

MULTILINGUALISM IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Multilingualism is one of the features of language contact that characterises language use in the public spaces of cosmopolitan areas like Ibadan. Little attention has been paid to multilingualism on signs in the public spaces of Ibadan. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate how multilingualism is reflected in the linguistic landscape of Ibadan with a view to determining the languages used on signs, their patterns and statuses in relation to the sociolinguistic context of Ibadan.

Seven communities in Ibadan (Challenge, Dugbe, Mokola, Iwo Road, Sango, Olodo and Ring Road) were purposively selected because of the strategic presence of different signs in them. The signs were subjected to sociolinguistic and descriptive statistical analyses.

Findings reveal that languages (English, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Arabic, French and Nigerian Pidgin) were used in various ways to show ethnolinguistic vitality, language hierarchy, dominance, distinctiveness and for economic motivation. Although monolingual language use had a high status in all the communities, there were also the pervasive use of English, visibility of French, Arabic and Nigerian Pidgin and the marginalisation of indigenous languages on the signs. These were due to the sign writers' skill condition, the presumed readers' condition and the symbolic value condition.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape; Language hierarchy; Ethnolinguistic vitality

1 Introduction

The study of the relationship between language and society has become an increasingly important field of study as communication and intergroup relations, in recent years, have expanded. Language is one of the most powerful emblems of social behaviour. No doubt, the dimensions of social behaviour and human interactions are often revealed through the study of the use of language in society as well as the relationship that exists between language and society.

The visual language that is used in the city is an important part of society. In other words, the linguistic landscape of society is comprised of items displayed in the written form in the public space as texts on the windows of shops, commercial signs, advertising billboards, graffiti, official notices, traffic signs which are produced and utilized by social actors. The contents of these

items often exceed their communicative functions. The aim of linguistic landscape research, therefore, is to “describe and identify systematic patterns of the presence and absence of languages in public spaces” as well as the dynamics behind the decisions creating these patterns (Shohamy & Ben-Rafael 2015).

The concept of linguistic landscape has motivated several linguists and researchers (such as Griffin, 2004 and Ben-Rafael et al. 2006) to conduct studies in different sites, cities and countries to show the importance of linguistic landscapes in such places. The symbolic construction of the public space can be seen in terms of the linguistic objects or the visible language on signs in the public space. The study of the visibility of language in the public space tend to reveal a lot about the spread, status, vitality and dominance of languages in different social and cultural contexts.

Nigeria is typically and prototypically a multiethnic and multicultural nation where diverse languages and cultures compete (Akindele and Adegbite, 2005). Based on the figures of the recent (2006) national census, the country is populated by over 140 million people. There are also over 250 ethnic groups (Akindele and Adegbite, 2005) and about 500 languages in Nigeria (Crystal, 2003). Multilingualism in Nigeria is studied not just in terms of the number of languages that exist in the repertoire of individuals and the nation but in terms of the sociolinguistic complexities that emanate from their diversity. Modern architecture, traditional housing patterns, traditional and westernised ways of life, all co-existing side by side impressively, have earned Ibadan the epithet “city-village” (Oyebiyi, 2008). The status of Ibadan as a city with the largest concentration of Yoruba, one of Nigeria’s major ethnic groups, as well as the seat of one of the nation’s largest administrative, commercial and industrial centres, where English is likely to be widely used, has effects on its sociolinguistic reality.

2 The sociocultural setting of the study

Ibadan – the capital of the then Western Nigeria which is Oyo State capital city – is one of the most densely populated African cities. Two million people, mostly from other regions of Nigeria and the world, are thought to live there (Makinde, 2012). The author also recognises three homogenous groups in the residential structure of Ibadan. The traditional sections of the city, known as the core areas (such as Bere, Ayeye, and Agbeni), are characterised by high rates of poverty, dense populations, poor physical design, deteriorating buildings, inadequate health care facilities, high prevalence of illiteracy and limited socioeconomic activity. Majority of people living in the intermediate zones, such as Molete, Oke-Ado, Mokola, Eleyele, and Agbowo, are either recent migrants or residents of neighboring Yoruba towns and ethnic groups. The population density here is lower than in traditional districts, and housing is moderately distributed, though not as in the outer areas. The elite primarily live in the city's periphery area, which includes Alalubosa G. R. A, Akobo Estate, Oluyole Estate, Bodija and other well-planned ones. Adetunji (2013) makes a similar claim regarding the

geographical features of Ibadan in his exposition about the city's eleven (11) Local administrative units. He classifies six areas as "semi-urban" (Akinyele, Egbeda, Ido, Lagelu, and Ona-Ara) and five as "urban" (Ibadan North, Ibàdàn North-East, Ibàdàn North-West, Ibàdàn South-East, and Ibàdàn South-West).

Ibadan was established in 1829 as a station for soldiers from Oyo, Ife, and Ijebu. It was created as a result of the conflicts that threatened the Yoruba people's ability to maintain their racial unity in the early 19th century. According to Oyebiyi (2008), the village was formerly known as Eba Odan, which translates to "near the savannah" and was given to it by passers-by due to its location between the savanna and the forest belt. Time reduced the two words, *Eba Odan* to *Ebadan* and, finally, it became Ibadan. It was founded before the colonial rule was established in Nigeria around 1893. According to Salami (2013), to establish itself and protect the Yoruba people from the Fulani Jihadists ravaging the northern region in the 19th century, Ibadan engaged in a number of conflicts.

The Ibadan *Soge*, or early inhabitants of Ibadan, were a group of *Egba Aguras*. The settlement back then consisted of a number of hill ranges with elevations ranging from 160 to 275 metres (Salami, 2013). Later, it developed as a hub for marketing for traders from the grassland and woodland regions. The city's rulers and the most significant economic group were the warriors (Falola, 1984). As settlers mostly traded in food items, animals and slaves, it had an economic boom in agriculture.

Today, Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, has grown in population and territorial expansion. It has grown from its population of about 70,000 inhabitants in 1856 to a densely populated multiethnic and multicultural cosmopolitan city. According to the United Nations (2014), Ibadan is one of the West African cities that have population growth of more than 100,000 per year, a result of both natural growth and net migration. One of Nigeria's greatest population densities can be found there (NPC, 2006). Given a projected annual growth rate of 4.6% from 2010 to 2020, the city's population is expected to reach about 5.03 million by 2025 (UN DESA, 2012).

The emergence of Ibadan as the headquarters of the defunct Western Region (Oyebiyi, 2008) contributed to its advancement and attraction to expatriates and other ethnic groups to different opportunities that exist in the city. This could be due to the high literacy level that existed in the Western Region in comparison with other regions in the country which could be due to factors such as the literacy levels of the people, the prevalence of articulate press, media and economic activities and the regional government's programmes which made people benefit from free education in 1955 (Kolawole & Adepoju, 2007). In other words, the opportunities that exist in the city have led to the influx of different linguistic and cultural groups to it. Ibadan is occupied predominantly by the Yoruba ethnic group making up about 95 percent of the population (Olatubara, 1995). The remaining 5 percent appear to be from other ethnic groups such as Igbo, Hausa, Ibibio, Edo, etc. The Yoruba ethnic group, therefore, predominates the city. This is obvious in the social interactions, kinship ties and compound housing system (Mabogunje, 1968). The city has the status of the

administrative capital of Oyo state with different industrial and commercial activities attracting people to the city leading to its development.

Various institutions, commercial and industrial activities, governmental policies and programmes have all aided the city's expansion. Olatubara (1995) holds that the extension of the train line to Ibadan contributed significantly to the development of Ibadan and this extension coupled with the convergence of Ijebu-Ode and Abeokuta routes in Ibadan further facilitated its growth and rapid physical expansion. It is the main commercial and educational centre of the state. Civil servants, artisans, industrialists, store owners, traders, and farmers make up a large portion of the population. Also, institutions and industries like the Nigerian Breweries have largely contributed to its growth, development and physical expansion. According to Oyebiyi (2008), the largest teaching hospital in West Africa (the University College Hospital), the Polytechnic, Ibadan, private universities, the School of Agriculture and Co-operative College, and the Nigerian Breweries are among the research and training institutions in the city. Many of these elements have helped to shape Ibadan into what it is today.

3 The language situation in Ibadan

People of different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds have migrated to Ibadan owing to the opportunities for a better life that abound in the city. English or Nigerian Pidgin is usually considered the lingua franca of such migrants who often consist of different minority groups in the sociolinguistic environment of Ibadan. Yoruba is, however, one of the most used languages by them.

The policies made by the government on language tend to promote a positive attitude towards English vis-a-vis Yoruba. Even though the social, political, and economic prominence of Ibadan, especially for being the (erstwhile) center of regional administration has necessitated an immigration flow (Adetunji 2013), Yoruba is still the most used indigenous language in the city. In the city, English, being Nigeria's official language, is considered a superordinate language which many people have a positive attitude to. Akindele and Adegbite (1999) observe that the other hundreds of languages are not considered as important the way these indigenous languages are.

Ibadan's sociolinguistic reality is impacted by its role as the city with the highest concentration of one of Nigeria's major ethnic groups (Yoruba), as well as one of the country's largest administrative, commercial, and industrial hubs where English is likely to be widely spoken. There appears to also be the extensive use of Nigeria's native languages in Ibadan but there is the official recognition of English accompanying its widespread use by many residents. Also, societal multilingualism in Ibadan can be attributed to the city's geographical location, economic activities and metropolitan nature. Its status as the administrative and economic capital of the Western Region before its delineation into six states predisposes it not only to being a place of attraction and influx for foreigners but different ethnolinguistic groups.

4 Multilingualism in Nigeria

There are sociolinguistic implications for the multiplicity of languages in Nigeria. No doubt, this situation raises issues about the status and functions of the languages used in the country. Controversies surround the agreement on the number of languages used in the Nigerian multilingual context. Simply put, an account of the total number of indigenous languages in Nigeria is not certain as scholars have different figures for this. In other words, there is no agreement yet over the number of indigenous languages that are spoken in Nigeria. There are some 500 languages in Nigeria (Crystal, 2003) and a conservative estimate of 400 languages (Akindele and Adegbite, 2005) and over 400 Bamgbose (1977). Also, according to Adegbija (2004), suggestions shift from 200, to 300, 368, 369 (e.g. Osaji 1979; Bamgbose, 1971; Brann, 1990). What is certain, therefore, is that there are several hundreds of languages used in the country (Ezema, 2009). Different ethnic groups in the nation tend to interpret the choice of any of the indigenous languages as the country's lingua franca as a way of imposing domination. None of the indigenous languages, also, has been seen to be capable of fostering growth, unity and development and coping with the realities of modernity if adopted as the official and national language.

Adegbija (2004) identifies three categories of languages used in Nigeria. He identifies about 450 languages as indigenous or native languages out of which Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo have been constitutionally recognised as major. English, French, Arabic, German and Russian are some of the exogenous languages he recognises. Nigerian pidgin belongs to his last category of pidgin languages. Pidgin English is one of Nigeria's important languages. It is spoken as a language of wider communication especially in trade in most parts of the southern states in Nigeria. Pidgin serves predominantly as the language of commerce, mass propaganda and mobilisation at the grassroots level of entertainment in music and of interethnic communication in schools and some cities like Port Harcourt and Benin-City (Adegbija, 2004).

Nigeria belongs to the "Outer Circle" of Kachru (1986)'s classification since English, which does not belong to any ethnic group in the country, is the official language that is used in all parts of the country for various purposes. The English language performs both official and national functions at the level of administration, politics, education, trade and commerce and science and technology (Akindele and Adegbite, 2005). This appears to be why Cenoz and Gorter (2008) consider it a threat to linguistic diversity because of the detriments its predominance places on other languages. However, it plays a unifying role and serves as the language of communication among people of different tribes and languages which is a role none of the indigenous languages have been able to play.

Surely, Nigeria's multilingual situation is complex. The study of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of cities and urban environments becomes necessary in understanding the linguistic repertoire of societies especially as the linguistic practices and experiences of people throughout the

world have become diverse as a result of migration, media, the virtual space of the internet and educational travel.

5 Multilingualism in linguistic landscape (LL)

Linguistic landscape surpasses just being a linguistic phenomenon but a manifestation of diverse aspects of reality particularly in multilingual contexts where people of different ethnolinguistic groups come in contact and interact for various reasons. Not only does it show the use of language in society, but it also reveals the presence of languages especially in terms of their coexistence which helps us to understand the rapidly changing urban landscapes. In other words, multilingualism has an important focus in linguistic landscape research.

The study of the linguistic landscape is particularly interesting in bilingual and multilingual contexts. Studies such as Gorter (2006) and Barni (2008) have focused on linguistic landscape as an element of multilingual contexts with varying focus on issues of language visibility, language shift, language diversity and language vitality. The methodology for including LL in a mapping of linguistic diversity was developed by Barni (2008). Studies on multilingualism in the linguistic landscape are often carried out in situations of language contact especially where migrants have settled in a host community (Barni, 2008; Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael, 2015) and the visibility of languages is often linked to the relative vitality of sociolinguistic groups (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). Landry and Bourhis (1997) in their approach introduced linguistic landscape as a concern in multilingual research with their view of “linguistic landscape” as a newly established approach in the field of language policy and planning which aims to examine multilingualism in speech communities. Ideas about societal multilingualism serve to help in focusing on language choice, hierarchies of languages, contact-phenomena, regulations, and aspects of literacy (Mahemuti, 2018) as well as the importance of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of communities. This knowledge helps in the understanding of globalisation, language policy and the long-term consequences of language contact.

Linguistic landscape offers ways of explaining language use in multilingual societies. The study of the LL can contribute to the understanding of language and cultural diversity as it reflects the population of the city, either the languages in use among the permanent inhabitants and immigrants or the way information is provided to visitors or tourists (Budarina, 2015). What this suggests is how the study of the use of language on signs serves to reveal the linguistic composition of societies as well as the presence of the different ethnic groups and the communicative patterns in such places. Truly, most of the works on linguistic landscape have been carried out in multilingual societies. Different languages have been found represented on the public signs in Israel (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara and Trumper-Hecht, 2006); Basque Country (Cenoz and Gorter, 2006); Jordanian cities (Alomoush, 2015); Tunisia; (Said, 2019). Even, Al-Athwary (2017) holds that despite the fact that the speech community in Yemen is generally monolingual in Arabic, the public space of Yemen is

primarily multilingual. Backhaus (2005) studied the diachronic development of Tokyo's linguistic landscape since the early 1990s as well as the coexistence of older and newer generations of signs in the streets of Tokyo. Results suggest an increase in linguistic heterogeneity (Backhaus, 2005). There is the coexistence of English, Japanese, Korean and Chinese on the signs in the streets. As Japan has been known as one of the few prototypes of a predominantly monolingual society, the variety of languages and scripts displayed on these signs is impressive. Since the extent to which a language is visible is one approach to understanding better attitude towards that language, the visibility or absence of a language in the public space echoes far-reaching statements not just about value and relevance of the language but also the language practices in society. Pennycook (2010), in this direction, views multilingualism in the linguistic landscape as a practice focusing on the relationship of uniformity depicted in messages conveyed by languages presented in the linguistic landscapes. This suggests that the use of languages that occur on signs in the linguistic landscape gives insights into the nature of society where they are used.

Multilingualism has an important focus in linguistic landscape research. Research on multilingualism in the linguistic landscape is often carried out in situations of language contact especially where migrants have settled in a host community (Barni, 2008; Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael, 2015). Leimgruber (2017) investigates the linguistic landscape of Saint Catherine Street, Montreal, Quebec in Canada. The community's visibility of language in the public space reflects the reality of the federal policy of bilingualism, the nation's sociolinguistic realities as well as laws strengthening the use of French. The research reveals the representation and management of visible mono-, bi- and multilingualism in the light of the nation's language policy and linguistic distribution favourable to the use of English and French. The visibility of other languages (Korean, Chinese, Czech, Spanish, Polish and German) are interpreted as merely indexical, symbolic and therefore mildly controlled. In the study of the representation of multilingualism in Tunisia's urban landscape, Said (2019) reveals the complex language situation as well as the place of multilingualism in helping to negotiate identities in the society of Tunisia. There is diversity in the use of languages on the monolingual bilingual and multilingual signs. Alomoush (2015) appears to represent the first study of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of Jordan. The research reveals the dominance of both Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and English on monolingual and multilingual signs as well as the marginalisation and stigmatisation of minority languages. The findings of the study are in consonance with Landry and Bourhis's (1997) observation about the dominant language on public signs being normally the language of the majority group that largely controls a specific region or area. The presence of English is linked to its association with globalisation, sophistication and modernity. The dominance of MSA is linked to the nation's Arabic nationalism. The presence or absence of languages in the public space communicates symbolic messages about the importance, power, significance and relevance of certain languages (Shohamy, 2006) in the multilingual context.

Given the review of these previous studies, studies which explore the linguistic landscape of Africa and Nigeria particularly, are needful. Most of these studies have focused on the linguistic landscape of Europe and Asia. Almost all the studies share a feature of not having a definitive theoretical framework to guide the analysis of data. The study of the visual language use in the environment will provide a more diversified perspective on the representation of languages in multilingual societies.

6 Methodology

Backhaus' (2007) Sociolinguistic framework and Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) model have been selected as the theoretical basis of this study. Backhaus (2007) developed and used his framework in his study of the signs of multilingualism in Tokyo. He also developed analytical categories of top-down versus bottom-up geographic distribution, code preference, part writing, visibility as well as idiosyncrasies and layering. Spolsky and Cooper (1991), in their study of language use on signs, in the eastern parts of the old city of Jerusalem, formulate three conditions to account for the motivations behind the choice of language on public signs.

6.1 Data collection

The data was collected with the aid of a digital camera. The digital camera as a device for documenting data has been used in linguistic landscape studies such as Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) Akindele (2011), Cindy (2011), Alomoush (2015) and Zheng and Luo (2019). This device enabled us to handle a sizeable random sampling of the signs in the study area.

6.2 Sampling technique and procedure

Cities have been known as a showcase for the visual display of symbols and images with shopping and industrial areas having the highest density. Not only do majority of the world's population live in urban areas but the city has become a hotspot of immigration and the resulting ethnic and linguistic mixing offers various possibilities to examine linguistic processes such as language shift, language acceptance, the rise of new varieties (Thema, 2012) as well as linguistic landscape. The urban dynamics of the city, marked by its typical cosmopolitan nature, predisposes it to constant influx of people of different ethnic backgrounds and, consequently, multilingualism.

The purposive sampling technique enabled the representation of cosmopolitan areas where business and commercial activities in Ibadan are expected take place. However, different sections of each of the areas selected for sampling were reflected on the signs photographed. Through this process, the data was collected from the signs found in these Ibadan areas. The sample was representative, in that way, and conclusions about the use of language on signs in

Ibadan from this sample of 280 signs formed an adequate representation. No doubt, different types of texts exist on public signs such as graffiti and place names found in this city. The study has, however focused on choice of public road signs, advertising billboards, commercial shop signs and inscriptions on buildings. These signs, although were selected for personal consideration., are units of signs that constitute the object of study within the scope of linguistic landscape.

7 Data analysis

7.1 Language distribution

This section delves into the analysis of the distribution and patterns of language use on signs in relation to the sociolinguistic contexts. The signs are analysed with respect to their distribution, configuration, frequency, the interaction of languages and the ordering of languages in order to provide a more comprehensive overview of the diversity of languages.

Table 1. *Signs and the number of languages used in Iwo Road*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | English only | Yoruba only | English and Yoruba | English and Igbo | English and Arabic | |
| Advertising billboards | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 4 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Total | 27 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 67.5% | 5% | 17.5% | 7.5% | 2.5% | 100% |

This part deals with the quantitative analysis of languages used in Iwo Road. There is the dominance of English on the signs as well as the prevalence of monolingualism. The high percentage of monolingual English signs is due to the dominant use of English on advertising billboards, public road signs and inscriptions on buildings Even though Yoruba, Igbo and Arabic are visible languages on the signs, they seem to be given diminished visibility as they are not dominantly used the way English is used. This gives credence to the cosmopolitan nature of Iwo Road as even though there appears to be the presence of people of varying ethnic groups in the area, English is still the language that seems to guarantee the intelligibility of the information on signs.

Table 2. *Signs and the number of languages used in Challenge*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| | English only | Yoruba only | English and Yoruba | English and Arabic | English, Hausa, and Arabic | |
| Advertising billboards | 7 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 32 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 80% | 2.5% | 12.5% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 100% |

This part deals with the quantitative analysis of languages used in Challenge. The analysis reveals that although there is the dynamics of language interaction in the community, there is the prevalence of English on signs. Yoruba is, however, the next most visually displayed language. The other languages found (Arabic and Hausa) have a marginal representation on signs in comparison with English and Yoruba. The analysis suggests the presence of other ethnic groups in the community but the fact that the largest percentage of all the signs counted, in this community, is predominantly in English, especially with the way it is represented on commercial shop signs and advertising billboards gives credence to its official status and wide recognition by people of different ethnicities in the community. This reality also suggests that there is an orientation towards monolingual language visibility in the sociolinguistic context of Challenge.

Table 3. *Signs and the number of languages used in Dugbe*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | English only | Yoruba only | English and Yoruba | English and Igbo | |
| Advertising billboards | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 7 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 27 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 67.5% | 2.5% | 27.5% | 2.5% | 100% |

This part deals with the quantitative analysis of languages used in Dugbe. Although the analysis suggests linguistic heterogeneity, there is an orientation towards monolingualism with the predominance of English. There is the preponderance of English especially on commercial shop signs and public road signs, adding a glimpse of sophistication to the goods and services being advertised and those offered in shops. It also serves as a means of enabling communicative efficiency on the public road signs by the institutions that own them. The presence of Igbo and the high incidence of the presence of Yoruba on the signs connotes the presence of speakers who are proficient in the use of Yoruba and the sign owners' interest in reaching out to them.

Table 4. *Signs and the number of languages used in Mokola*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| | English only | Arabic only | English and Yoruba | English and Hausa | English, Yoruba, and Igbo | |
| Advertising billboards | 6 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 6 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 29 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 72.5% | 2.5% | 20% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 100% |

The analysis of the distribution of the languages on the signs reveals the status of languages in the sociolinguistic context of Mokola. The pervasive use of monolingual English on advertising billboards shows the wide acceptability of English and the sign owners' interest in reaching out to a variety of customers and clients who although may be knowledgeable in other languages prefer to read the information signs in English due to the positive connotations attached to it. Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo seem to be used on such advertising billboards since they are languages that quite a number of people are expected to be familiar with. The sign owner in this way is trying to establish solidarity with them. The dominance of English on the commercial shop signs, inscriptions on buildings and public road signs can be explained in terms of its place as an important language of trade and as a means of helping business owners promote the marketability of their products and services as well as its place in promoting communicative efficiency, making it easy for the presumed writers to reach out to quite a number of people speaking different languages.

Table 5. *Signs and the number of languages used on Ring Road*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| | English only | Yoruba only | Arabic only | English and Yoruba | English, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba | |
| Advertising billboards | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 32 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 80% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 12.5% | 2.5% | 100% |

The analysis shows the place of English as the most visually displayed language in comparison with Yoruba, Arabic, Igbo and Hausa in the linguistic landscape of Ring Road. This shows the credence given to the use of English in terms of its role in advertisement, as a lingua franca and a language with a privileged position. Yoruba is the only language used on bilingual signs apart from English. Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba clearly have diminished visibility on the signs. The implication of the dominance of English especially in terms of its prevalence on commercial shop signs and advertising billboards relates to the cosmopolitan nature of Ring Road, characterising its space as a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities. It seems shop owners are aware of this reality and simply use English to communicate with their prospective clients and customers through it since it is the language that the majority are likely to understand.

Table 6. *Signs and the number of languages used in Olodo*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | English only | Yoruba only | English and Yoruba | English, Arabic, and Yoruba | |
| Advertising billboards | 2 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 4 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 3 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 13 | 4 | 22 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 32.5% | 10% | 55% | 2.5% | 100% |

The representation of languages in the linguistic landscape of Olodo shows a lot about the dynamics of language interaction in the context. The dominance of Yoruba especially on advertising billboards, commercial shop signs and inscriptions on buildings shows the large presence of Yoruba speakers and the sign owners' intention in reaching out to them. It is also due to the presence of warning notices and directional signs. Its dominance is also as a result of signs expressing identity, solidarity and those showing ownership of streets and buildings which mostly appear in Yoruba. These signs tend to show the actors' identity and their commitments to an ethnolinguistic group (Yoruba). This suggests that English and Yoruba are the dominant languages in this community while Arabic seems to have little or no prevalence.

Table 7. *Signs and the number of languages used in Sango*

| Signs | Frequency of language(s) | | | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| | English only | Yoruba only | English and Yoruba | English and Igbo | English, Yoruba, and French | English, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba | English, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, and Pidgin | |
| Advertising billboards | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Commercial shop signs | 6 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Inscriptions on buildings | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Public road signs | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 24 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 40 |
| Percentages | 60% | 2.5% | 25% | 5% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 2.5% | 100% |

The analysis of the distribution of languages on the signs in Sango reveals the level of diversity present in the area. The occurrence of Pidgin further reiterates its place as an important trade language in Nigeria. The use of French on the advertising billboard seems to depict its association with uniqueness, providing information to not just residents of the city but also the foreign tourist population which serves as a means of increasing the income of its owner. It also conveys additional information about the bank and the sign owner's international affiliation. Here, French serves as an attention getting device while English seems to be favoured for its official relevance and status.

7.2 Categorising the signs

The photographs were categorised and grouped into different types of signs for the analysis of the patterns of language use. Each category contains a detailed analysis of photographs using Backhaus' (2007) analytic framework including the four types of "writing" which he named monophonic writing, homophonic writing, mixed part writing and polyphonic writing. The categorisations were also influenced by Spolsky and Cooper's (2009) components based on their preference model for the examination of the relationship between the languages, their owners and how they relate to the sociolinguistic context of the communities in the understanding of the patterns of language use.

Signs with texts having a complete translation (or transliteration) of each other are homophonic signs. In a mixed part writing style, only elements of a sign are available in two or more languages. The polyphonic style has different languages without the mutual translations of languages. On monophonic signs, there is only one language used. Polyphonic, homophonic and mixed part writing style relate to multilingual signs while monophonic concerns only monolingual signs. In other words, there is complete translation or transliteration of languages in homophonic writing. Mixed part writing refers to signs that have partial translation or transliteration of languages. Complete translation or transliteration of languages is not possible in polyphonic writing, and in monophonic writing.

Spolsky and Cooper (1991) proposed a preference model based on three components: the "sign writer's skill" condition, the "presumed reader" condition, and the "symbolic value" condition. The "sign writer's skill" condition necessitates the linguistic ability of the writer of the sign. The "presumed reader" condition requires the intelligibility of the sign to the supposed addressee as it considers the reader's linguistic ability. The "symbolic value" condition has an underlying motivation to show power, uniqueness, distinctiveness, identity and solidarity in language choice.

These models provide a rich background useful in analysing the motivations for the construction and initiation of signs and the patterns of language use on them.

Table 8. *Patterns of language use*

| Communities | Monophonic signs | Mixed part signs | Homophonic signs | Polyphonic signs |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Challenge | 33 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Dugbe | 28 | 0 | 1 | 11 |
| Iwo Road | 29 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Mokola | 30 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| Olodo | 17 | 1 | 0 | 22 |
| Ring Road | 34 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Sango | 25 | 3 | 0 | 12 |
| Total | 196 | 6 | 4 | 74 |

7.2.1 Monophonic signs

In the data, there are instances of monophonic signs in English and Yoruba although most of the monophonic signs are in English. Such signs are mostly directional ('in'), navigational ('This way in, Welcome!'), warning ('beware of 419 this house is not for sale', *to sibi ko ya were tabi ko ku*— meaning 'urinate here, become insane or die', *to sibi ko ya were*— 'urinate here and go insane'), place names ('cocoa house') and regulatory ('no smoking, waiting, hawking' /*mase to sibi*—meaning 'do not urinate here'), persuasive ('core fashion/infusion of extremity outfits') and commercial ('divine mercy stores').

Most of the monophonic signs are regulatory and business signs. Monolingual Arabic on a mosque wall and a residential building appears to be used by the owners of the signs to identify with Islam since Arabic is often associated with the Islamic religion.

Figure 1. *A monolingual English commercial shop sign at Ring Road*



The use of English on this sign could be explained in terms of the presumed reader's and the symbolic value condition as it seems to be the status marker and the language that guarantees the intelligibility of the information on the signs as well as the language in which the expected reader of the signs is able to read. The monophonic signs in Yoruba are mostly used for warning and admonition. The sign in Figure 2 below conveys a prohibitive information.

Figure 2. *A monolingual English sign in Olodo*

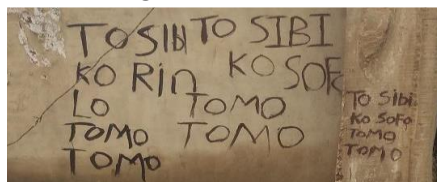


Figure 3. *A monolingual Yoruba sign on Ring Road*



Yoruba seems to be used in Figure 3 above as a form of advice to the presumed reader about recognising the important place of Jesus as the only way to salvation in Christianity. The use of Yoruba serves to demonstrate the vitality of

Christianity as well as the place of the Yoruba language in spreading Christianity in the sociolinguistic context of Ibadan.

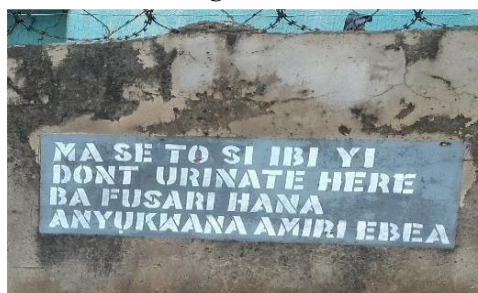
7.2.2 Homophonic signs

The few instances of these homophonic signs denote the desirability of the sign owners in reaching out to a wide range of individuals who may not be proficient in the dominant code (English). The languages used on these signs are English, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa.

Figure 4. *A Yoruba/English bilingual sign in Sango*



Figure 5. *A Yoruba/English/Hausa/Igbo/multilingual sign in Challenge*



The sign in Figure 4 is a bilingual sign placed on the wall of a building warning people from urinating in the surrounding of the building. It relates to the “presumed reader’s” condition as the sign is presented to be intelligible to the presumed readers who are expected to know the dominant languages of the community. The sign in Figure 5 is not only used to suggest language hierarchy and dominance but also multiculturalism. The “symbolic value” condition explains the motivation for the choice of English, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa presupposing the presence of these language groups as well as the attempt by the signwriter to show solidarity towards them.

7.2.3 Mixed part signs

There are only three mixed part signs in the data and the languages used on them are Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Arabic and English. The sign in Figure 6 is the only mixed part sign in the data (in the linguistic landscape of Challenge). The sign is an advertising billboard belonging to a business corporation producing a particular brand of chicken seasoning cubes “Mamador”. Only a word has been translated from English into Arabic and, in this case, there is only a partial translation of a word in one language into another one. “HALAL” is the only word translated into the Arabic language on the sign. “HALAL” as well as its Arabic translation is associated with the Islamic dietary laws. The word loosely translates to “permissible” in English which has been used to suggest that the seasoning cube has been prepared and stored lawfully. This tends to convey on

the product a mark of distinctiveness and uniqueness which promotes its marketability. Arabic, in this case, appears to lend a sense of exclusivity to the sign. This appears to be a device for enhancing the acceptability of the product by the general public especially those who may be interested in consuming food items that are considered “halal”. The sign could also be directed to the foreign tourist population who might be interested in consuming the halal type of seasoning cubes.

Figure 6. *An Arabic/English bilingual sign*



Figure 7. *A Yoruba/Hausa/Igbo/English sign*



The sign in Figure 7 is the only mixed part sign in linguistic landscape of Ring Road. It is a business sign that advertises a brand of a non-alcoholic beverage. It is a bottom-up sign and the languages used on it are English Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. On the mixed sign, *Wa* is a Yoruba expression that loosely translates to “come” in English. It is translated into two other languages (Hausa and Igbo) which are *zo* and *bia*. These expressions from the three major languages in Nigeria express the same meaning which translates to “come” in English. The mix of these languages appears to be a strategy used to promote the marketability of the products on the sign to people of various ethnic groups. Although there appears to be the dominance of Yoruba with the use of *Igo kan* (‘one bottle’) and *Waso ni o* (‘It’s fifty naira’), English is still prominently used with the use of “bottles”. It is worth noting that the sign owner seems to be aware of the influence of Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo languages, especially as they are presented as alternative languages to English in branding the company.

The symbolic value condition of the multilingual nature of the sign is explainable in terms of how the product is presented as useful to all kinds of people of different identities and ethnicities. The dominance of English relates to the “good reason hypothesis” since it is a status marker in society. It is therefore the preferred language of prestige that conveys a positive image on signs.

7.2.4 Polyphonic signs

Most of the bilingual and multilingual signs in the data are polyphonic in nature. The languages on each of the signs convey different meanings. On some of the signs, proficiency in all the languages used on them is needed to understand the meaning of the sign while in others, the indigenous languages such as “Ogechi” (Igbo), “Akinola” (Yoruba), “Leke” (Yoruba), “Iya Ibeji” (Yoruba) and *Imuse*

Ileri ‘the fulfillment of a promise’ (Yoruba) are only used as part of the business names in addition to English. The principle of power relations as applied by Ben-Rafael (2009) may help to account for the motivations behind the high incidence of the use of Yoruba which is the dominant indigenous language. The indigenous languages are used to show identity and solidarity and the commitment of the actors to their linguistic groups while English is demonstrated as the language of business, sophistication, prestige, wider communication and a means of helping business owners increase sales. This reality gives the indigenous languages diminished visibility and relevance. The use of Yoruba on inscriptions on buildings on signs showing ownership could be interpreted as conveying the message that showing ownership is more important than being understood.

Figure 8. *An Igbo/English bilingual commercial sign shop sign*



Figure 9. *An Igbo/English bilingual commercial shop sign*



The sign in Figure 8 is a bottom-up sign belonging to a private business venture. The use of Igbo as part of the business name in ‘IGBO FOOD RESTAURANT’ can be explained in terms of the large presence of Igbo cultural groups and an attempt by the presumed writer of the sign to show solidarity towards them as the restaurant is shown to be a place where all kinds of Igbo food is offered for sale. It seems to also be used to index their identity and contributes to showing the preponderance of polyphonic writing on signs in Iwo Road as there are more polyphonic signs than there are monophonic and homophonic signs in this sociolinguistic context and their predominance can be explained in terms of the extent of multiculturalism in Iwo Road.

8 Summary

The analysis reveals that the linguistic landscape of Ibadan is diverse, multidimensional and multilingual resulting from the cosmopolitan nature of the city. The analysis of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of the communities brings into the limelight the reflection of linguistic hierarchies, language choice, covert and overt language attitudes, language vitality, power structure, ethnolinguistic diversities and nature of multilingualism in Ibadan.

The languages used on the signs are Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Arabic, French, Nigerian and English. The languages are used in various ways to attract the attention of the public, to index the social identity of actors, to show distinctiveness and uniqueness, show solidarity, social attractiveness. facilitate

the intelligibility of signs and to challenge the power of dominant languages. The dominance of English is explainable not just in terms of its official status but also the prestige and sophistication attached to it. Yoruba, the primary indigenous language of the community, is the next most visible language in the linguistic landscape of the communities. The heterogeneous and cosmopolitan nature of the communities tends to be responsible for the nature of language diversity found in the linguistic landscapes of the communities.

9 Conclusion

The linguistic situation in the sociocultural context of Ibadan and also gives insights into the patterns of languages use in other cities in Nigeria. Even though Ibadan is a southwestern state with a large population of Yoruba speakers, its metropolitan nature and urban dynamics seems to have made it attraction to people of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Despite its ethnolinguistic diversity, however, there seems to be a positive attitude attached to the English language. Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo are used in various ways to suggest multiculturalism, for communicative efficiency and for ethnic identity. English Yoruba and Arabic are also used for religious purposes. There seems to be a positive attitude attached to French and Nigerian Pidgin with the way they are structured on the business signs. Their use also suggests the widespread contact between languages in Nigeria. The superordinate status is demonstrated through its use on the signs and its patterning. The approaches used to analyse the data for this research have enhanced the analysis of multilingualism within the linguistic landscape of the communities. The heterogeneous and cosmopolitan nature of the communities tend to be responsible for the nature of language diversity found in the linguistic landscapes of the communities.

10 Limitations of the study

The process of data collections was a demanding activity that involved moving around streets and roads as well as visiting business ventures and places of residence, thereby observing and taking pictures of signs that were related to the subject of investigation. A great deal of attention was placed to taking photographs of signs that would be research worthy. The research is limited in terms of the geographical areas it covered.

Attention was placed to taking representative samples of data but not all the signs in the communities were photographed. In other words, only 280 photographs of signs were examined. Also, some signs that could have constituted part of data for the study were ignored and left out because they contained expressions that could not be easily analysed as belonging to a particular language. For instance, abbreviations were used on some signs.

11 Suggestions for further studies

The study is descriptive research and it has only focused on multilingualism in selected Ibadan communities of Iwo Road, Ring Road, Sango, Mokola, Challenge, Olodo, and Dugbe and is, however, limited in this respect. The following areas, therefore, are suggested for further studies:

1. More communities in Ibadan need to be covered to provide a well-rounded study on multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of the city. Also, researchers can explore other cities in Nigeria including cities in the eastern and northern parts and conduct comparative studies on multilingual language use in them to reveal what variations in them will show.
2. Future studies could also collect sociolinguistic information about linguistic landscape actors (sign writers and sign owners) to see what variables influence the choice of language in the public space and what they perceive about their choices reflects the power and status of various ethnolinguistic groups in the country.
3. It is further suggested that researchers may also investigate the attitudes of the public towards multilingualism in the linguistic landscapes of communities as well as their perceptions in order to understand the way different individuals and groups perceive the linguistic landscape.

12 About the author

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