis, as well as in La Marsa. In order to obtain these results, all the content of signs was listed by domain and content. Following this categories were developed in order to group the domains in broader groupings.

In the Old City (Figure 4-18) it can be noted that MSA is exclusively found in the domains of Food Products, and predominant with respect to Services, and Clothing, Beauty Products, and Leisure. French on the other hand had a higher representation in the domains of Restaurants and Cafés, as well as in Housewares. It is not clear why these trends are observed, however the use of MSA on Food Products, Services, and Clothing, may be explained because of the capacity of this language to be understood by a larger section of the Tunisian population.

With respect to the use of French in Restaurants and Cafés on the other hand, these locations may be frequented by a more privileged population who have more access to this language.
Figure 4-18. Languages Contained on Private Signs by Content in Tunis (Old City).

In the New City (Figure 4-19) MSA has a higher representation in Advertisements and Private Institutes. French on the other hand is found more on signs featuring Services and Food Products, and in the same way as in the Old City, Restaurants and Cafés.

Figure 4-19. Languages Contained on Private Signs by Content in Tunis (New City).
With respect to La Marsa (Figure 4-20) MSA is found more predominantly on Graffiti, Residential signs and, in the same way as in the New City, on Private Institutes. The French language was more frequently featured on signs from Shopping Centers and Retail Stores, Clothing, Beauty Products, and Leisure and again on signs of Restaurants and Cafés. When compared to the Old and New areas of Tunis, La Marsa had Advertisement signs where English was the majority language.

![Languages Contained on Private Signs by Content in La Marsa (Suburb).](image)

Tables 4-15 to 4-17 present the distribution of data with respect to Size of Font, Order of Languages, and Translation of Content on Public and Private Multilingual Signs in Tunis (Old and New areas), and La Marsa.

In Table 4-15, the font sizes for different languages are compared in all three environments. In this light, it is noted that across all three environments and in both public and private signs a high frequency of the linguistic landscape favors an equal representation of font size for the majority language (i.e. MSA) and the foreign language. This observation thus confirming the state provisions mentioned in the law pertaining to the posting of languages (Table
The use of a larger font size to represent MSA was also consistently found in Tunis (Old and New areas) and La Marsa with a higher frequency for public signs. Finally, in La Marsa, it was revealed that a larger font size used for foreign languages was more likely to be found on private than in public signs.

Table 4-15. Size of Font on Multilingual Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Tunis (Old City)</th>
<th>Tunis (New City)</th>
<th>La Marsa (Suburb)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Sign</td>
<td>Private Sign</td>
<td>Public Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occurrences</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Occurrences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the same</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigger</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4-16, the hierarchical ordering of languages on signs revealed that in all three domains of investigation, MSA was featured first in both private and public signs with a higher degree of frequency. This fact is in line with the official linguistic policy of the country favoring Arabic as a state language.

Table 4-16. Order of Languages on Multilingual Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Font</th>
<th>Tunis (Old City)</th>
<th>Tunis (New City)</th>
<th>La Marsa (Suburb)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Sign</td>
<td>Private Sign</td>
<td>Public Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occurrences</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Occurrences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic First</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign First</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-17 presents the ratio of translation in the three environments studied. The majority of signs in the Old City have no translation provided. The New City and La Marsa, on the other hand, offer similar patterns whereby there is a higher degree of word-to-word translation on public signs and a higher frequency of non-translated private signs. While it is not clear why there is a higher frequency of non-translated signs in Old Tunis, the findings pertaining to New
Tunis and La Marsa may be explained due to a variety of factors. The larger percentages of translated public signs in these environments may come from the fact that there is a higher non-local population or tourists and expatriates in these areas, and there is hence a higher need to provide these populations access to geographical locations, attractions, and services. The lack of translation of private signs also follows the same rationale but in this case the lack of translation provided is due to the fact that private signs are already written using more foreign languages than MSA (Table 4-12). This use of foreign languages without translation serves the non-local population and is assumed to be comprehended by the local population as well.

Table 4-17: Translation of Content on Signs in Tunis and La Marsa.

| Translation            | Tunis (Old City) | | Tunis (New City) | | La Marsa (Suburb) |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                        | Public Sign      | Private Sign     | Public Sign      | Private Sign     | Public Sign      | Private Sign     |
|                        | Occurrences %    | Occurrences %    | Occurrences %    | Occurrences %    | Occurrences %    | Occurrences %    |
| Word to word           | 22.2             | 18               | 22.2             | 11               | 21.6             | 226              |
| No Translation         | 53.1             | 43               | 31.2             | 79               | 63.2             | 226              |
| Partial translation    | 24.7             | 20               | 15.2             | 19               | 15.2             | 45               |
| Total                  | 100              | 81               | 100              | 125              | 100              | 389              |

Attitudinal Data

The third category of data was collected using a survey questionnaire and aimed at eliciting the language attitudes of a selected group of the Tunisian population. The sample comprised 12 respondents (5 Male, 7 Female) selected using convenient sampling. Although there were both male and female genders, as well as different age groups in the sample, neither gender nor age were variables of interest. All informants were Tunisian nationals, residing either in the capital city or in the suburban towns neighboring Tunis; they were all fluent in at least three languages. The respondents’ levels of education varied from secondary education to doctoral studies. Following the administration of the survey, careful procedures were taken to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of subjects.
The questions were divided into two respective categories (see Appendix C). A first set comprised specific questions about the languages represented on the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa. These questions not only asked informants about the linguistic content of signs but also about the visual content, ordering of languages, target audience, and appropriateness of languages on these signs. The second set of questions elicited more general attitudes about languages familiar to the respondents. The presentation of attitudinal results will follow this logical division order.

**General Attitudes about Languages in Tunisia**

Figure 4-21 represents a pie chart with the languages deemed most important for Tunisians. The percentages presented below are taken in view of the attitudes of interviewed local respondents and thus differ from the data pertaining to street signs presented previously. These attitudes were formulated by the informants when they were asked to classify a list of foreign languages being used in Tunisia. The question asked respondents to classify these foreign languages according to the importance they had for Tunisians in general. A considerable majority of respondents evaluated French (43%) as the most important foreign language for Tunisians to know. This language was followed by English (25%).
When asked to classify languages from most to least important with respect to their personal life (Figure 4-22), informants evaluations were more divided, however a larger majority listed TA and MSA followed by French and English, and other linguistic combinations. Both findings from Figure 4-21 and 4-22 will be theorized in the next chapter.
Specific Attitudes about Linguistic Content of Street Signs

Respondents were provided with a picture of a public sign written in MSA and were asked to evaluate whether this language was appropriate in this particular context. Figure 4-23 reveals that an absolute majority (100%) identified MSA as the appropriate language in this context and this finding provided evidence of the bottom-up ratification of this language as the language of public signs and official posting situations.

![Figure 4-23. Appropriateness of Modern Standard Arabic on Public Signs.](image)

Following this, informants were asked to give their impressions about the connotations conveyed by the use of MSA on signs. In other words, they were asked to provide their perceptions about the implications of MSA and what it symbolized for them when it was represented on signs. As can be shown on Figure 4-24, a combined 84% deemed MSA as conveying official status, and as symbolizing culture and identity. Only 8% of respondents associated MSA with modernity, while another 8% judged MSA as being a restrictive language used only in elite or educated circles. Bearing on these percentages, it seems thus clear that people’s attitudes are in conformity with the pronounced language policy of the country which
lists MSA as the language of the state. These attitudes thus confirm the language policy of the
country where MSA is a symbol of officiality, culture, and identity. Yet a small percentage of the
respondents list MSA as a language indexing modernity or as restrictive. This finding may show a
tendency towards the adoption of other languages as indicators of modernity.

Figure 4-24. Connotations of the Use of Modern Standard Arabic in the Linguistic Landscape of
Tunisia.

TA was the next language which informants were asked to react to (Figure 4-25). To this
effect, when asked about the appropriateness of TA on a private sign, subjects’ attitudes revealed
less eagerness to see this language represented on signs. In this respect, 25% reported TA as not
important, while 42% judged it as relatively important. While 25% of respondents deemed TA as
important, only 8% valued this language as necessary.
Figure 4-25. Appropriateness of Tunisian Arabic on Private Signs.

More specifically, when asked to provide more details about the implications of TA on signs and what this language symbolically conveyed to them (Figure 4-26), informants overwhelmingly reported that TA conveyed local culture/identity and proximity to people (75%), while (25%) perceived TA as used to index all social class indiscriminately and was used to address all categories of the Tunisian population.

Figure 4-26. Connotations of the Use of Tunisian Arabic in the Linguistic Landscape of Tunisia.
In order to examine attitudes to foreign languages in general, respondents were asked to evaluate the degree of importance and appropriateness of non-Arabic languages on private signs. In this light, the attitudes presented in Figure 4-27 revealed that although only 8% deemed foreign languages as a necessity, a combined 75% judged that foreign languages were relatively important to important. It is important to note that 17% evaluated the use of foreign languages on private signs as confusing and/or inappropriate.

![Figure 4-27. Appropriateness of Non-Official Languages on Private Signs.](image)

When asked specifically to react on the representation of French in the linguistic landscape, and particularly on private signs (Figure 4-28), informants’ attitudes were distributed in rather opposite poles. A majority of 50% reacting by judging French as appropriate while a sizeable 33% deemed this language inappropriate to use on private signs. Nonetheless, a group of respondents (17%) did not take a particular position and replied neutrally.
Figure 4-28. Appropriateness of French on Private Signs.

In particular, when eliciting attitudes pertaining to the symbolic implications of the use of French in the linguistic landscape (Figure 4-29), informants replied in a variety of ways. In this regard, while 59% of subjects deemed French a prestige language thus correlating with the 50% from the previous set of attitudes, the same frequency of respondents who deemed French as inappropriate (33%) deplored the role of French as maintaining a status quo of dependence on a previous colonial language. A set of informants judged French neutrally as well (8%) by stating that it was Tunisia’s second language.
When reacting to the use of English in the linguistic landscape and the symbolic implications of its use on private signs (Figure 4-30), respondents’ attitudes were less radical and their answers had a variety of layers when compared to the same question asked for the French language (Figure 4-29). In this light, 33% of subjects answered that English had no particular meaning which may be interpreted due to the relatively frequent history of this language in Tunisia. Another set of informants (17%) evaluated this language as conveying high quality to the product hence hinting to the commodifying role of this language in commercial signs. This role of English in advertisements was also revealed in the attitudes of 17% of respondents who saw this language as used merely within the context of advertisements and not as a tool for communication. Another 17% deemed the use of English as a symbol of modernity, while 8% saw English as an eye catcher. Finally only 8% of informants saw this language as a form of dependency on other languages. It is important to note that this attitude is less marked than in the case of French where 33% of respondents saw this language as a symbol of status-quo (Figure 4-29).
Finally, in order to understand the impact and repercussion of the use of foreign languages in the linguistic landscape, respondents were asked to evaluate whether the use of foreign languages on signs was targeted towards the local or foreign population. The majority of informants (34%) perceived the use of foreign languages as geared to address the local population only, while 25% agreed that the locals were the primary audience and that foreigners were also targeted. The same ratio of respondents deemed the use of foreign languages as targeting foreigners first then locals. Finally only 8% of the interviewed informants judged the use of foreign languages as addressing foreigners only while another 8% deemed that both locals and foreigners were the target audience of street signs using foreign languages.
Figure 4-31. Audience Targeted by Non-Official Languages.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented the results of the legislative data and numerical analysis of linguistic landscape items, and people’s attitudes. Both the general provisions for language regulation as well as the legislation pertaining to street signage explicitly establish Arabic as the official language of the Republic of Tunisia. In addition, policy pertaining to language posting makes provision for the inclusion of additional languages to supplement the national language, although no clear mention of which languages are to be used. With respect to the representation of languages in the linguistic landscape, Arabic (MSA) is the most present language on street signs in the Old City, which confirms the legal provisions endorsing Arabic as the state language. French is the second language in terms of representation particularly in the New City and in the Suburb, which marks a departure from the policy provisions on the languages of posting. It is hypothesized that the use of French is explained by the more marked presence of a population of expatriates and to the availability of educational institutions, embassies, and French investors and businessmen. In addition, English is starting to affirm itself as a foreign language in the three
environments systematically ranking higher than the local dialect TA in the three environments examined. English is thus becoming more popular due to its use in advertising and its role for purposes of commodification. On the other hand, the timid use of TA for written communication is fairly recent due to the typical association of this dialect with oral communication. The data from people’s perceptions towards language on street signs again confirmed the language policy of the country where MSA is a symbol of officiality, culture, and identity. When asked specifically to react on the representation of French in the linguistic landscape, respondents’ attitudes were distributed in rather opposite poles. A majority reacted by judging French as appropriate while a sizeable section of informants deemed this language inappropriate to use on private signs. These divided trends show that respondents have either a perception of French as a prestige language or deplored the role of this language as maintaining a status quo of dependence on a previous colonial language. When reacting to the use of English in the linguistic landscape informants’ attitudes were less radicalized and compartmentalized thus indexing relatively moderate opinions. In the next chapter, these results will be discussed in more details and complicated in the subsequent chapter. In this regard, I will discuss the implications of these results and provide a deeper qualitative analysis of the research findings, as well as offer the findings’ implications for LL studies.
Chapter 5

Data Interpretation and Implications

Introduction

This chapter triangulates the results which have been presented in the previous chapter in relation to the different sources of data. The interpretation of these findings is grouped according to the themes of analysis identified in the data. In this respect, this chapter does not interpret results by itemized order, but treat the themes holistically and according to patterns which have emerged throughout the analysis of the findings. Seven categories have been used to interpret the data from language policy, the linguistic landscape, and people’s perception. These categories pertain to the linguistic content of signs, the status of signs, as well as to the characteristics relating to script, font, order of languages, as well as transliteration. It is important to note that while the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa displays a multitude of languages, the discussion here will be limited to the most salient languages presented in the data. Hence, the discussion and interpretation of the findings will be limited to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Tunisian Arabic (TA), French, and English. Following the discussion of the different patterns observed, I will then explain how policy documents, linguistic signs, and people’s attitudes represent different but nonetheless complementary understandings of the interaction between multilingualism and language policy in Tunisia. Finally, I will examine the implications of how top-down advocated language policies can benefit from bottom-up expressions of multilingualism and discourses of linguistic diversity, and by explaining how different manifestations of linguistic representation can contribute to a better understanding of the language situation in Tunisia.
The next section discusses findings pertaining to Arabic. Arabic is here used to refer to the literary Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) rather than the vernacular Tunisian Arabic (TA). TA will be discussed in more detail subsequently.

**Pattern I: MSA - The Official Language of the State**

The state-sponsored policy of Arabization, which was introduced in Tunisia following the country’s independence from France in 1956, provides a rationale for the advocacy of Arabic as the national language of the state. The adoption of Arabic as the main official language is explained because of the strong tie that exists between Islam, the main religion in Tunisia, and the Arabic language. This particular use of the Arabic language for purposes of identification and affiliation with Islam and the Arab world is indicated in the preface of the Tunisian constitution. In addition to this initiative, the government has issued a number of laws to implement this project and put it in actual practice. The constitution of the Republic of Tunisia, for instance, is one of the authoritative documents which exemplify the state’s implementation of Arabization.

More specifically, in the foundational provisions of the constitution (Article I, Chapter 1), and following descriptive statements which characterize the country’s sovereignty, political system, and religion, a clause proclaims Arabic as the language of the country (emphasis added).

‘Tunisia is a free, independent and sovereign state. Its religion is Islam, its language is Arabic and its type of government is the Republic’ (p. 4)

It is important to mention that all policy documents ascribe a *de facto* official status to MSA not TA. While it is explicitly stated that Arabic is the official language in the first chapter of the Tunisian constitution, it is not clear which variant of Arabic is referred to. It could be hypothesized that authorities strategically aimed at leaving ambiguous the reference to Arabic. Because there is no further explanation as to whether ‘Arabic’ refers to MSA or TA, there is an
implicit common agreement between policy designers and Tunisian citizens that ‘Arabic’ refers to MSA rather than TA. In this respect, even though official policy documents do not explicitly state which version is the legitimate one (see Daoud, 1991 p. 10) identifying that ‘official’ Arabic refers exclusively to MSA is understood by everyone in Tunisia. This assumption derives from the fact that MSA is the higher variety (H), whereas TA is the lower one (L). MSA thus automatically qualifies for the official standing of ‘language of the state’ as evidenced by the constitution (Table 4-1), and performs additional functions as it is also the language of legislation (Table 4-2), administration (Table 4-3), education (Table 4-4), and, more relevant to this study, the language used in posting (Table 4-5). The privileged position of MSA vis-à-vis TA is not only subsumed under the state-sponsored language legislation, but is also apparent in the linguistic landscape, particularly on public signs where it is placed first in hierarchical order on signs (Figure 4-32).

Figure 4-32. Public sign displaying Modern Standard Arabic first followed by a French translation.

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22 The categories H and L respectively refer to High and Low varieties in a diglossic situation (Ferguson, 1959).
When examining the linguistic landscape, the higher status of MSA is confirmed in terms of levels of linguistic representation (Table 4-7). In the city of Tunis particularly, MSA is the most represented language in the linguistic landscape with 49% of signs in old Tunis and 36.19% in the new city. In addition, as the ranking of languages in terms of frequency of occurrences (Table 4-8), MSA is again the most represented language in both old (50.75%) and new (36.32%) areas of the capital city.

These observations are corroborated by data from Tunisian respondents as well. In this regard, questionnaire data (Figure 4-23) revealed that the overwhelming majority of respondents stated that having MSA on public signs was appropriate, thereby confirming findings from policy and street signs. Moreover, when asked about the connotations of MSA (Figure 4-24), a substantial majority (84%) referred to this language as means of conveying official status and as a badge of cultural identity, while only 8% of informants did not feel a sense of closeness to MSA, qualifying it as a language restricted to an educated population.

With respect to the specific legislation pertaining to languages used in posting, MSA is again listed as the mandatory language (Table 4-5). This regulation which is in line with the foundational provisions stipulated in the constitution contains additional provisos which, in contrast to the constitutional clause, provides concessions for the posting of foreign languages on signs. In fact, as can be seen in Articles 1 and 2 of the decree of the municipality of Tunis dated from August 6th 1957, the state legislature allows foreign languages to be represented on governmental signs. More specifically, although these official documents do not mention a particular foreign language adopted by the state, there are two indications which reveal that the Tunisian authorities advocate leeway for foreign languages in the linguistic landscape. The first indication, listed in Article 2, mentions that it is possible for Arabic and a foreign language to be written on the same signs using a font of similar size as long as the content in Arabic is not smaller than the content in the foreign language. The second indication of the state’s flexibility
with foreign languages in the linguistic landscape is that there is no provision which mentions that Arabic must be always first in the hierarchical arrangement of the sign (i.e. order and placement of languages). Public signs (Figure 4-32) provide evidence that policies pertaining to posting are respected, and that MSA is maintaining a privileged status coming always first in the top to bottom hierarchy.

Official administrative documents, public signs, and people’s attitudes validate, in unison, the privileged status conferred to MSA as the language of the state. However, a closer look at the data reveals some caveats to these preliminary observations. While MSA is the language most represented in both the old and new areas of the city of Tunis (Table 4-7), with respect to the suburban town of La Marsa however, MSA (37.45%) loses its dominion to French (40.11%) which ranks as one of the highest languages in terms of representation in the linguistic landscape of La Marsa. Based on this observation, French seems to be gaining more representation in the suburban town of La Marsa than in the capital city of Tunis. This fact might be explained due to Tunis’ important role as the administrative, political, cultural, and historical centre of Tunisia, where the constitutional clause emphasizing the need to preserve an Arab/Islamic identity, is more expressed than in the more geographically peripheral areas. In addition, the saliency of French in the linguistic landscape vis-à-vis other languages may be due to the large population of French expatriates residing in La Marsa, many of whom are employed by the primary (École Paul Verlaine), and secondary (Lycée Gustave Flaubert) schools of this town. In addition, the French ambassador’s residence is also located in La Marsa.

When looking at the legislation pertaining to street signs (Table 4-5), Article 1 states that MSA must be present on all signs and that a foreign language may be added as well. This particular legislation hence precludes the existence of signs where MSA would not be visible altogether and where only a foreign language would be present. This is nonetheless observed in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa as evidenced by Table 4-12. More specifically,
monolingual signs in French, English, Italian, Hebrew, and Spanish are encountered in the linguistic landscape. In addition, as shown on Table 4-14, MSA which is argued to be the language of the state barely achieves majority representation in the new area of Tunis and is overshadowed by French in La Marsa where French is the language most represented in the linguistic landscape. These examples clearly demonstrate a violation of the policy provisions pertaining to the languages of representation. Some illustrations of this discrepancy between the legislation on posting and the linguistic landscape are shown in the following images (Figures 4-33, 4-34, and 4-35).

![Image](image_url)

Figure 4-33. Sign using French and English.
Taken together these trends with respect to MSA show a preliminary picture of how policy about languages can mis-represent the linguistic situation on the ground. The discrepancy observed between policy and practice in this particular context confirms previous findings from the LL literature (Barni & Bagna, 2006; Backhaus, 2007; Shohamy, 2006; Lanza &
Bearing on these inconsistencies, it can be said that the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa are indicative of linguistic adjustments. These linguistic adjustments are the outcome of a policy of conciliation which aims at affirming the national character/identity through the advocacy of MSA but at the same time makes tentative provisions for foreign languages in official documents. In addition, these adjustments are also experienced in light of people’s attitudes, and through the vocalized resistance towards French as the language indexing colonialism and cultural hegemony. Bearing on this, the Tunisian linguistic landscape reflects similarly to what has been shown in Ramamoorthy (2002) and Lanza & Woldemariam (2009), a context of flexible concessions, conciliations and adjustments. In the next section, I present data pertaining to Tunisian Arabic.

**Pattern II: TA - The Stigmatized Language of Identification**

The Tunisian Arabic spoken dialect has no official status and is not mentioned in any explicit policy document. From this perspective, it is the L variety in terms of Ferguson’s (Ferguson, 1959) classification of languages in diglossic settings. In spite of this, it is the mother tongue of all Tunisians, the language used at home, and in daily transaction and interactions in society. In this light, the role of the vernacular TA can be said to have a dual status in Tunisia. In terms of street representation, it is relatively invisible when compared to MSA, French, and English in both Tunis and La Marsa (Table 4-7). It also only constitutes one third of the possible linguistic combinations on street signs lagging behind MSA, French, English, and even Italian (Table 4-11). However, considering that it is mostly a spoken/oral language and does not as such have an established written tradition, it can be said to have gained more visibility in recent years. When questioned about the importance of TA on street signs, 8% judged it as necessary, 25% of respondents deemed it ‘important’ while 42% stated that it was relatively important. Another 25%
of the surveyed respondents argued that it was not important, thus providing evidence that TA is still believed to be an intimate language rather than a publicly displayed one, and showing that the representation of TA in the linguistic landscape was still not a commonly observed practice. In fact, as TA is predominantly used for oral communication, and bearing on the fact that it does not have a written tradition, this language when encountered on street signs creates more surprise, and incongruity, than approbation. Commenting on this idea, a female respondent noticed:

It’s coming we are not accustomed to them but it’s coming.

It’s coming you know we are not accustomed to them but it’s coming.

Another interesting finding (Table 4-12) is that TA is more present in the linguistic landscape of the Medina and used within particular spaces in Tunis, which suggests that TA is associated with a particular sphere of influence or domain of operability. The co-indexation of particular spaces with particular languages – in this case the use of TA within the confines of the Medina – argues for the context-boundedness of language to space (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). As argued by Hassa (2008) in the context of Morocco, the vernacularization which can be noticed more recently on street signs in Tunis, is used to index a more grassroots character and is intended to achieve a sense of power, impersonality, and locality versus globality. As a Tunisian lady argued:

It speaks to Tunisian people, this is the language of everyday life.

Thus while MSA connotes official status, and evokes the state, TA on the other hand is used as an indicator of solidarity. This point is corroborated by a local respondent who stated:

When people read these signs in TA they feel it is closer to them, everybody can understand the signs both old and young it is not limited in scope because if one were to write it in MSA it is possible that a category of the population might not
understand it. Someone who for example was not formally educated in Arabic. Something else also, we are now using more the vernacular even in text messages, compared to a few years ago where Tunisians would use French, English or MSA which (i.e. MSA) we are not using except in formal education. As a consequence, this is starting to spread on street signs.

Supporting this finding, it was also revealed that a staggering 75% of the respondents interviewed (Figure 4-26) argued that the role of TA in the linguistic landscape indexed local culture/identity and proximity to people.

However, the use of TA as a local language on advertisements, while achieving solidarity, is also used strategically for instrumental purposes by sign designers and – although to a lesser extent than French – is also manipulated by marketing agencies for purposes of commodification (Heller, 2003). This use of TA parallels the use of regional languages as outlined by Hornsby (2008) for particular marketing purposes. This recent trend in the use of TA in the linguistic landscape is not to the liking of every Tunisian who was interviewed. A respondent argued for instance that the use of TA was detrimental to the preservation of MSA, arguing that TA on street signs was contributing to Tunisian’s loss of identity and to the degradation of the Arabic language as well as to its perception as an old fashioned or retro language.

Pattern III: French – Between Symbol of ‘Francophonie’ and Commodity

Notwithstanding the fact that Tunisian policy documents do not officially endorse a second language, the expression ‘foreign language’ used in legislative documentation, presented in Tables 4-1 to 4-5 above, is mainly a cover term for ‘French’ as it is the most dominant second language in Tunisia. This dominance of the French language can be experienced first-hand in the linguistic landscape. In effect, French has a large presence in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa where this language is second to MSA in Tunis but is surprisingly in first position.
in La Marsa as discussed above (Table 4-7). The visibility of French on the street signs of Tunis and La Marsa can be explained based on historical circumstances as Tunisia was formerly a French protectorate from 1881 until independence in 1956. This marked historical presence still has traces in the Tunisian administrative system where French bureaucracy and terminology is used for common transactions, and where French is still used to fulfill specific functions. A young female teacher of English commenting on this issue stated:

We are still related to France, culturally, but also politically and administratively, if for instance you go to some Tunisian administrations you will notice more words from residues of the French colonial administration than terms in Arabic, for example ‘did you prepare the résiliation’?

This prevalent presence of French is also due to the linguistic and cultural imperialism which ‘francophonie’ (Péroncel-Hugoz, 1982) and French cultural models exert on Tunisian local culture (Dhaouadi, 1996).

When looking at the linguistic landscape, the prevalence of French on street signs is visible in public places, especially in translations and transliterations of locations, geographical sites, and place names. These translations and transliterations can be referred to as ‘imperial relics’ (Calvet, 1994) which were designed during the French occupation by the colonial administration. This notion is confirmed by the fact that Arabic-to-French transliterations follow a French morpho-phonology rather than an English one. For instance, the city of سيدى أبو سعید is expressed with a French transliteration ‘Sidi Bou Said’ rather than an English transliteration ‘Sidi Bu Saeed’.

The governmental flexibility concerning the visibility of foreign languages in Tunisia, as evidenced by Articles 1 and 2 of the decree of the municipality of Tunis (Table 4-5), shows that the regulatory role of political institutions encourages the representation of foreign languages in

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23 French administrative term meaning cancellation, rescission, or termination.

24 Translation and transliteration will be discussed further when tackling the issue of script usage in the LL.
general and particularly of Arabic-French bilingualism. This fact provides evidence for the
tolerant stance that authorities have towards non-local languages despite what on the surface
might appear to be a staunch monolingual policy favoring Arabic. As a matter of fact, the
favoring of Arabic-French bilingualism is proved in terms of the combinations of languages on
street signs. In this light, as shown in Table 4-11, MSA and French constitute the most
represented linguistic combination in the respective cities of Tunis (Old City: 66.6%; New City:
58.02%), and La Marsa (65.04%). In addition, French is more represented than MSA in language
combinations as it is included in 18 out of the 28 language combinations observed in Tunis and
La Marsa in comparison with MSA which appears in 17 out of 28 combinations. This high
representation of French vis-à-vis MSA, beyond flouting the constitutional provisions which
advocates the supremacy of MSA as the language of the state, also casts doubt on the willingness
of policy makers to provide a balanced representation of MSA and foreign languages in the
linguistic landscape. In fact, what actually transpires from the linguistic landscape data is that
while Arabic-French bilingualism is desired, the outcome seems to actually favor French
monolingualism to the detriment of MSA. This point was also raised by a 25 year old local
Tunisian national who argued that having French on street signs and particularly in private signs
only favored the frenchification of the public space and is an indicator that the society is
becoming more and more ‘francophone’. In addition, the local respondent argued that the use of
foreign languages such as French, as well as the more recent use of the vernacular Tunisian
Arabic (TA) was contributing to the decline of the Arabic language:

The tendency of having French on street signs will change, because we (i.e. Tunisians) are more open minded, so there will be more languages and a degradation/decay of Arabic, especially now as you notice that in advertisements
we are using more TA than MSA, in addition in our society we have a negative
perception to MSA. If you speak to someone in MSA they will say to you ‘what
is wrong with you, you speak like my grandfather’ so the public opinion is
against MSA.

Thus, judging from the claims made from this respondent, the use of French and MSA
are associated with modernity and backwardness respectively.

This negative perception of MSA may span from the fact that despite the official status of
Arabic on official decrees, the actual implementation of Arabization is not applied as a *conditio
sine qua non* and not sanctioned by ‘repressive’ measures. In fact, as argued by Hamzaoui (1970)
quoted in Daoud (1991, p. 16): “Although the constitution stipulates that the official language is
Arabic, there is not one official text which obliges each administrator to apply it immediately”.
This factor explains the prevalence of the French language in Tunisia as evidenced by the
linguistic landscape and the tug-of-war (Daoud, 1991) which exists between MSA and French in
Tunisia. In fact, when compared to Algeria and Morocco which have gained their independence
from France around the same time, Tunisia can be cited as the least successful in implementing
Arabization (Sirles, 1999). In spite of the fact that Tunisia has a majority of Arabs compared to
these countries which comprise important numbers in Berber population.

While a group of respondents argued that French was taking more space in the linguistic
landscape and were lamenting the low representation of MSA in the linguistic landscape, other
informants explained these phenomena as being caused by socioeconomic factors. In this respect,
when commenting on how one may find deplorable the fact that there were French signs in
Tunisia but no Arabic signs in France, I was told:

شوف، كما قال ابن خلدون "المغلوب يتبع الغالب" أنت tu peux pas ils sont dans une position de force culturellement. ما تحكيش على ال ـ position économique parce que c’est pas le contexte، أو أحاها قادعين أقفو، ـ بالنسبة لنا. Donc c’est même pas une question de force, on le fait pour un besoin. كان جينا قوينين، on aurait pas besoin de mettre le français mais on le fait على خاطر عنا ـ une économie qui dépend du tourisme, donc
voila.
Look, like Ibn Khaldun\textsuperscript{25} said ‘the vanquished follows the vanquisher’ you cannot go to stakeholders in an advanced country and ask them to write a sign in Arabic to please us because they are in a position of power compared to us. They are more advanced than us, culturally. I am not talking about economic superiority because it is not the context here, and we are just copying them. So for us, it is not even a question of power, we do it for a need. Because if we were powerful, we would not need to put French [on signs] but we do it because we have an economy which depends on tourism, so that is why.

Another aspect which can be used to explain the popularity of French in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa is its instrumental use as a language of commodity, particularly on private signs. When comparing the proportion of linguistic representation on private signs (Table 4-14), French was shown to be in second position, and coming only after MSA on private signs in the older areas of Tunis (39.4%). However, French was resolutely the primary language used on private signs in both the modern area of the capital (37.45%) as well as in the suburban town of La Marsa (41.43%). In addition, when surveying the sectors of activity whereby languages were used on private signs (Figures 4-18, 4-19, and 4-20), it was revealed that with respect to the older neighborhoods of Tunis, French was more represented on private signs advertising Housewares, and indicating Restaurants and Cafés. In a similar fashion, in newer areas of Tunis, private signs used more French to indicate Restaurants and Cafés, but also to advertise Food Products, Services, Clothing, Beauty Products, and Leisure items. Finally, in la Marsa, similar findings were observed with respect to the use of French to designate Restaurants and Cafés, but also Clothing, Beauty Products, and Leisure, as well as Shopping Centers and Retail Stores. Synthesizing these findings, the common elements found in both Tunis and La Marsa where French was used on private signs developed either around the consumption of foods and alimentary products (Restaurants and Cafés, Food Products), around clothing and fashion (Clothing, Beauty Products and Leisure), or for the sake of consumption (Housewares, Services, Shopping Centers and Retail Stores). The following snapshots taken from the three areas of data

\textsuperscript{25} Medieval Arab Sociologist born in Tunisia, author of المقدمة (Prolegomena).
collection illustrate this point. Thus it seems that the use of French is instrumental and efficacious in selling these commodities to the Tunisian population.

Figure 4-36. Advertisement in French for women’s clothes ‘Les dix Jours dixit Jusqu’à -30%’ “Ten dixit Days Up to -30%”.

Figure 4-37. Advertisement in French for men’s clothes ‘excellence pour hommes’ “excellence for men”.

The use of French in the linguistic landscape as a commodifying language (Heller, 2003) was clearly confirmed by attitudes collected from the local informants. In this regard, several respondents agreed that when French was used for commercial purposes, it was most often to
'valorize’ the product. An informant argued that the use of French was intended to address the local population, not the foreign one, and that it was a marketing strategy. Myr, a young lady who teaches in a secondary school stated:

Maybe it is to show that French is an important language, and that this product is imported from France, but here this is actually a local product.

While these respondents aimed at explaining the motivations of advertisers and their impact on the audience of sign readers, Myr, who adopted the voice of the Tunisian population stated:

People would think that this product is a good one and that it is manufactured in a nice way.

Finally, Alhan, a suburban 30 year old woman explained how both sign writers and sign readers were engaged in a dynamic discursive relationship when she noted:

The use of French on advertising is not directed for the French population in Tunisia, but for the Tunisian population who speak French (…) they [sign designers] intend to address and attract the elite. This elite wants to feel better when buying a product, [and when seeing this product advertised in French] they feel they are purchasing a product that someone else does not understand (…) It has a psychological effect.

This interesting perspective on the use of French as a commodity in private signs accurately captured the complex web of interdiscursive dialogicality (Bakhtin, 1981) between sign readers and sign designers, as well how interpellation (Althusser, 1970) is achieved by marketing agencies to ‘cajole’ the self-image of consumers via the medium of the French language. Thus, advertising agencies choose to engage in a dialogue with the consumers where they can offer new identities which the local population wishes to adopt. The interface where these identities are marketed and sold via products becomes the actual linguistic landscape. In
addition the devices used to attract the attention of the consumers are by means of interpellating,
calling the attention, and hailing the population which in turn starts to identify with the roles
assigned to them. In these interactional dynamics, French plays the role of the device whereby
consumers are interpellated because this language connotes sophistication and higher social
standards as evidenced by the above respondents’ statements.

While the influence of French still permeates the Tunisian society, there are nevertheless
two major factors which slowly contribute to its disappearance, namely the policy of Arabization
and the growing interest in the English language. An interesting rationale for the spread of
English to the detriment of French is expressed in Battenburg (1997) who, quoting Fishman
(1983, p. 20) states: “English is less loved but more used; French is more loved and less used”.
This idea can be used to describe the situation of French and English in Tunisia. The word “love”
may not be accurate in representing the linguistic dynamics in Tunisia, a more suited word may
be “familiar”. In fact, this issue represents the plight of developing countries such as Tunisia, who
do not have the luxury of using the language that they really want to use, but what is imposed on
them by the actual social/economic/cultural conditions which have a bearing on their immediate
livelihood. In the next section, findings related to the representation of English as well as to local
perceptions towards this language are presented and discussed against the background of top-
down political advocacies.

Pattern IV: English - The ‘Third-Space’ Language

In the same way as French, English does not have official representation in the texts of
law pertaining to posting. More specifically, it is clustered in the label ‘foreign language’ used to
refer to all languages in the linguistic landscape. However, this language, although not as
historically established as French due to its relatively recent advent, is quickly gaining more
terrain in Tunisia. In this respect, the availability of monolingual English signs (Table 4-12) as well as the linguistic frequency counts (Table 4-14) both indicate that although English is less prevalent than French on street signs, it still has more representation than the local vernacular TA, and other languages such as Italian, German, and Spanish. In addition, English on street signs was found to be more prevalent in the new city of Tunis and in La Marsa compared to the older area of the capital (Table 4-12 and Table 4-14).

Sociolinguistic studies which have explored the growing linguistic competition between French and English in Tunisia have talked about a relation of ‘rivalry’, or ‘contest’ (Battenburg, 1997) between French, the colonial language, and English, the language of technology, business, tourism, and globalization. This linguistic rivalry may be explained because former North African protectorates and colonies are slowly distancing themselves from the dependence on the French language and turning to English as a tool for development. The situation is further explained by the inability of French to make inroads into Anglophone territories. What this entails is that, as argued by Battenburg (1997) French in the Maghreb, and more specifically in Tunisia, has not been successful in meeting the new challenges set forth by the English language. From a historical standpoint, with the advent of the 1980’s, Tunisian politicians, government officials, and also journalists started to advocate that the policy of Arabization should be accompanied with an emphasis on the teaching and use of the English language in more domains and with more commitment than the interest manifested in French. This plain desire to bolster English was sometimes the subject of polemical statements such as the one delivered by the former Minister of Finance, Mansour Moalla: “The day will come when Tunisians will have no interest in learning French. They will resort to English or another ‘useful’ language” (Bessis, 1982-83, p. 81). Corroborating this idea, a female respondent stated that in comparison with the past, English now is studied earlier and is becoming more important for Tunisians:
Maybe, with many things that happen in the world, they (i.e. Tunisians) just want to get closer to English speaking countries.

Another respondent explained that the growing popularity of English in Tunisia is because it is a language needed for professional opportunities abroad.

These attitudes and perceptions of English which are reflective of the future political agenda of Tunisia provide evidence that English in Tunisia is used as a language which facilitates opportunities and has implications on a global scale. English is experienced by the local population as a modern language which connects them to the world. This idea is confirmed in a respondent’s statement:

“I use English to make new friends through the internet, for example chatting. yesterday, I had a new friend from Malaysia; to speak with people from Arab countries, we use English, because on my keyboard I do not have Arabic letters.

The use of English is thus attributed to sophistication and flexibility, and has other social implications in Tunisia. Bearing this idea in mind when examining the connotations of the use of French and English respectively, it appears that attitudes to French are more clear-cut (Figure 4-29) being either the language of prestige and high class (59%), the language of colonialism (33%), or the second language of the country (8%). English, on the other hand, leaves a variety of impressions on the local population, and general attitudes to this language are less categorical or polarized (Figure 4-30). In this regard, Tunisians judged English as either having no particular connotation or as being neutral (33%), as conveying added credibility and quality to the object advertised (17%), as symbolizing modernity (17%), as specific to the context where it is used (17%), as an eye-catcher (8%), or as a sign of dependency on other languages (8%). It is important to mention that the negative implications of French (33%) outweigh those pertaining to English (8%), thus it appears that the local population has more negative perceptions of French than English even though the former language has more representation in the linguistic landscape as shown in Table 4-7.
Bearing on these findings, it can be argued that even though there may be a linguistic rivalry between French and English in Tunisia, these two languages occupy different spaces in the linguistic landscape and achieve different functions in the perceptions of Tunisians. Hence negative attitudes towards French and more neutral or positive attitudes towards English may be explained due to a variety of factors. First, as Battenburg (1997) explains, the propensity to reinforce the teaching/learning of English may be explained by a desire from Tunisians to counter the French language bias which was imposed on them mainly for historical reasons during the colonial period. Thus this use of English has local implications/ramifications and serves to defy the hegemony of French which is still invasive as witnessed by the Arabic-French bilingual public signage practices. Uses of English in the linguistic landscape did not result in similar reactions as the ones triggered by French. In this respect, Seyli a young engineer studying in France, commenting on the use of French in the linguistic landscape stated:

 Pour moi c’est pas un bon signe, parce que c’est une perte d’identité en quelque sorte. Pour l’anglais, c’est pas la même chose parce que pour l’instant on est pas très anglophones. La vision de l’anglais ou le français n’est pas du tout la même chose. Chaque langue a une connotation différente. En plus comme l’anglais n’est pas lié à un contexte politique le français, comme c’est une langue internationale, ça me gêne pas trop. Partout dans le monde on fait ça et ça n’a pas cette connotation de dominance culturelle. C’est plutôt un signe d’ouverture.

For me this is not a good sign, because it is a loss of identity somehow. But for English, it is not the same thing because so far we are not so Anglophone. Perceptions towards French and English are not the same thing at all. Each language has different connotations. In addition since English is not connected to a political context like French, and that it is an international language, it does not bother me that much. Everywhere in the world this is happening and it does not have a similar connotation of cultural dominance [that French has]. It is rather a sign or openness.

Another person stated that when she saw a sign in TA, even if English was also there, she felt better than when seeing a sign exclusively in French:

 I feel closer to it, maybe also because there is English, (...) I feel better here when I see it. It speaks to me more.
This particular use of English as a third space language (Kramsch, 1993), easing and mediating the historical tensions which the French language is associated with, can be connected to similar instances of linguistic adjustments in the LL literature. In this light, the literature offers parallel examples where English is used locally to subvert top-down advocacies (Banu & Sussex, 2001) or colonial status-quo (Ramamoorthy, 2002) but also to ease tensions (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Shohamy et al., 2006).

The use of English on both public and private signs (Table 4-14) also reveals that private signs have more English than public signs where this tendency is slower. It is important to place the situation in its political context. The Tunisian government still has strong political, economic, and cultural ties with France. Thus although the government may be fostering more visibility of English in Tunisia, this initiative is slowed by the active role played by France in promoting its language in the national territory. As Battenburg (1997) argues, the influence of the French language, which is now slowly diminishing in Tunisia, has been predominantly maintained in world affairs by France’s exerting influence over former colonies. The idea that Battenburg supports is that the French ‘political’ resistance to American-led initiatives in Africa and the Middle-East is the outcome of the fears of the loss of French influence in these areas of the world. As explained by the author, this influence is not only linguistic but also political and economic since France still continues to benefit economically from its colonies and protectorates; these economic benefits are now being jeopardized by the rising importance of English which threatens to disrupt the situation. In Tunisia, France’s fear of threats to its interests is outwardly manifested in the discrepancy between funds provided in 1996 by respectively the United Kingdom ($400,000), the United States ($600,000), and France ($20 Million) for language, cultural and educational activities. This significant discrepancy was well expressed in a statement by a British official when he observed: *The French spend more in a morning than we do in a year.* As a respondent rightly observed:
Francophonie is now growing because of the popularity of English. Other uses of English involved the display of this language on advertisements. In this respect, the majority of examples of English uses in advertisement were characterized by a disconnection between textual and visual contents or seemed to aim at achieving solely ‘visibility’ of English without focus on the semantic impact of the sign (Figure 4-40).

Figure 4-40. Advertisement for Pasta in English ‘Very Good’.

Such uses of languages in the linguistic landscape, which are usually characterized by short formulas and lexicon – or ‘nuclear English’ (Ross, 1997) – have been described in the literature as aimed to achieve commodification (Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Ross, 1997; Dhongde, 2002; Hornsby, 2008), desired visibility of multilingualism (Backhaus, 2007) or instances of decorative use of English (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Mac Gregor, 2003; Ross, 1997). The uses of English on private signs was particularly salient in La Marsa where it was the language most widely used in advertisements overshadowing both MSA and French. This fact could be explained in light of the indexicality of signs to their social environment and how they are reflective, among other things, of the human geography of the location which they index. More
specifically, the important number of advertisement signs in English in La Marsa may be explained as resulting from the larger population of expatriates residing there.

Finally, the use of English, French and Arabic seem to obey generational dynamics which are in turn sensitive or reflective of the linguistic policy of the historical period at stake. A young woman pointed out that there was a generational divide whereby the older generation had a more Arab culture and education while the younger generation had more familiarity with French culture and were more educated in French. While this woman might have described her generation and the previous one, it seems however that there is currently another generational divide from French to English in Tunisia. As indicated by Battenburg (1997) in his study of the advent of English in Tunisia, the subtle shift from French to English in Tunisia is apparent along generational lines as well. He illustrates this trend by citing one of his Tunisian respondents who observed that while his parents were more proficient in French than he; his children were actually more proficient in English than he was.

In sum, although both languages are not recognized on official policy documents, uses of English in the linguistic landscape fulfill multiple goals, are more sophisticated, and endorse more functions than French. These functions span from uses pertaining to global implications to ones related to local repercussions. In addition while English has no established historical past in Tunisia in the same way as French does, it is nonetheless gaining more representation in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, ranking higher than the local TA dialect. Furthermore, contrary to French which, as an informant pointed out, is still tainted with the vestiges of colonialism, English endorses the role of a third space language which eases the tensions associated with the hegemonizing role of French and its connection to a colonial past.
**Pattern V: Status of Signs**

A number of studies which examined street signs and their linguistic content have stated that there was more discernible language diversity on private signs than on public signs (Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Huebner, 2006). The present study also examined whether this trend was valid with respect to the linguistic landscape of Tunisia, and more specifically within the environments of Tunis and La Marsa. Based on the findings presented in Table 4-14, it is shown that, in the three environments investigated, the official language of Tunisia (i.e. MSA) is preserved on public signage and more present in this category of signs than on private signs. This trend confirms findings from the LL literature that public signage is more prone to confirm and affirm the linguistic policy of a particular environment than private signage (Backhaus, 2007). In addition, data collected from Tunisian respondents confirmed the trends observed from the linguistic landscape. In this regard, when speaking about public signs and the languages contained in them, a young woman stated:

> You must have the Arabic language, because exclusively you have Tunisian people who go there (meaning to administrative offices and governmental buildings).

In addition, a Tunisian respondent observed that when it came to public signage:

> L’Arabe standard est nécessaire, pour une situation officielle comme celle-ci, c’est important, d’abord pour dire a celui qui lit vous êtes dans un pays arabe, donc c’est une question d’identité d’abord.

> MSA is necessary, for an official situation like this, it is important, first to inform the person who reads that you are in an Arab country/nation, so first of all it is a question of identity.

Thus MSA is used to index identification with an Arab national identity. This desire to identify with an Arab culture and identity is stated in the opening stipulations of the Tunisian constitution (Table 4-1, Article 2).
An interesting finding which echoes the aforementioned interpretations and discussions pertaining to MSA and TA, is that the status of MSA while powerfully displayed on both public and private signs, is in sharp contrast to TA which is absent from public signs and rather meagerly represented on private signs. This confirms the discussion of TA as a language which despite representing a local identity is nonetheless still not taken seriously by the local population when it appears in writing and on display. This is due to TA being spoken rather than written, therefore the ‘natural’ functions of the two varieties of Arabic in Tunisia (diglossic situation) has a bearing on the choice of script on signs, as spoken language has no script to speak of. These findings collected from the linguistic landscape also resonate in data collected from the informants. As a matter of fact, Seyli noticed that it was crucial to keep MSA on public signs in order to:

\[
\text{Ne pas laisser le dialecte prendre la place du standard.}
\]

Avoid that the dialect (i.e. TA) takes the place of the standard (i.e. MSA) which I see as a bad thing, because the dialect should not be written but must stay oral, because it does not have a grammar. We have to see what is more important. Is it more important to belong to Arabic or to a dialect of Arabic?

When asked why TA was not used on public signs instead of MSA, Myr declared:

\[
\text{No, it must be written in MSA, because it is a ministry and it must be something official. Because if it is written for example in TA, it will make sense but it would sound as something for everyday. For example we write text messages in TA, it is something more colloquial, but here if it is written in MSA, it will give more importance to the ministry.}
\]

The authoritativeness and ‘seriousness’ which TA lacks is again emphasized in these attitudes from local respondents. This idea points to an important aspect of the languages found in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, mainly that, as seen with respect to English and French, and as evidenced here with the case of MSA and TA, each language achieves a particular function and is meant to be used within a particular sphere of influence. These endonormative
practices when flouted result in a situation of incongruity (Ferguson, 1959; Fishman, 1967). In this light, a local secondary school teacher argued that if MSA was used in advertisements, it would not be appropriate and people will laugh when seeing the sign. She equally also pointed out that when Tunisians told jokes, they would sometimes purposefully use words from MSA. This strategy would hence have a comical effect due to the incongruity of the language used.

Reflecting on the complex interweaving between MSA and TA, Enemils, a middle-aged retired man engaged in a diatribe about the status of these varieties on public signage and how they contributed to the creation of separate identities:

Il ya deux choses
"الهوية"، و "الذنّة"، الهوية محل الأفكار التي تحملها و انتظام الايديولوجية
dans ce cas ça sera Arabe, mais "ذنّة"، الذنّة، tout ce que ton environnement t’as apporté,
مثلا le dialecte. Mais ce qu’on appelle
"العنصريّة"،
و هذا هو ادبيك للتعصب كما المقاومة الوطنية، و تونس
c’est le centre du monde،.الح

There are two things ‘Personification’ and ‘Identification’. Personification includes your ideas, and ideology, this is fulfilled by Arabic (i.e. MSA), but ‘Identification’ includes all that your environment brought you, and this is fulfilled by the dialect (i.e. TA). However if you try to superpose both you enter into what is called ‘Neurosis’ and this leads to extremism such as militant nationalism, saying such things as Tunisia is the centre of the world, etc.

This perspective on the separate roles of MSA and TA corroborates the state-sponsored initiatives to foreground MSA in public signage in order to use it in defining the identity of the country on a global scale. The use of TA in private signs on the other hand also achieves a crucial role which aims at getting closer to the local population and achieving an identificatory role on a local scale.

With respect to the premise that there is more linguistic diversity on private signs than on state-sponsored signs (Backhaus, 2005; Banu & Sussex, 2001; Barni, 2006; Curtin, 2009; Huebner, 2006; Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Leclerc, 1989; Rosenbaum et al., 1977), when comparing the three data sites, it is indeed the case that more
languages are represented on private signs than public ones. However it should be noted that although to a lesser extent, public signs still contain a diverse set of linguistic representation, with languages such as French (Tunis Old City: 25%, Tunis New City: 38.23%, La Marsa: 34.83%), English (Tunis Old City: 6.25%, La Marsa: 3.37%), Spanish (Tunis Old City: 6.25%, La Marsa: 2.84%), German (Tunis Old City: 6.25%, La Marsa: 1.12%), Italian (Tunis Old City: 6.25%), and Hebrew (Tunis New City: 2.94%). This finding is surprising given that government policies in Tunisia give more support to the visibility of Arabic and recognize foreign languages peripherally. Moreover, it shows that the policy pertaining to posting is therefore lenient and not controlled, given the data observed in the linguistic landscape. This tolerance vis-à-vis foreign languages is even more visible on private signs where the frequency rates of non-local languages was even higher than on public signs. This trend which again reveals the permissiveness granted by the state for purposes of accommodating non-local languages is applauded by a local informant who did not see the discrepancy between policy and practice as problematic; in fact she stated that having the official linguistic policy reflected on private signs was:

Not a necessity, because it is part of our culture (…) Arabic is our language, okay, we can use it in official buildings, in official documents, but if you look at the Tunisian people they do use other languages, so it is okay to use them (i.e. other languages) for commercial reasons.

Thus, in Tunisia, the keenness of the state to represent foreign languages on governmental or official signs opens the door even more wide for privately produced signs while still maintaining the dominant status of Arabic.

When looking at more details concerning the distribution of non-local languages, it is interesting to notice that, with respect to the new city of Tunis, French is slightly more present on public than on private signs. In both the older areas of Tunis as well as in La Marsa, both French and English have more weight on private than on public signs. One rationale, which could explain the marked presence of French in La Marsa and the low rankings of English is the popularity of
the former in this suburban town. In fact, the majority of residents of La Marsa are socio-economically more privileged when compared to the rest of the Tunisian population, and have more access to French via education or professional interactions. In addition, although English is also growing in public signage in La Marsa (14.30%) the presence of a French system of education which has been in effect since the protectorate (1881) can explain why French has considerably more impact (41.43%) in this suburban town. Finally, as has been explained previously, the presence of a larger population of expatriates mainly from France and who reside in La Marsa, can be used as an additional justification for the popularity of English and more specifically French in the linguistic landscape of La Marsa. It is interesting to note that keenness to implement top-down political decisions on language become more difficult as one moves away from more traditional semiotic spaces (i.e. The Old City) to newer areas (i.e. The New City) and to the suburb (i.e. La Marsa), but also as one moves from more homogeneously populated areas to areas which are more cosmopolitan and where it is more likely to find tourist or non-local populations. This confirms the context-boundedness of signs and how they are indexical not only of semiotic spaces but also reflective of the human geography where they are placed (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Thus, factors such as human population, nationality of inhabitants, level of education, socioeconomic background, can represent additional predictors of the nature of the linguistic landscape, particularly in terms of languages featured on street signs. This finding which emphasizes how the linguistic content of signs is indexical and indicative of the social setting has also been explored in a number of LL studies (Banu & Sussex, 2001; Dhongde, 2002; Huebner, 2006; Hult, 2009; Shohamy et al., 2006). Based on the findings outlined above and on the LL literature, it can be thus argued that the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa does not only obey linguistic regulatory directives from governing authorities but is also shaped by the people and in view of the dynamics of the human population which occupies these spaces.
Keeping in mind the trends which have shown that linguistic diversity is not only desired on private signs but also encouraged on public signs in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, the following section will explore the use of script, font size, and order of languages to index hierarchy and the dynamics between languages in the linguistic landscape.

**Pattern VI: Choice of Script, Font Size, and Order of Languages**

While the government has initiated specific regulations establishing Arabic as the dominant language on signs (Table 4-5 above), there are only two clauses which mention the specific choice of script when writing Arabic. Article 2 specifies the language to be used when writing on signs. In spite of this specification, data from the linguistic landscape reveal that, with the exception of Tunis (Old City) (47.4% of signs use Arabic script while 38.31% of signs use Roman script) there is a marked prevalence of Roman script vis-à-vis Arabic script in both Tunis (New City) (34.59% of signs use Arabic script while 45.55% of signs use Roman script) and La Marsa (35.32% of signs use Arabic script while 46.97% of signs use Roman script). This imbalance between the statutory importance of Arabic and the prolificacy of Roman script again points to the lenient attitude of the state with respect to the visibility of foreign languages in general and foreign script in particular.

With respect to font size, Article 3 of the legislation on signage (Table 4-5) states that the size of the Arabic language must be at least equal to the size of the foreign language. While a few inconsistencies have been noticed on certain signs (Figures 4-41, 4-42, and 4-43), this clause is overall fully respected particularly on public signs in the three environments surveyed (Table 4-15). It is interesting to note however that both on public and private signs, the most frequent pattern observed was that both Arabic and foreign languages were written with a font of similar

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26 For this particular pattern, respondents were not asked to react to the use of script, font size, and order of languages.
size. This again provides additional evidence that either the government is not stern with respect to clearly demarcating the language of the state vis-à-vis foreign languages or that people are resistant to state-sponsored provisions.

Figure 4-41. Hairdresser shop sign written with Arabic (top) and French (bottom) – the sign translates as ‘Hairdresser for Women’.

Figure 4-42. Two signs advertising a clothing shop – the top sign written in French and transliterated using Arabic script translates as ‘Hot Corner’.
In Tunisian legislation on posting, there is no particular law which sanctions the order in which languages appear on signs. However, as shown in light of LL studies which have tackled this issue (Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2006), order and hierarchy of languages on a sign can be a crucial indicator of the importance of these languages in the linguistic landscape. This factor also indexes the importance of languages within the policy of the country. More specifically, when a language is placed first in the top-to-down hierarchy, this generally indicates that this language is powerful and has official status. However in commercial signs, while the notion of power is still communicated by a larger font size, the emphasis placed on enlarging the font size conveys prestige rather than official status. In the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, this trend was verified and numerical results revealed that in both public and private signs the official language (i.e. MSA) was placed first on the sign. In La Marsa, while there were also more signs displaying MSA as the first language than signs with a foreign language placed first in the hierarchy, the most frequent application of language hierarchy was signs with languages at the same level such as the one exemplified in (Figure 4-44). This shows that there are more challenges to the official language in areas where foreign languages have more linguistic representation. Overall, respondents selected from the local population substantiated observations.
that MSA needed to be first on signs. When asked about how languages should be represented on signs in the linguistic landscape, a respondent stated: “Arabic first, and in bigger font”.

Figure 4-44. Bookstore sign with French and MSA on an equal level – which translates as ‘Thousand Leaves’.

**Pattern VII: Lost in Transliteration**

An interesting dimension of the use of script in both Tunis and La Marsa was the use of transliteration. When looking at the practices of transliteration in both environments, it was revealed that Roman transliteration of Arabic was more present in Tunis (Old City) (12.99%) and La Marsa (10.68%), while Arabic transliteration of Roman was found more in Tunis (New City) (13.01%). The motivation behind these transliterations is not clear and scripts are prone to create confusion. The reason for this confusion is that, in the case of Arabic transliterations of Roman, Arabic does not achieve a semantic function; it is only used to achieve phonetic ‘calques’. In Figure 4.16 for instance, the store’s name is referred to in French as ‘La Boucherie’ (The Butcher), however in Arabic it is merely transliterated as لا بوعشوري which sounds as ‘laa bushuree’ and does not carry any meaning in Arabic. Thus transliterations are incomprehensible and confusing for Tunisians who do not understand French. The same is true for Roman transliterations of Arabic. As a result, since transliteration does not achieve a semantic function of clarifying the content to a potential audience, as confessed by a local respondent, this practice
was experienced as puzzling and “bizarre”. This problematic issue of transliteration was deemed
by Seyli to be the responsibility of the governing authorities:

ل’État ne fait aucun effort, les efforts de l’État sont dépourvus de stratégie.

The state does not make any effort, the state’s efforts are devoid of a strategy.

For example in Arab nations there are committees/leagues to support the
maintenance of the Arabic language, and we do not have such a thing in Tunisia.
The East (i.e. Middle East) is taking more responsibilities to preserve the Arabic
language than us. For example they establish which words should enter the
language and which should not, but we do not. We take French words and
arabize them. This is the state of Arabic now.

In most cases transliteration found on public signs are the remaining relics of French
colonization. In this regard the obsolescence of transliterations, particularly on public signs are
used to provide a phonetic cue as to the pronunciation of geographical locations in Tunis and La
Marsa which, as argued by Calvet (1994, p. 204) are “certaines appellations qui témoignent de
l’histoire coloniale de la ville” (“Particular designations which provide evidence as to the colonial
history of the city”).

The triangulation of the data from language policy, linguistic landscape, and attitudes was
subdivided into discrete themes of analysis pertaining to the linguistic content of signs, the status
of signs, the characteristics relating to script, font, order of languages, and to transliteration. The
discussion and interpretation of research findings was limited to the discussion of Modern
Standard Arabic (MSA), Tunisian Arabic (TA), French, and English. All policy documents
ascribed a de facto official status to MSA and this tendency was also observed in the linguistic
landscape, particularly on public signs. These observations were corroborated by data from
Tunisian respondents as well. In terms of street representation, TA was relatively invisible when
compared to MSA in both Tunis and La Marsa. Respondents provided evidence that this language
is still believed to be an intimate language rather than a publicly displayed one, and also argued
that having TA in the linguistic landscape was still not a commonly observed practice. Although there is no clarification as to the nature of the languages involved, policy documents also made provisions for the inclusion of foreign languages as an addendum to the national language. In addition, a closer look at the data revealed some caveats to these preliminary observations. While MSA is the language most represented in both the old and new areas of the city of Tunis, with respect to the suburban town of La Marsa, MSA loses its dominion to French. The popularity of French in the suburban area of La Marsa was explained due to Tunis’ important role as the administrative, political, cultural, and historical centre of Tunisia, where the constitutional clause emphasizing the need to preserve an Arab/Islamic identity, is more expressed than in the more geographically peripheral areas. In addition, the saliency of French in the linguistic landscape vis-à-vis other languages may be due to the large population of French expatriates residing in La Marsa. The use of French in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa received mixed reception. Overall, while a group of respondents argued that French was taking too much space in the linguistic landscape and were lamenting the low representation of MSA. Other informants explained these phenomena as being caused due to socioeconomic factors. Although not officially recognized on policy documents since it is subsumed under the term ‘foreign language’, English is nonetheless quickly gaining more terrain in Tunisia. This trend is observed particularly on monolingual signs. Although English is less prevalent than French on street signs, it still has more representation than the local vernacular TA, and other languages such as Italian, German, and Spanish. The growing popularity of English in Tunisia is explained by respondents because of its need for professional opportunities abroad. These attitudes and perceptions of English which are reflective of the future political agenda of Tunisia provide evidence that English in Tunisia is used as a language which facilitates opportunities and has implications on a global scale. English is experienced by the local population as a modern language which connects them to the world.
The discrepancy observed between policy and practice confirmed previous findings from the LL literature (Barni & Bagna, 2006; Backhaus, 2007; Shohamy, 2006; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Trumper-Hecht, 2009). It is argued that the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa are indicative of linguistic adjustments. These linguistic adjustments are the outcome of a policy of conciliation which aims at affirming the national character/identity through the advocacy of MSA but at the same time makes tentative provisions for foreign languages in official documents. In addition, these adjustments are also experienced in light of people's attitudes, and through the vocalized resistance towards French as the language indexing colonialism and cultural hegemony, but also in terms of the acceptance of English as a ‘third space language’ (Kramsch, 1993), easing and mediating the historical tensions which the French language is associated with, and representing a linguistic capital for global opportunities.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

Summary of Study

This LL study, which has focused on the analysis of urban multilingualism in Tunisia through the examination of the mismatch between language policy, planning, and practice, has yielded a number of research findings.

First, with respect to the official de facto language of the state, MSA was shown to be the undisputed official language not only in terms of political status, but also with respect to its visibility on public signs in the linguistic landscape, and in view of people’s attitudes. However, it was also noted that despite its strong status in the city, there were still some inconsistencies observed with respect to the suburban area of La Marsa, where MSA cedes its supremacy to French on private signs. It was explained that this inconsistency was the result of additional provisions made by the state, which permitted the use of foreign languages, but also due to the importance of a large French expatriate population in La Marsa. This finding was related to the idea that signs are co-indexical with the environment where they are situated (Scollon & Scollon, 2003) and reflect the human geography of the area investigated.

The status of TA, the local spoken dialect was, contrary to MSA, not institutionalized in political legislation, and was also shown not to have a high level of representation in the linguistic landscape. However, as revealed in local respondents’ perceptions, it still constitutes a marker of local identity which indexes proximity and folksiness. Despite this level of familiarity conveyed by TA, the majority of informants nonetheless agreed that they did not wish to see it represented in the linguistic landscape and that it had to remain oral rather than spoken. In this light, the
reason why respondents agreed that TA had to remain an oral language was that if otherwise it would ‘corrupt’ the quality of the official and more prestigious MSA. Therefore, this language was one of the few languages in the linguistic landscape to have a dual status in terms of its status for the local population; it was both cherished and repudiated at the same time.

In the same way as TA, French is not officially recognized in Tunisian legislation. Notwithstanding this, policy documents mention notions such as font size and hierarchy which implicitly assume other languages. It can be argued that the label ‘foreign language’ used in policy documents is mostly a cover term for the French language. In this regard, as a language inherited from the former colonial occupation, French in Tunisia was shown to have a substantial impact on the linguistic landscape, especially on private signs where it was used either as a relic of colonialism, as a language interpellating or addressing a particular social group, or as a language of commodification (Heller, 2003). Regardless of its purpose in the linguistic landscape, attitudes towards French by local respondents either valued it as the second language of the country, and as a cultural heritage, or rejected it as a language marking a prevailing status-quo of subjugation to French politico-cultural hegemony.

Bearing on this, English was shown to be a language slowly but surely growing in the linguistic landscape of Tunis and La Marsa, and gaining more acceptance in people’s attitudes. As a matter of fact, while French was perceived by some as a language indexing colonial status-quo and dependency on the language of the colonizer, English was experienced by some as a liberating language which countered the hegemony of French due to its lack of association with a colonial history. Thus some informants argued that English was used as a “third space” (Kramsch, 1993) language which was not used for purposes of identification as MSA but which had different connotations from the French language still laden with colonial undertones.

With respect to the status of signs, the official policy of the country was reflected on public signage with MSA coming first across all street signs. Private signs displayed a greater
diversity of languages, hence confirming findings from the LL literature (Backhaus, 2005; Banu & Sussex, 2001; Barni, 2006; Curtin, 2009; Huebner, 2006; Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Leclerc, 1989; Rosenbaum et al., 1977). In fact, as shown in the data in Chapter 4, the linguistic representation on private signs is more varied and wide-ranging, than in bilingual Arabic-French public signs, involving a total of 11 languages (i.e.: MSA, TA, French, English, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, Hebrew, Chinese, and Japanese).

The use of script, font size and placement of languages on street signs also showed a preponderance of particular patterns. Script choice in all three environments favored the use of Roman to the detriment of Arabic, thus violating state-sponsored policies. However, this apparent contradiction in the language policy of the country may again be a willingness from the authorities to provide leeway for the representation of foreign script and languages in the linguistic landscape. Size of font and order of languages however complied with the legislative decrees when written on signs, these considerations which confirm the superior status of MSA vis-à-vis other languages in the linguistic landscape were also corroborated in light of respondents’ attitudes.

Based on these finding and in view of the LL literature, it can be argued that the sociolinguistic environment in Tunisia is symptomatic of a situation where the LL is a site of linguistic adjustment. In this regard, while on the surface it appears that Tunisia has a relatively conservative stance towards linguistic diversity in view of its monolingual linguistic policy, it is however slowly adjusting and making more implicit provisions for the visibility of languages in the LL. Paralleling similar findings from Banu & Sussex (2001) and Huebner (2006) with respect to English, the use of both French and English in Tunisia represent ‘challenges’ to the state-sponsored monolingual linguistic policy of the country. While being more present in middle and upper-class neighborhoods such as the New City and La Marsa, or in areas where expatriates live and where embassies and foreign missions are located. This shows that in more socio-
economically privileged areas, ‘challenges’ to language policy are not experienced as problematic and, it is from these areas that adjustments are initiated within the linguistic landscape. In this respect, when situating this study within the continuum of the linguistic landscape as indicative of ‘tensions’ vs. ‘harmony’, it can be said that Tunisia is situated in the middle of this continuum and represents a site where the linguistic landscape conveys adjustment. The reason why Tunisia is a context of linguistic adjustment rather than instrumentalism or acceptance is that on the one hand, foreign languages are recognized in official documents although without explicit mention of name while on the other hand, as people’s attitudes have shown, there are still some attitudes of resistance to French as a language indexing colonialism and cultural hegemony. Bearing on this, the Tunisian linguistic landscape reflects similarly to what has been shown in Ramamoorthy (2002) and Lanza & Woldemariam (2009), a context of flexible concessions, conciliations and adjustments.

Reflections on Research Findings

This research has provided an illustration of the complex linguistic situation of Tunisia where language representations on publicly and privately produced road signs are on the surface not in synchronization with the pronounced language policy of the country. In this respect, and following the interpretation of research findings, it was revealed that although the state is seemingly showing a policy of monolingualism in favor of Arabic, the reality of the linguistic situation in Tunis and La Marsa, provides evidence that the government is actually adopting a policy of mediation, or as Ramamoorthy (2002) states a “policy of plurality with fluidity” (p. 130). Thus, the surface-level mismatch between policy and practice is revealing of the current tensions and negotiations between the languages of the state (i.e. MSA) and the languages in the
state (i.e. TA, French, and English). This study has therefore demonstrated the need to diversify the range and types of data in sociolinguistic studies when investigating multilingualism. In doing so, researchers interested in language policy and planning can develop a much more astute and comprehensive understanding of urban multilingualism and top-down as well as bottom-up linguistic practices. It appears that using data triangulation can provide more levels of sophistication to the analysis of the language policies and practices of Tunisia. In this respect, by including data from policy documents, street signs, and people’s attitudes, the methodology of this study has been successful in triangulating the research findings in order to move from a descriptive to an explanatory depiction of the multilingual practices in Tunisia. In addition, using diversified data sources offered in this case a more acute understanding of the dynamic role of the state in mediating linguistic diversity on the ground while keeping a cohesive policy of affiliation with Arab culture and identity at the top level. Including attitudes and interviews from the local population adds more complex layers of interpretation to the analysis of the sociolinguistic community and moves beyond an etic description of street signs to the explanation of the linguistic practices, and ideologies as vocalized by local informants. As has been shown LL literature, studies which included voices from the people (Hornsby, 2008; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009; Trumper-Hecht, 2009) had more complex ways of triangulating data from policy documents, and LL items and depicted a more holistic representation of the linguistic dynamics of the examined environment. On the contrary, studies which did not incorporate people’s attitudes did not move beyond descriptive extrapolations about the sociolinguistic environment investigated. Thus, future LL research ought to include voices from the people as an essential part of the interpretation of the linguistic landscape.

27 Personal communication.
Recommendations and Implications for Language Policy and Planning

Based on the findings and interpretations above, it has been shown that the dynamic interaction between policy, representation, and attitudes in the context of Tunisia has revealed a complex linguistic situation with apparent paradoxes and inconsistencies. These inconsistencies lie in the fact that while Arabic is advocated as the language of the state through state legislature, the linguistic landscape as well as people’s attitudes reveal that Tunisia has a more plurilingual identity than a monolingual one as advocated by the official policies. However, following a deep analysis of the policy of the country, it has been shown that while the state advocates Arabic monolingualism on a surface level, there is actually an implicit will to accommodate more linguistic diversity which only transpires when starting to look at the linguistic landscape and at perceptions from the local population. All in all, the discourses of linguistic diversity observed from the linguistic landscape and elicited from respondents’ voices have shown that political pronouncements pertaining to language are not always reflective of the situation on the ground. As Spolsky (2004) puts it: “the real language policy of a community is more likely to be found in its practices than in management” (p. 65). Given these findings, this study can be used to inform policy makers about the discourses of linguistic plurality which are available at the bottom-up level in order to make provisions for a more representative, realistic, and factual linguistic policy for Tunisia. The tensions in policy, representation, and attitudes help to develop a more appropriate language policy for Tunisia. The study will inform policy makers of the attitudes and tendencies that are not visible in social life or heard loudly in policy discourses. A more realistic policy for Tunisia will push for more implementations of local identity at the top-down level in order to preserve the individuality of the country but explicitly adopt a second language in order to justify the use of bilingualism on street signs (May, 2004). Although the implementation of such a policy will still constitute some challenges (Canagarajah, 2005), particularly since English
is a relatively new language in Tunisia, this situation would be more in-line with the reality of the situation on the ground where French is used in the linguistic landscape but not recognized in policy documents.

Notwithstanding the fact that it neither indexes an established language in policy documents nor serves as the indicator of a significantly large French population living in Tunisia, French is still the second most represented language in the LL of the three environments examined. Thus the role of French in the LL of Tunisia needs to be reassessed as it primarily serves to maintain the status-quo of Tunisia as a former colonial language. In this regard, the central government as well as the local authorities should not encourage the maintenance and the cultivation of the French language on public signs. In fact, the disparate messages from language policy provision which advocate Arabization and standard Arabic while at the same time using French on governmental signs send confusing messages of disparity.

Language policy documents need to adopt an ‘official’ foreign language not only for the purposes of translation but also for international communication because, so far, the label ‘foreign language’ is clearly a cover term for French. As Coluzzi (2009, p. 308) rightly remarks: “The presence of different languages in the linguistic landscape hardly ever reflects the actual size of the population who speak them, but the prestige these languages enjoy within society and/or the official policies of the state/region”. Thus, the French language in Tunisia does not index as much the ability of Tunisians to converse in this language as the prestige associated with this language and the cultural fascination towards French for a portion of the Tunisian population (Dhaouadi, 1996). The allegiance to French in official bilingual signs seems to be anachronistic and obsolete given the current context of globalization and particularly due to the emergent growth of English as a foreign language in Tunisia. It is even more unrealistic because English is considered as a

28 According to the CIA World Fact Book the division of Tunisia’s population is 98% Arab, 1% European, and 1% Jewish.
neutral or ‘third space’ language, which does not have colonial undertones in the same way as French does. Bearing on this, it would be more appropriate to have English as a recognized foreign language in policy documents, but also in public bilingual signs in lieu of French. Thus the presence of French on linguistic signs in Tunisia seems to be there only for historical reasons and is a stigma marking Tunisia’s dependence on France.

These language policy and planning decisions have also practical long-term implications for educational decisions. These decisions pertaining to the unambiguous and unequivocal adoption of a state-sponsored language such as Arabic (MSA) and a foreign language such as English for purposes of communication on a global scale determine the community’s language practices and shape the local community’s attitudes towards their national and global languages. Hence, as Yanguas (2009, p. 30) rightly argues:

Language educational policies (LEPs) are not the only decisions politicians make that have an influence on citizens: what languages should be used to translate official documents? What languages should be used at official acts? Or what languages should be displayed on public signs? These are but examples of language policies that also have a very important effect on the population because they are mechanisms through which those in power expand and reinstate their own language ideology.

At a larger level, the findings of the study will inform the policy considerations in other multilingual and postcolonial communities. Particularly, countries of the Maghreb which have been colonized by France, namely Algeria and Morocco, have undergone similar historical paths following their respective independence. In this light, the implementation of Arabization in Algeria and Morocco is experiencing similar challenges as the ones illustrated in Tunisia, where the strengthening of the national character through the use of MSA is being jeopardized by the still marked presence of French. All three countries of the Maghreb are going through dramatic linguistic changes. While they are now long past the path of decolonization, they still find that the use of French is reintroducing a climate of dependency evocative of colonialism and cultural
imperialism. In this equation, English is slowly imposing itself as the third space language used to ease and moderate linguistic tensions.

Finally, as pointed at the beginning, by focusing on visual symbols rather than on spoken language as traditionally done in sociolinguistics, this linguistic landscape will also contribute to the field of sociolinguistics by demonstrating the benefits of the study of written language. It will show how linguistic landscape provides a vantage point on the subtleties of language representation and attitudes that are often heavily mediated and monitored in spoken contexts. The visual signs provide a window into language ideologies and attitudes through a relatively unmediated channel. As an illustration, contrary to other sociolinguistic data sources, linguistic landscape data is not subjected to the observer’s paradox (Labov, 1972), and is unaltered by the presence of the researcher. Scholars in sociolinguistics and language planning have to consider how they can complement spoken data with visual signs to obtain a more balanced picture of a community.

**Limitations of the Study**

While this study has aimed at investigating the urban practices of multilingualism in Tunis and La Marsa, in view of policy, the linguistic landscape, and language perceptions, it is crucial to point out that a major limitation of this study is that findings revealed by this study are illustrative rather than representative of the complex linguistic dynamics presented in these environments. Therefore, this study does not pretend to represent the realities of the linguistic situation in Tunisia but to illustrate its trends. Moreover, it is important to mention that linguistic landscapes are not fixed in time, but are constantly shifting and changing. Therefore, a longitudinal study would be more suited so as to get a sense of how the linguistic landscape changes according to evolving social circumstances and historical occurrences (Backhaus, 2005;
Spolsky & Cooper, 1991). In addition, the interpretation of findings can only serve to illustrate the situation in the environments surveyed and cannot be generalized to describe the situation of all cities and towns in Tunisia. Related to this point is the idea that findings collected from the attitudinal survey data cannot as well be generalized to the whole population of Tunisia as the sampled population was not large enough to guarantee statistical accuracy.

**Implications of the Study**

This study casts light on some interesting changes and inconsistencies in the linguistic profile of Tunisia. Since several LL studies suggest that English in the linguistic landscape of non-primarily English speaking contexts is a symbol of globalization [i.e., in Israel (Shohamy et al., 2006) and the Netherlands (Edelman, 2006), for example], this study has provided evidence for the notion that English in Tunisia is a third space language (Kramsch, 1993) which is used not only for commodification (Heller, 2003) but also to circumvent the effects of French, a language loaded with colonial undertones. In this respect, while Tunisia has traditionally been classified as being part of French speaking or francophone Africa, this study shows that this descriptive label may no longer be valid to characterize the linguistic and geopolitical status of the country. While Tunisia has been traditionally associated with francophone Africa and may still be a French-speaking country, its linguistic landscape shows that the power and influence of English is growing steadily. The following diagram explains this hypothesis about the shift from French to English in Tunisia. Though the diagram has been constructed to present the role of English in postcolonial communities, it is adapted here to explain the role of the French language in Tunisia. This diagram show the different steps in the ‘life cycle’ of English from its initial transportation and transplantation as EFL status, to its developments and institutionalization where it then shifts
into ESL status. Finally the final cycle phases describe how English then becomes more restricted in use and then becomes disinstitutionalized where it then shifts back into EFL status.

In Tunisia, while French seems to be at the end of the cycle (i.e. disinstitutionalisation), especially because it has been replaced via a strong policy of Arabization, English may be at the beginning of the “chain” where it is being transported, adapted and becoming less invisible (Daoud, 1996). In other words, while French is in the 5th stage of the process, English is in the ascendant 3rd stage. The study shows that English is now slowly getting transplanted into the linguistic practices in the Tunisian landscape. In addition, data from local respondents has provided additional insights into how English is positively perceived by Tunisians due to its non-association to a history of colonialism. Indeed, contrary to French, English has no colonial connotations in the Maghreb. Thus the proposition that English is becoming more popular than French seems to be valid across the ‘francophone’ Maghreb (Battenburg, 1997; Ennaji, 1991). Attitudinal research has also pointed out in Algeria (Bourenane, 1984), Morocco (Abbassi, 1977;
Bentahila, 1983; Elbiad, 1985; Gravel, 1979; Sadiqi, 1991), and Tunisia (Bannour, 1989; Reguiai, 1984), that English is starting to be preferred over French as a foreign language. As Ennaji (1991, p. 15) explains, English is starting to compete in serious ways with French, particularly in the domains of education, science, and technology:

Not only is English favored by students, educationalists, and decision makers, but it is also gradually becoming a serious rival of French in higher education. A good number of university students and researchers must learn English to be able to read the English references relevant to their specialty. Additionally, more and more scientific research carried out by native Maghrebin academics is nowadays published in English.

Another theme that this study addressed relates to the top-down governmental advocacies which state that Tunisia is a monolingual country. Arabic is by official decree established as the official language of the country (Tunisian Constitution, Chapter I, Article 1). This research provided evidence that while this is institutionally true, in actual everyday linguistic practices, this is a misconception and the linguistic diversity of the linguistic landscape was offered as evidence of ground level multilingualism. In other words, while policy documents represent the identity and culture of the country in one way, the signs represent them in a different way. In this regard, this study has developed an appreciation for the hybrid linguistic and cultural representation of the Tunisian identity through street signs. It is hypothesized that this hybridity will become more pronounced in the future.

In addition to the use of languages for purely instrumental or cosmetic purposes, such as when using English in Tunisia to achieve visibility (Backhaus, 2007), cosmopolitanism (Curtin, 2009; Huebner, 2006), or commodification (Heller, 2003; Leeman & Modan, 2009), linguistic diversity within the LL, as evidenced in the streets of Tunis and La Marsa also presupposes and entails that a sizeable portion of the population is literate in the languages represented in the landscape. The linguistic landscape can, in this regard, be cited as an example of ‘new literacy’ (Gee, 2007) interface based on multiple affordances and other semiotic systems including but not
limited to language. In fact, street signs represent a dynamic, modern, and communicative
interface which people are exposed to on a daily basis and which involves the interaction between
text (the linguistic content represented) and context (the sociolinguistic environment where the
sign is located). As Cenoz & Gorter (2008) observe:

The linguistic landscape is multimodal because it combines visual and printed
texts. The information in the linguistic landscape is on different types of material
objects such as signs, billboards, stickers, posters, shop windows or vending
machines. The characteristics of these materials in combination with the text and
images displayed and the space where they are located provide different
affordances that interact with the reader’s resources in the process of re-making
of the text (p. 278).

This type of literacy which is multimodal, multilingual, multiscripical, and hence
multiliterate, provides the local population with a potential to develop multicompetence (Cook
1992, 2002) in reading and writing the languages featured in their daily visual linguistic ecology.
Moreover, as people become used to this interface of visual literacy (Burmark, 2003; Gee, 2007;
cities. They appropriate these discourses, transforming them to make them their own [and]
develop literacy practices that enable them to engage with messages communicated between the
readers and writers of their communities” (Dagenais et al. 2009, p. 265).

In addition to the implications of the linguistic landscape as a site of literacy practices,
the linguistic landscape in Tunisia may also represent a tool for pedagogy (Sayer, 2010) which
can serve to sensitize the population about the languages spoken and encountered in the country,
in order to raise people’s awareness about their linguistic repertoires, identities, and cultural
heritage (Dagenais et al., 2009). Additionally, when introduced in formal education as a
pedagogical tool, the heuristic potential of the linguistic landscape can be used in Tunisia to
familiarize people with the power issues pertaining to languages and to make the population
critically aware of the implications and capital which certain languages may represent for them.
This educational perspective on the linguistic landscape represents an emerging and promising
trend in LL research. As suggested by Dagenais et al. (2009) the use of the linguistic landscape as an educational tool can also serve to “examine how people respond to what is represented in the print/visual environment of their communities as they construct their own representations of the LL” (p. 253).

Finally, an even more practical orientation which this study may serve is to conceptualize the linguistic landscape as a tool for second language acquisition. As shown by Cenoz & Gorter (2008), the LL can also be a site which fosters the development of second language acquisition particularly in the form of input to second language learners. In this respect, even though it represent an example of incidental learning, the LL constitutes authentic (Bucholtz, 2003; Coupland, 2003), contextual, and socially relevant input, and can thus be used to enhance L2 pragmatic competence (i.e. speech acts, indirect language, metaphors).
Appendix A Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Urban Street Signs in the Linguistic Landscape of Tunisia: Tensions in Policy, Representation, and Attitudes

Dear participant,

My name is Slim Ben Slimane Ben Said. I am a graduate student in the Department of Applied Linguistics at the Pennsylvania State University. I am currently doing a research to complete my Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics. In this study, I will examine people’s reactions and attitudes to pictures of street signs. The study that I am planning to conduct requires Tunisian informants in the age range 20-50. The sample will include a total number of 30 people. The subjects will be selected with an equal number of male and female informants in each group.

You will be asked to examine 5 pictures of public signs collected from the streets of Tunis. After examining these pictures, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which should take about 15 minutes to complete. All your responses will be confidential. You will be asked to provide demographic information (sex, age, first language and whether you have knowledge of a second language) about yourselves, but not your names. Following the questionnaire, the Principal Investigator will ask you questions about your answers. Your participation in the survey is VOLUNTARY. If you agree to take part in the investigation, you need to sign this form. However, if you change your mind, you may withdraw at any time without hesitation.

The people who will have access to the data will be the principal investigator, and his doctoral advisor, Dr. Canagarajah. After the study is completed, the raw data sheets will be destroyed. All possible steps will be taken to protect you identity. For additional information, you
can contact Slim Ben Slimane Ben Said, Principal Investigator, 305 Sparks Building, University Park, PA, 16802, tel.: (814) 441 7617, email: sbb170@psu.edu or Dr. Suresh Canagarajah, Research Advisor, Department of Applied Linguistics, Sparks Building 305, University Park, PA, 16802, Office tel.: (814) 865 6227 email: asc16@psu.edu. Thank you for your precious collaboration and assistance in this research. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You will be given a copy of this form for your records

_________________________________   _______________ ___
Participant Signature       Date

_________________________________   _______________ ___
Person Obtaining Consent      Date

This informed consent form was reviewed and approval by the Social Science Institutional Review Board (IRB 29834) at The Pennsylvania State University on 04/07/2009. It will expire on 04/07/2012.
Appendix B Questionnaire

Check the appropriate boxes

1 – What is your GENDER?

MALE ☐ FEMALE ☐

2 – What is your AGE?

Less than 20 ☐
Between 20 and 30 ☐
Between 31 and 50 ☐
Between 51 and 70 ☐

3 – What is your nationality?

TUNISIAN ☐
OTHER: ________________________ ☐

4 – What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary School ☐
Secondary School ☐
University (Duel) ☐
University (License)  
University (Master)  
University (Doctorate)  

5 – What is your occupation? ___________________

6 – Which part of Tunisia do you live in? ________________________________

7 – Except Tunisian Arabic, do you have knowledge of additional languages?
   No, I have never studied a Second language before.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes I Can …</th>
<th>Modern Standard Arabic</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C Survey

Please examine the following pictures carefully, and then answer the following questions

Sign # 1

Sign # 2
Sign # 3

Sign # 4
Sign # 5

1 – In Sign # 1, do you read all languages?

YES ☐ NO ☐

2 – Which language do you read first on this sign?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Please explain why this language is the first you read or notice

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
3 – When exposed to Sign # 2, do you look at the visual content or read the language(s) first?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Why?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4 – In your opinion, should English and French be used in official signs such as in Sign #4?

[ ] YES  [ ] NO

Explain your answer

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5 – In your opinion, what is the importance of non-Arabic languages on the private signs # 1 and # 5?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
6 – In your opinion, what is the importance of Modern Standard Arabic in the official Signs # 4?

7 – In your opinion, what is the importance of Tunisian Arabic in the private Sign # 2?

8 – Are non-Arabic languages (found on signs) intended to serve locals or foreigners? Please explain your answer with reference to Sign # 3 and # 5
9 – What are your impressions about the use of foreign languages on street signs in Tunisia?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

10 – In your opinion, what can the use of Modern Standard Arabic on a sign symbolize/imply?

Please explain your answer with reference to Sign # 4

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
11 – In your opinion, what can the use of Tunisian Arabic on a sign symbolize/imply? Please explain your answer with reference to Sign # 2


12 – In your opinion, what can the use of French on a sign symbolize/imply? Please explain your answer with reference to Sign # 3


13 – In your opinion, what can the use of English on a sign symbolize/imply? Please explain your answer with reference to Sign # 5


14 – Is French appropriate for sign # 3? Why? Why Not?


16 – In the following list of foreign languages being used in Tunisia, which language is the most important for Tunisians to know?

- French
- English
- Italian
- German
- Spanish
Why?

1. Modern Standard Arabic: __________
2. Tunisian Arabic: __________
3. French: __________
4. English: __________
5. Italian: __________
6. German: __________
7. Spanish: __________

Explain why you have ordered these languages in this way

17 – Please place these 7 languages in order of importance TO YOU with 1 being “the most important” and 7 “the least important”.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY
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VITA

Slim Ben Slimane Ben Said

Slim Ben Slimane Ben Said has been teaching courses in Arabic, French and English as a Second Language at the Pennsylvania State University. His research interests include linguistic landscape, linguistic imperialism, as well as sociolinguistics and language policy and planning within the contexts of North Africa and the Middle East.