Linguistic Landscape in a Multilingual Cameroon

Linguistic Landscape in a Multilingual Cameroon

By

Wenslus Asongu

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

Linguistic Landscape in a Multilingual Cameroon

By Wenslus Asongu

This book first published 2025

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2025 by Wenslus Asongu

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-5164-6
ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-5165-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ix

List of Tables x

List of Figures xi

List of Appendices xv

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms xvi

Abstract xviii

Chapter One 1
Overview
1.1 Background to the Study 1
1.2 Objectives 7
1.3 Scope and Contribution of the Study 8
1.4 Motivation and Significance of the Investigation 9
1.5 Definition of Key Terms 12
1.6 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework 14
1.6.1 Literature Review 14
1.6.1.1 Linguistic Landscape in the World 14
1.6.1.1.1 Linguistic Landscape and Multilingualism 14
1.6.1.1.2 Linguistic Landscape and Ethno-linguistic Vitality 19
1.6.1.1.3 Linguistic Landscape and Language Policy 20
1.6.1.2 The Sociolinguistic Landscape of Cameroon: History and Perspectives 23
1.6.1.2.1 The English Language in Cameroon 23
1.6.1.2.2 The French Language in Cameroon 34
1.6.1.2.3 Cameroon Creole English and Camfranglais in Cameroon 40
1.6.1.2.4 The Place of Indigenous Languages in Cameroon 50
1.6.1.2.5 Bilingualism and Multilingualism in Cameroon . 60

1.6.1.2.6 Language and Meaning 81
1.6.2 Theoretical Framework 85
1.6.2.1 The Sociolinguistic Theory of Correlation 85
1.6.2.2.1 An Overview of the Notion of Sociolinguistics .. 86
1.6.2.2.2 Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Landscape 89
1.6.2.2 Pragmatic Theory..... 91
1.6.2.2.1 A Historical Overview of the Pragmatic Theory. 91
1.6.2.2.2 Pragmatic Concepts and their Relevance to Meaning Interpretation 98
Presupposition 98
Context, Implicatures and Reference..... 99
Context 100
Implicature..... 100
Reference..... 102
Reference, Indexicals and Deixis 104
1.6.2.3 Construction Grammar 106
1.6.3 Methodology 116
Introduction 116
1.6.3.1 The Setting, Sample and Sampling Techniques..... 116
1.6.3.2 The Informants..... 119
1.6.3.3 Types of Data Collected 120
1.6.3.4 Tools and Method of Data Collection..... 120
1.6.3.4.1 Pilot Phase and Validation 120
1.6.3.4.2 Data Collection Proper..... 122
1.6.3.4.3 Observation and Camera 123
1.6.3.4.4 Questionnaire and Interview 123
1.6.3.5 Method of Data Analysis 124
1.6.3.5.1 Quantitative analysis 124
1.6.3.5.2 Qualitative analysis 125

Chapter Two 127
Data Presentation, Analyses and Interpretation of the Results and Findings
2.1 Sociolinguistic Aspects of Signposts in the LL of Cameroon..... 127
2.1.1 Messages Written on Signposts in Cameroon and their Sociolinguistic Characteristics: Social and Philosophical (Ideological) Implications..... 128
2.1.1.1 The Place of Various Domains of Messages in Buea, Douala, Yaounde and Dschang..... 128

2.1.1.2 The Position of Various Domains of Messages and some Background Information about Cameroon in the General Zone under Study 139
2.1.1.2.1 Types of Religion-related Messages and the Religious Background of Cameroonians 139
2.1.1.2.2 Sports-related Message and Sportive orientations of Cameroonians..... 142
2.1.1.2.3 Music-related Messages and Music realities about Cameroon 145
2.1.1.2.4 Education-related Messages and the Educational Background of Cameroon..... 148
2.1.1.2.5 Economic-related Messages and Economic realities about Cameroon..... 152
2.1.1.2.6 Health-related Messages and Health Realities about Cameroon 154
2.1.1.2.7 Politics-related Messages and the Political Background of Cameroon..... 156
2.1.1.2.8 Other Messages 159
2.1.1.2.9 Recapitulation of the Place of Different Domains of Messages in Cameroon 159
2.2 Sociolinguistic Contact Phenomena..... 163
2.2.1 Multilingualism and Language Dominance in Different Domains of Life in Cameroon 163
2.2.1.1 Languages used on the Religion-related Signposts.... 163
2.2.1.2 Languages used on the Sports-related signposts..... 166
2.2.1.3 Languages used on the Music-related Signposts 169
2.2.1.4 Languages used on the Education-related Signposts . 171
2.2.1.5 Languages used on the Economic-related Signposts . 174
4.2.1.6 Languages used on the Health-related Signposts..... 177
2.2.1.7 Languages used on Politics-related Signpost Messages 180
2.2.1.8 Languages and other Domains of Life in Cameroon . 183
2.2.2 Languages used in Code-mixing in Cameroon..... 188
2.3 Pragmatic Aspects of Signpost Messages, the Social Backgrounds, Philosophical (Ideological), and Attitudinal Tendencies of Cameroonians 195
2.3.1 A Pragmatic Analysis of Signpost Messages in Cameroon, Authors' Visions of Life, their Philosophical or Ideological and Attitudinal Tendencies..... 196
2.3.2 Other Signpost Messages 219

2.4 Cognitive Sociolinguistic Aspects of Signposts in Cameroon: Signpost Messages as Family of Linguistic Constructions 228
2.4.1 Signpost Messages as Linguistic Constructions 232
2.4.1.1 Lexical Constructions in Cameroon English and Cameroon Francophone English 232
2.4.1.2 Phrasal Constructions 257
2.4.1.3 Sentential Construction 262
2.4.1.4 Recapitulation of Contextual Lexical, Phrasal, and Sentential Construction and Their Meanings in CamE and CamFE 263

Chapter Three 269
General Conclusion
3.1 Summary 269
3.2 Sociolinguistic and Cognitive Sociolinguistic Implications of the Findings 273
3.3 Suggestions for Further Research 275

References 276

Appendices 296

Index of Key Authors 325

Index of Some Key Notions 329

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of some scholars, informants, proofreaders, and family members.

First and foremost, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my PhD supervisors, Prof Dr Aloysius NGEFAC and Prof Dr Gilbert Tagne SAFOTSO, for their useful and critical comments and suggestions and the time devoted to reading the work and for their libraries opened to me for the success of this research. I am incredibly grateful for their in-dept guidance throughout this investigation. Their efforts have left imprints not only in my academic life but also in my personal life. I equally remain indebted to Prof Dr Thomas Hoffmann, the Chair of English at the Catholic University of Echstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany, for providing me with some scientific books and papers on cognitive linguistics and for his significant feedback. In the same vein, I am thankful to Prof Dr Micheal Ndemanu, Professor of Multicultural Education at Ball State University, United States of America, for his moral and financial support. I am also very thankful to Prof Dr Edgar W. Schneider for inspiring, motivating and encouraging me during this study.

My sincere gratitude and honour go to all the informants (traders and authors of various signpost messages in Douala, Yaounde, Buea, and Dschang) for providing the data for this book. I wish to equally acknowledge Mr Sylvestre Nzeuta Lontio, who is a professional statistician, for accepting to process my quantitative data using the SPSS Excell Software. His expertise contributed significantly to the realisation of this book.

To all of my proofreaders, I express my sincere thanks.

I would also like to express my most incredible indebtedness to my family, especially my loving mother, Mrs Elizabeth Forju; my late father, HRH Forju John Ajua Amingoh; my wife, Stesis Asongu; and my kids, Shelton Asongu and Wilma Asongu, for being amazing to me throughout the investigation.

LIST OF TABLES

1: Number of Signpost Messages Collected per Region/Town 118
2: The Informants of the Study 119
3: Domains of Signpost Messages in Buea 129
4: Domains of Signpost of Messages in Douala 131
5: Domains of Signpost Messages in Yaounde 134
6: Domains of Signpost Messages in Dschang 137
7: Ratio between Different Religion-related Messages in the Zone under Study 139
8: Types of Sports-related Messages 142
9: Music-related Messages 146
10: Ration Between Education-related Messages 148
11: Economy-related Messages 152
12: Types of Health Messages 155
13: Types of Political Messages 157
14: The Place of the Various Domains of Life in the Zone under Study 160
15: Frequency of Languages used on the Religious-related Signposts ... 164
16: Frequency Table of Languages used on the Sports-related Signposts 166
17: The Languages used in the Music Domain in the Zone under Study 169
18: Frequency of the Languages used in the Educational Domain in the Zone of Study 172
19: Frequecy of Languages used in the Economic-related Signposts 175
20: Occurences of Languages used in the Health Domain 178
21: The Languages used in the Politics-related Signposts 181
22: Languages Found in other Domains of Life 183
23: Recapitulation of the Place of Languages used in the Zone under Study 186
24: Languages used in Code-mixing 189
25: Difference between the Researcher's and Authors's Interpretation of other SPMs 220
26: Signpost Messages Collected in Different Towns and their Frequency 228
27: Contextual Lexical, Phrasal, and Sentential Construction and Their Meanings in CamE and CamFE 263

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Braj Kachru's three Concentric Circles of English 24
Figure 2: Native English Speakers Living in the "Inner Circle" English-Speaking Countries 25
Figure 3: Lyons's Triangle of Words and Meanings 103
Figure 4a: Pie Chart Depicting the Proportions of Various Domains of Signpost Messages in Buea 130
Figure 4b: Evolution Curve of the Domains of Signpost Messages in Buea 130
Figure 5a: The Place of Various Domains of Messages in Douala 132
Figure 5b: Evolution curve of various domains of signpost messages in Douala 133
Figure 6a: The Place of Various Domains of Messages in Yaounde 135
Figure 6b: The Evolution Curve Showing the Place of Various Domains of Messages in the city of Yaounde 136
Figure 7a: The Place of Various Domains of Messages in Dschang 137
Figure 7b: The Evolution Curve Showing the Place of Various Domains of Messages in Dschang 138
Figure 8a: The Proportion of Different Religious Messages in the Zone of Study 140
Figure 8b: The evolution Curve Showing the Variation of Religious Messages in the Zone of Study 141
Figure 9a: The Place of Sports-related Messages in the General Zone of Study 144
Figure 9b: The Evolution Curve Depicting Sports-related Messages in the General Zone of Study 144
Figure 10a: The Proportion of Music Domains of Messages in the Zone of Focus 147
Figure 10b: The Variation of Sports Domains of Messages in the Zone of Study 147
Figure 11a: The Proportion of Different Categories of Education-related Messages in the Towns under Investigation 150
Figure 11b: The Variation of Education-related Messages in the Zone of Study 151
Figure 12a: The Proportion of Economic-related Messages per Town in the Zone of Study 153

Figure 12b: The Graphic Variation of Economic-related Signpost Messages 153
Figure 13a: The Proportion of Health Messages in the Zone of Study... 155
Figure 13b: The Variation of Health Messages in the Zone of Study 156
Figure 14a: The Proportion of Politics-related Messages in the Area under Study 158
Figure 14b: The Variation of Politics-related Messages in the zone of study 158
Figure 15a: The Proportion or Place of Different Domains of Activities in the Zone under Investigation and in Cameroon at Large. 161
Figure 15b: The Variation of Different Domains of Messages in Cameroon..... 161
Figure 16a: The Proportions of Languages used in Religious-related SPMs..... 164
Figure 16b: The Variation of Languages on Religious-related Signposts..... 165
Figure 17a: The Place of Various Languages in the Sports Domain in Cameroon..... 167
Figure 17b: The Variation of Languages in the SportS SPMs..... 168
Figure 18a: The Proportion of Languages used in the Music-related Signposts..... 170
Figure 18b: The Variation of Languages used in the Music-related SPMs..... 171
Figure 19a: The Proportion of Languages used in Education SPMs 173
Figure 19b: The Place of Panguages used in the Education Domain of Messages..... 173
Figure 20a: The Proportion of Languages used in the Economic domain of messages 176
Figure 20b: The Place of Various Languages in Economic-related Signposts..... 176
Figure 21a: The Proportion of Different Languages used in Health Messages 179
Figure 21b: The Place of Various Languages in the Health Domain of Messages..... 179
Figure 22a: The Proportions of Languages used in Politics-related Messages in the Zone of Study 181
Figure 22b: The Position of the Languages used on Politics-related SPMs in the Zone of Study 182
Figure 23a: The Proportion of Languages used in other Domains of Life.... 184
Figure 23b: The Variation of Languages used in other Domains of Life 185
Figure 24a: The Proportion of Various Languages in Cameroon..... 187

Figure 24b: The Positions of Languages Used in SPMs in the zone of study 187
Figure 25a: The Variation of Code-mixing Messages in Cameroon 190
Figure 25b: The Evolution Curve Revealing the Place of Different Code-mixing Messages in Cameroon 191
Figure 26: “Repetition” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE 233
Figure 27: “City” as a Lexical Construction..... 234
Figure 28: “Concours” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE 235
Figure 29: “Quitus” as a Lexical Construction 236
Figure 30: “Promotion” as a Lexical Construction..... 237
Figure 31: “Causion” as a Lexical Construction..... 237
Figure 32: “Pre-inscription” Figure 5 as a Lexical Construcion..... 238
Figure 33: “Direction” as a Lexical Construction..... 239
Figure 34: “Ekwang, eru, fufu, garri, ndole, khati khati, achu, and paper soup goat” as Lexical Constructions in CamE 240
Figure 35: “Matricule” as a Lexical Construction in CamFE/CamE..... 240
Figure 36: “Formation” as a Lexical Construction in CamFE..... 241
Figure 37: “Dodo” as a Lexical Construction in CamE..... 242
Figure 38: “Njakatu” as a Lexical Construction in CamE 242
Figure 39: “Mpu” as a Lexica Construction in CamE 244
Figure 40: “Fiesta” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE 245
Figure 41: “fufu-garri” as a Lexical Construction in CamE 246
Figure 42: “College” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE .. 247
Figure 43: “Book center” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE 248
Figure 44: “Infoline” as a Lexical Construction in CamE 249
Figure 45: “Institute” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE.. 249
Figure 46: “Key duplication” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE 250
Figure 47: “Snack Bar Restaurant” as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE 251
Figure 48: “General Commerce” as a Lexical Construction in CamFE . 252
Figure 49: “Service Traiteur’’ as a Lexical Construction in CamE and CamFE..... 252
Figure 50: “Harvest thanksgiving” as a Lexical Construction in CamE. 253
Figure 51: “Nails plug” as a Lexical Construction in CamE 254
Figure 52: “Preparatory classes” as a Lexical Construction in CamE 255
Figure 53: “Momo” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE 255
Figure 54: “Short Courses” as a Lexical Construction in CamE 256

Figure 55: “Government Bilingual High School” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE and CamFE 257
Figure 56: “Government High School” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE and CamFE 258
Figure 57: “10k” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE..... 259
Figure 58: “Crossover night” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE 259
Figure 59: “Bact to school” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE and CamFE 260
Figure 60: “Internally displaced persons” as a Phrasal Construction in CamE..... 261
Figure 61: “Food is ready” as a Sentencial Construction in CamE 262

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Some Signpost Messages 296
Appendix A1: Some Religion-related Messages 296
Appendix A2: Some Sports-related Message 299
Appendix A3: Some Music-related Messages 302
Appendix A4: Some Education-related Messages 305
Appendix A5: Some Economic-related Messages 308
Appendix A6: Some Health-related Messages 310
Appendix A7: Some Politics-related Messages 313
Appendix A8: Other Messages 314
Appendix B: Questionnaire 317
B1: Questionnaire (English Version) 317
B1: Questionnaire (French Version) 320
Appendix C: Reseearch Authorization 324

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AM	African Music
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Bu	Buea
CABTAL	Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy
CamE	Cameroon English
CamFE	Cameroon Francophone English
CBC	Cameroon Baptist Convention
CEMAC	Communauté Economique et Monétaire l'Afrique Centrale
CFA	Camfranglais
CM	Christian Messages
CONAC	Commission Nationale Anti-Corruption
COPI	Campaign or Other Political Information
CPE	Cameroon Pidgin English
Dla	Douala
Dsc	Dschang
e.g.	Example
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECRMs	Economy-related Messages
Ed.	Edition
Eds	Editions
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
Etc.	Et cetera
FC	Fooball Club
GBHS	Government Bilingual High School
HITCs	Higher Institutes and Training Centres
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRH	His Royal Highness
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IM	Islamic Messages
INJS	National Institute of Youth and Sports
IPrA	International Pragmatics Association
L1	Language one
L2	language two

LL	Linguistic Landscape
MTN	Mobile Technology Network
NACALCO	National Association of Cameroonian Language Committees
NCPBM	National Commission for the promotion of Bilingual and Multiculturalism
NDSSISRI	Names of Different Sports, Sport Institutions and Sport-related Information
NFTSs	Names of Football Teams and Stars
NHCHCHRI	Names of Hospitals, Clinics or Health Centres and Health-related information
NPSs	Nursery and Primary Schools
OMs	Other Messages
Op.cit	Opere Citato
P.	Page
PE	Pidgin English
PP.	Pages
PPFs	Political Parties and Feagures
PROPELCA	Projet de Recherche Operationelle pour l'Enseignement des Languages au Cameroun" (Operational Research Project for the Teaching of Languages in Cameroon)
PSG	Paris Saint Germain
RP	Receive Pronunciation
SIL	International Linguistic Association
SL	Second Language
SPM	Signpost Message
SPMs	Signpost Messages
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSs	Secondary schools
TCM	Typical Cameroonian Music
U.K	United Kingdom
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
Vs	Versus
WE	World Englishes
WHO	World Health Organisation
WM	Western Music
WWW	World Wide Web
Yde	Yaounde

ABSTRACT

This book investigates the Linguistic Landscape (LL) of Cameroon, a heavily multilingual postcolonial context. Specifically, it examines the sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and cognitive aspects of signpost messages in Buea, Douala, Yaounde, and Dschang. The book stems from the observation that messages displayed on signposts in Cameroon reveal significant sociolinguistic pieces of information about the nation. The investigation is therefore couched in the premise that the messages displayed on signposts in Cameroon constitute a window to the sociolinguistic landscape of the country. Through observation, photographing, questionnaires, and interviews, a total number of 1500 signpost messages targeted for the investigation together with one hundred and seventy (170) interview responses from some authors of the messages were collected. These data were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively from the perspectives of the sociolinguistic approach, pragmatic approach, and Construction Grammar approach to world Englishes. The analysis reveals multidimensional findings. First, the messages disclose different types of sociolinguistic pieces of information about their authors, language users, and Cameroonians in general. That is, their religious, sporting, musical, educational, economic, health, and political orientations. In fact, the authors of the signpost messages are interested in economy (54%), education (18%), health (8%), religion (6%), sports (3%), music (1%), and politics (1%), respectively. As regards economy, for instance, the affluence of the messages related to this domain is an indication that it is the leading domain of activity in Cameroon. In addition, as regards religion, two main types of religion are identified on signposts in Cameroon such as Christianity and Islam. However, messages concerning Christianity are more displayed on signposts as compared to Islam-related messages. Second, with regard to the linguistic background of Cameroon, the investigation points out that French and English are the dominant languages of the country. This proves that the authors of signpost messages participate in promoting the nation's bilingualism. However, they relegate various Cameroonian indigenous languages to the background in terms of different domains of life. This is why the investigation recommends the reconsideration of these languages in the LL of Cameroon. Third, the analysis divulges that some of the messages contain the pragmatic meanings which disclose the authors' visions of life, their interests, philosophical (ideological) and attitudinal tendencies. Fourth, some of the messages equally expose context-

specific lexico-syntactic peculiarities of form-meaning pairings (e.g. 'constructions'). These messages tend to constitute a family of linguistic constructions typical of Cameroon English (influenced mainly by Indigenous Languages and French) and Cameroon Francophone English (influenced by French, especially in French- speaking areas).

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Multilingual Context, Signpost messages, and Cameroon

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the general introduction of the book. It focuses on the background to the study, research objectives, scope and contribution of the book, motivation and significance of the investigation, definition of key terms, literature review and the theoretical framework, and the methodology.

1.1 Background to the Study

In a late-modern age typified by the free flow of people and ideas around the world[1], public arenas are being inundated with information relating to different domains of life. Generally, the information is displayed on public signs (such as signboards, banners, billboards, posters and walls), which are referred to as signposts in this work. Those signs or signposts reveal salient pieces of information and sociolinguistic phenomena about the society where they are found. This is interestingly the case in Cameroonian society, a heavily multilingual postcolonial context whose public spaces are characterised by all sorts of signpost messages (SPMs) written in different languages. In fact, the language of public and private messages written on different public supports in a particular area is called that area's Linguistic Landscape (LL). The ability of these signs to disclose sociolinguistic information and the manner in which different domains of life function can provide more insights into a particular society, reshape people's views and ideas, and contribute to development. Besides, considering that the LL has both an informative and a symbolic function[2], the informative function revealed in the signs in sundry languages indicates the language to be used for

---

[1] Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Metropolis: University of Minnesota Press, Vol. 1, 1996, pp. 2-29

[2] Landry, Rodrick and Y., Bourhis, Richard, *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An empirical Study*. J. Language Soc. Psychol, 1997, 1(16), pp. 23-49.

Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, et al., *Linguistic Landscape and Multilingualism: A Jewish-Arabe Comparative Study.* Unpublished reseach report, 2001.

communication in shops and other businesses, and also mirrors the comparative power of various languages. Indeed, the use of diverse languages in a given LL equally has a symbolic function, considering that language is a significant dimension of a linguistic group[1]. According to Landry and Bourhis[2], using a particular language can 'contribute most directly to the positive and social identity of ethno-linguistic group. For instance, the use of Basque in bilingual signs in Donostia does not merely provide pieces of information in Spain but has a salient symbolic function related to effective factors and the feeling of the Basque as a symbolic identity[3].

According to Landry and Bourhis[4], LL is "the language of public road signs, and advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings are combined to form the Linguistic Landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration". Considering the complexity of this definition, it is obvious that many sociolinguistic and sociocultural realities about a particular society can be revealed through its LL. Knowledge of such facts can complement and help ameliorate the social life of a territory. The expression "Linguistic Landscape" is related to concepts such as linguistic market, linguistic mosaic, ecology of languages, diversity of languages or linguistic situation. Hence, LL has to do with the social context in which more than one language is represented. Bourhis and Landry[5] summarised the definition of LL as the "language that is visible in a specified area". This implies that the exposition of language in a particular area is what is referred to as LL. Then, the number of linguistic tokens is mostly high in shopping areas in cities, and this could make us talk about cityscape instead of the linguistic landscape[6].

---

[1] Cernoz, Jasone D. and Gorter, Durk, *Linguistic Landscape and Minority Languages.* Published in Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism, edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto. Multilingual Matters LTD, 2006, p. 78.

[2] Landry, Rodrick. Y. and Bourhis, R.ichard, *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An empirical Study*. J. Language Soc. Psychol, 1997, 1(16), pp. 23-49.

[3] Cernoz, Jasone D. and Gorter, Duck, *Linguistic Landscape and Minority Languages.* Published in Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism, edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon, Buffalo, Toronto. Multilingual Matters LTD, 2006, p.79.

[4] Landry, Rodrick. Y. and Bourhis, Richard, *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An empirical Study*. J. Language Soc. Psychol, 1997, 1(16), pp. 23-49.

[5] Landry, Rodrick. Y. and Bourhis, Richard, *La loi 101 et Lamenagement du Paysage Linguistic du Quebec. In P. Bouchard and R.Y. Bourhis (eds) L'Amenagement Linguistique au Quebec : 25 D'Applicationde la Charte de la langue Francaise,* Quebec: Publication du Quebec, 2002, pp. 107-132.

[6] Ibidem

Landry and Bourhis'[1] study of LL, later on inspired a good number of scientific papers such as Shiohata[2] & Sebba[3], Shohamy & Gorter[4], and Spolsky[5], which adopted the term "Linguistic Landscape" and formalised its use. This paved the way for the growth of the study on LL, a relatively new and recent area of research in sociolinguistics, which has to do with the representation of languages relating to identities, cultural globalisation, and the growing presence of English and the revitalisation of minority languages.

As far as Cameroon is concerned, in the Anglophone education subsystem, French and German are taught as foreign languages. In the Francophone subsystem of education, English, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, and Chinese are studied as foreign languages. Some of those foreign and indigenous languages are used on signposts in the country (e.g. "Rainbow Kindergarten School" and "Fombah Glorious").

Given the linguistic and other realities of Cameroon, Simo Bobda and Mbangwana[6], among others, describe the country as Africa in miniature, implying that Cameroon is a country that has almost everything found in Africa, especially as far as languages are concerned. Ngefac[7] describes Cameroon as a country blessed with multiple languages with different statuses and functions. As a matter of fact, the country displays a complex sociolinguistic landscape, given that numerous languages with different statuses and functions co-exist. For instance, two Indo-European languages, English and French, are the official languages used for official communication, especially in governance, education, politics, parliament, judiciary, and so on. In addition, there are approximately 283 indigenous languages[8],

---

[1] Landry, Rodrick. Y. and Bourhis, Richard, *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An empirical Study*. J. Language Soc. Psychol, 1997, 1(16) pp. 23-49.

[2] Shiohata, M., *Language Use along the Urban Street in Senegal: Perspectives from Proprietors of Commercial Signs*, Journal of Multilingualism and Multicultural Development, 2012, 33(3):1-17 DOI:10.1080/01434632.2012.656648.

[3] Sebba, Mark, *Linguistic Landscapes: A Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo Peter Backhaus*, Writing Systems Research, 2010, 2(1): 73-76 DOI: 10.1093/WRS/WSP006.

[4] Shohamy, Elana and Gorter, Durk, *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery. Project: Linguistic Landscapes and Multilingualism*. Research gate.net, 2009.

[5] Spolsky, Bernard; Robert Cooper., *The Languages of Jerusalem*, Oxford University Press, 1991.

[6] Simo Bobda, Augustin. and Mbangwana, P. N., *An Introduction to spoken English,* Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1993.

[7] Ngefac, Aloysius, *Linguistic Choices in Postcolonial Multilingual Cameroon*, Nordic Journal of African Studies, 2010b, 9(3), pp. 149-164.

[8] Ngefac, Aloysius, *Sociolinguistic and Structural Aspects of Cameroon Creole English*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

which people speak from different ethnic groups that make up the country. Furthermore, there are two contact languages, Cameroon Creole English (Ngefac[1]) and Camfranglais (CFA)[2]. These languages serve as lingua francas, and are spoken by Cameroonians from different social backgrounds, especially the urban youths.

Cameroon shares borders with French-speaking countries (Chad to the North, the Central African Republic to the East, and Congo and Gabon to the South) of "*Communauté des États Membres de l'Afrique Centrale"* (CEMAC). The country shares borders with just one English-speaking country of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria to the West. Concerning the demographic distribution of Cameroonians with regard to the official languages, French dominates English in terms of the number of speakers. The dominant nature of French is justified by the fact that France benefited from 80 % of this territory, leaving only 20% to Britain during the country's partition by the League of Nations in 1918. Besides, French-speaking and English-speaking Cameroons became the members of "la Francophonie" and the Commonwealth of Nations after colonisation. The sustainability of the English and French languages in Cameroon has been the basis of the official bilingual status of the country. However, Mforteh[3] affirms that the so-called official languages in Cameroon, as supported by the 1972 language policy, have created new identities, known as Francophone and Anglophone.

Consequently, these identities have created a linguistic deadlock in which many Cameroonians find themselves today. This is seen in the educational system and public and official information. The policy of official bilingualism is more on documents than in practice (Tchoungui[4], Kouega[5] and Anchimbe[6]).

---

[1] *Idem*

[2] Kouega, Jean Paul, *Language Choice in Multilingual Socio-religious Setting in Southen Cameroon,* 2003.

[3] Mforteh, Stephane Achimbe, *Cultural Innovations in Cameroon's Linguistic Tower of Babel*, In http://www.inst.at/trans/16Nr/03_2/3_2inhalt 16.htm, 2006, consulted on the 2/11/2019.

[4] Tchoungui, G., *Focus on Official Bilingualism in Cameroon: Its Relationship to Education. In: Koenig, E.l., Chia, E. and Povey, J., Eds., A Sociolinguistic Profile of Urban Centres in Cameroon*, Cross Road Press, Los Angeles, 1983, 93-116.

[5] Kouega, Jean Paul, *Pidgin Facing Death in Cameroon* Landscape, 2001, 21. Pp.11-22.

[6] Achimbe, Eric A., *Anglophone and Francophone: The Stakes of (Official) Language Identity in Cameroon*, Revue Angliciste de la Réunion, Faculté des lettres et Sciences Humaines, Université de Réunion, 2005, pp. 2-20.

A message can be understood as a short piece of information that one gives to a person when they cannot speak to them directly. In this work, the word message refers exactly to media texts displayed on signposts. Therefore, given that studying messages related to the LL of Cameroon is significant for understanding how the Cameroonian society functions, this work is worth carrying out. LL also takes into account streets, corners, circuses, parks, and buildings. These areas bear socio-symbolic importance in society (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006, quoted in[1]). This means that the study of LL is vital because it reveals the realities of societies, communities and regions. Therefore, it is in this light that the investigation of the LL of Cameroon is interesting today and worth investigating.

There is so far a limited number of studies that have been carried out in the area of LL in Africa in general and in Cameroon in particular, even though the "society is flooded with all sorts and types of signage" (Forceville[2]). In effect, previous studies such as Kouega and Baimada[3], Abongdia and Foncha[4], Seino[5], Djadjeu[6], and Nkamta and Ngwenya[7] have investigated the LL of Cameroon. For instance, Kouega and Baimada[8] explore language use and religion, focusing on the languages of religious practices and

[1]https://www.google.com/url?q=https://murbll.worldpress.com/what-is-linguistic-landscapes/sa=u &ved=2ahUkeWI609it1bLnAhUrMewKHW99cWwQFAJegQIaband&usg=AOvVasw1OyJi50y8VvX9GDpms02g, retrived on the 2nd of February 2020at 11:40 am.

[2] Forceville, C., *Educating the eye? Kress and Van Leeuwen's Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design (1996), Language and Literature*, 1999, Vol 8(2): pp. 163-178.

[3] Kouega, Jean Paul. and Baimada, François. G., *Language Use in the Islamic Faith in Cameroon: The Case of a Mosque in the City of Maroua*, Journal of Language and Culture, 2012, Vol. 3(1), pp. 10-19, January 2012.

[4] Abongdia, Jane-Francis A. & John Wankah Foncha, *Language Ideologies in the Linguistic Landscape of One University in South Africa*, Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy, 2014.

[5] Seino Fomukong, Evangeline Agwa, *Sylistic Ideology: Building Images in Advertising Lnaguage in the Brewery and Communication Industries in Cameroon*, International Journal of Language and Linguistics, 3 (5), pp. 11-21, 2016.

[6] Djadjeu Fonteng, Junie Armelle, *A Pragmatico-Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Study of Messages Written on Taxis in the City of Yaounde*, ENS Yaounde, M.A. Unpublished DIPES II Dissertation, 2016.

[7] Nkamta, N.Paul & Ngwenya, L.T., *Linguistic inequality in Cameroon: The case of advertising in Douala*. South Africa Journal of African Languages, 2017.

[8] Kouega, Jean. Paul & Baimada, François G., *Language Use in the Islamic Faith in Cameroon: The Case of a Mosque in the City of Maroua*, Journal of Language and Culture, 2012, Vol. 3(1), pp. 10-19, January.

the factors that determine the choice of these languages in the Islamic faith in Cameroon, especially in the northern part of the country. They, therefore, point out that Arabic is the liturgical language used with Islam. At the same time, Fulfulde is the language of the Imam, that of the Muezzin and a vehicle language in the neighbourhood. Unlike Kouega and Baimada[1], Nkamta and Ngwenya[2] argue that the LL of Cameroon, especially Douala, reveals that French, English and indigenous languages are used unequally in the domain of advertisement in Cameroon. Indeed, French and English dominate the indigenous languages, and the above scholars recommend that the indigenous languages should be included in advertisements. Seino[3] also looks at Language and advertisements in Cameroon. Hence, she opines that the stylistic ideology in advertising language in brewery and communication industries in Cameroon shapes the mental representations in the consumers' mind, providing the impression that the richer the emotional content, the more likely those consumers will go for the product. Then, Abongdia and Foncha[4] examine two issues related to the LL of one university in South Africa. First, they show to what extent the language ideologies are reflected in the linguistic landscape of a South African university. Second, they argue that there is a discrepancy between the language policy established and the actual practice. In fact, from their study, it is glaring that most billboards around the university under study are in English, as perceived in the landscape with a limited number of Africaans and IsXhosa notices. Djadjeu[5] instead explores messages displayed on taxis in Yaoundé and points out that those messages disclose different types of sociolinguistic information about the authors in particular and language users in Yaounde in general. For instance, their religious orientations, sports vision, political orientation and linguistic background. She further remarks that there is a gap between the ordinary and pragmatic meanings of the above-mentioned messages and that the messages had linguistic infelicities.

The above scholars have diligently studied some sociolinguistic aspects of Cameroon. However, what those studies investigated represent just the tip of the iceberg of the different types of sociolinguistic information and phenomena that characterise a complex postcolonial multilingual context like Cameroon. For example, the study of the difference between the ordinary meaning and the pragmatic meaning by Djadjeu Fonteng[6] in the city of

[1] Nkamta, N. Paul & Ngwenya, L.T., 2017, *Op.cit.*
[2] *Idem*
[3] *Idem*
[4] Abongdia, Jane-Francis A. & John Wankah Foncha, 2014, *Op.cit*.
[5] Djadjeu Fonteng, Junie Armelle, 2016, *Op.cit*.
[6] *Idem*

Yaounde did not focus on how the gap between these two meanings reveals the visions of life, interests, attitudinal and ideological tendencies of language users as the case of this current investigation. There is, therefore, the need to investigate the sociolinguistic pieces of information related to different domains of life such as politics, religion, education, sports, music, commerce and health revealed through the messages on signposts displayed in Cameroon. It is also necessary to investigate those messages' pragmatic and cognitive linguistic aspects.

It has been observed that messages displayed on signposts in Cameroon reveal significant sociolinguistic pieces of information about the country. They express people's ideologies, attitudes and interests alongside the ordinary and pragmatic meanings of the messages, sociolinguistic phenomena, such as multilingualism, language dominance, code-mixing, neologisms; and exhibit context-specific lexico-syntactic peculiarities of form-meaning pairings (e.g. 'constructions') that characterise CamE and CamFE. That is, the messages found on signposts in Cameroon disclose important pieces of information about the social backgrounds and the philosophical orientations of the Cameroonian people and domains of life relating to those messages (economic, political, religious, sportive, sanitary and educational domains).

This is an intriguing research gap in that Cameroon is a fascinating multilingual country with hundreds of indigenous languages, two official languages (French and English) and some contact languages such as Pidgin English and Camfranglais. Those languages coexist with other foreign languages such as Spanish, German, Italian and Chinese, and they reveal significant linguistic and sociolinguistic information and phenomena in the country's linguistic landscape. Thus, each sign and signpost in such a country is a complex semiotic message that carries both linguistic and sociolinguistic meaning, characterising Cameroon. That is why it is worth researching the multimodal codes that pervade the Cameroonian society and promise to have a considerable impact well beyond the field of linguistics.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to show the extent to which the messages exposed on signposts in Cameroon constitute a window through which sociolinguistic and linguistic (cognitive linguistic) information about this country could be perceived; how the messages provide another way through which the gap between the pragmatic and semantic meanings of signpost messages could be examined, since in several cases, authors' meanings differed from the literal meanings of the messages. This main objective was split up into four secondary objectives:

1. The work aims at investigating how messages displayed on signposts in Cameroon serve as a window to the sociolinguistic landscape of the country. In other words, the study investigates how messages displayed on signposts in Cameroon reveal sociolinguistic pieces of information about the country.
2. The study analyses sociolinguistic phenomena that characterise the messages displayed on the signposts.
3. The work examines the messages' ordinary meaning and implied meanings. In other words, the study examines the difference between ordinary and the contextual meanings of some of the messages, as implied by the authors of the messages.
4. It looks at the entrenched patterns of form-meaning pairings of linguistic constructions (morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, and sentences) that characterise CamE and CamFE.

1.3 Scope and Contribution of the Study

Considering that this study involves the sociolinguistic, cognitive-linguistic, and pragmatic dimensions, it is important to define the scope of the work with regard to these dimensions. Sociolinguistically, the study investigates how messages displayed on signposts in Cameroon serve as a window to the sociolinguistic landscape of the country. Furthermore, it investigates sociolinguistic phenomena, such as multiculturalism, bilingualism, code mixing, language dominance and neologisms that characterise the messages. Here, bilingualism and multilingualism are studied according to how they function; language dominance is studied according to the frequency of various languages on the signposts; and code mixing and neologisms are studied in terms of their features. For instance, concerning language dominance, it can be determined from the frequency of various languages on signposts. This language dominance is studied in terms of the domains of activity in Cameroon in an attempt to show the place of each language in different domains instead of investigating language dominance in the domains of religion and administration, as it has been the case in some previous LL studies. Instead of studying language dominance generally as has been the case in previous investigations, this investigation examines it according to different domains of life in an attempt to point out various languages used is those domains and their values. Cognitively, it analyses context-specific lexico-syntactic peculiarities of form-meaning pairings. That is, it takes into account the social context factors of the messages displayed on signposts.

Pragmatically, it investigates the difference between the conventional or ordinary meanings of the messages and the pragmatic or contextual meanings, as intended by the authors.

1.4 Motivation and Significance of the Investigation

This section tackles the motivation and significance of the research. Indeed, it is worth pointing out some factors that led to this study and the significance of the book.

Concerning the motivation of the work, it is noteworthy that five fundamental factors motivated this research. First, the fact that the LL as a whole is a pretty new area of scientific enquiry, especially in Cameroon, an intriguing postcolonial multilingual context. Second, different signpost messages inundate public and private places in Cameroon on a daily basis. Third, the dynamic nature of the messages (e.g., the messages are related to different domains of life such as religion, politics, commerce, health, sports, music, cinema, and citizenship just to name a few. Some of the messages carry people's names, and most of them are written in diverse languages etc.). Fourth, the fact that a proprietor of a cosmetic shop in Buea informed the investigator that the message inscribed on her shop's door post, "Canada shop", has always been misunderstood by several readers. Indeed, most people have always suggested that this message refers to a shop where products from Canada are being sold, given that the word "Canada" is a noun that accompanies the second noun "shop", and both of them form a compound noun, "Canada shop". However, the proprietor of the shop reported during the interview that her message, "Canada shop", rather refers to the fact that she sells products of good quality, which can only come from abroad, especially from Canada. And finally, some of the messages contain some words peculiar to the Cameroonian context. These words contribute in shaping some new features specific to some new varieties of English in Cameroon (especially CamE and CamFE).

With regard to the significance of the study, it should be noted that this investigation could be significant to different stakeholders involving the scientific community, language planners and policy makers of Cameroon, and social actors (especially business people and other investors).

As regards the scientific community, the study is significant as it shed lights on many sociolinguistic, pragmatic and cognitive aspects of signpost messages in Cameroon. In fact, limited investigations have been carried out on the sociolinguistic, pragmatic and cognitive aspects of signpost messages displayed in Cameroon. Apart from a few scientific papers, no major study has investigated Cameroon's multilingualism from the perspective of LL.

The few studies carried out in Cameroon on the sociolinguistic background of the speakers through language use are Ngefac[1], Kouega[2], Nkamta and Ngwenya[3].

It should be noted that Ngefac's[4] studies were limited to the way phonological variables reveal sociolinguistic information (level of education, social status, age, ethnicity, gender, and others). As concerns Nkamta and Ngwenya[5], they investigated how the language used in advertisements in Douala relegates the indigenous languages to the background in favour of French and English.

In the same line, Kouega and Baimada[6] investigated how the languages used in religious practices reveal the language choices of Muslims in the northern part of Cameroon. These previous studies do not focus on signposts and how they reveal salient sociolinguistic pieces information about Cameroon. Second, the study investigates the indigenisation or acculturation of English and French in Cameroon in the context of LL (which results in New Englishes known as CamE and CamFE). This is because previous investigations have concentrated only on Cameroon English (also referred to as Cameroon Anglophone English), and projected a 'monolithic picture' of English in Cameroon. This work argues, with empirical evidence from the perspective of Construction Grammar Approach to World Englishes theorizing (see Hoffmann and Trousdale 2013), that Cameroon showcases different World Englishes and presents a complex English language status quo that cannot be easily clarified by some World Englishes paradigms (see for example, Kachru, 1985; Quirk et al., 1972; Schneider, 2007; and Moag, 1982).

It should be noted that in many postcolonial contexts in general and in Cameroon in particular, western languages such as English and French have been significantly appropriated according to the realities of those places

---

[1] Ngefac, Aloysius, *Social Differentiation in English: Evidence from Sociolinguistic Fieldwork*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008a *&* *The Social Stratification of English in Cameroon*. World Englishes, 2008b 27, (2/3), pp. 407-418.

[2] Kouega, Jean Paul, 2001, Op*. cit*, Pp.11-22.

[3] Nkamta and Ngwenya, *op.cit*, 2017.

[4] Ngefac, Aloysius, *Social Differentiation in English: Evidence from Sociolinguistic Fieldwork*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008a *&* *The Social Stratification of English in Cameroon*. World Englishes, 2008b 27, (2/3), pp. 407-418.

[5] Nkamta, N. Paul and Ngwenya, L. T., *op.cit*, 2017.

[6] Kouega, Jean. Paul. and Baimada, François. G., *Language Use in the Islamic Faith in Cameroon: The Case of a Mosque in the City of Maroua*, Journal of Language and Culture, 2012, Vol. 3(1), pp. 10-19, January 2012.