

Exploring the linguistic landscape: the case of the 'Golden Triangle' in the Algarve, Portugal

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Abstract

Studies of the linguistic landscape (LL) are concerned with language in its written form, in the public sphere; language that is visible to all through texts such as billboards and other public signs. The LL is such a taken-for-granted part of our everyday experience that its importance as a form of social practice is often overlooked. Taking a mixed methods approach to the case of the linguistic landscape of the 'Golden Triangle', an area of tourist resorts which is gradually becoming a residential area in the Algarve, Portugal, I suggest that the discursive construction of a place is partly achieved through the highly visible texts of the LL which may also impact upon the discursive construction of the collective identities of those who inhabit the place.

Introduction

There has been a recent, and growing, interest amongst researchers in sociolinguistics and other areas of applied linguistics in the 'linguistic landscape' (LL), which is taken here to mean the amalgamation of all the linguistic tokens that are present in, and thus mark, the public sphere. Although the linguistic landscape constitutes the "very scene (...) where society's public life takes place" (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006: 8), it is such a taken-for-granted part of our everyday experience that its importance as a form of social practice is often overlooked.

Gunther Kress has argued that "all signs are equally subject to critical reading, for no sign is innocent" (Kress, 1993: 174). Whilst it is debatable whether *all* public signs are ideological in nature, it seems reasonable to suggest that they are *potentially*, in some way, symbolic markers of status and power, operating within semiotic systems of social positioning and power relationships. Linguistic choices - including code choice or preferences - in public spaces serve to index broader societal attitudes towards different languages and, ultimately, their speakers. These attitudes may reflect the language policies of a particular nation-state or region, especially in territories which are officially bilingual or multilingual, or the more localized language practices of a particular community. In a country like Portugal, essentially a monolingual nation,¹ and as such with no apparent need for explicit, state-imposed, language policies, there are nonetheless multilingual language practices in evidence in some parts of the LL. Furthermore, it is through an examination of these practices that symbolic power relations may be revealed.

This paper presents a case study of part of the linguistic landscape of the Algarve, Portugal's most important tourist region, focusing on the small town of Almancil and the area surrounding it – the so-called 'Golden Triangle'. Besides exploring the symbolic functions of this specific LL, particularly through linguistic code preference, the main objective of the case study is to explore how the LL contributes to the discursive construction of place-identity, which can be understood here as the relationship between the discursive construction of place and the discursive construction of the individual and collective identities of those who inhabit the place.

I begin by discussing the concept of the linguistic landscape and what investigating it might uncover. I then review some of the empirical work that has been done on the linguistic landscape before presenting the case study.

The linguistic landscape

Studies of the linguistic landscape (LL) are concerned with language in its written form, in the public sphere; language that is visible to all in a specified area (Gorter, 2006). It is, according to Landry & Bourhis (1997: 25), "the language of public road

¹ The EC Special Eurobarometer Report 'Europeans and their Languages' (European Commission, 2006) reveals that of the 25 European countries considered in the survey, it was only in Portugal and Hungary that 100% of the respondents claimed the respective state language as their native language.

signs, advertising boards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings” which form the linguistic landscape of “a given territory, region or urban agglomeration”. The list provided by Landry & Bourhis in their definition includes only relatively fixed signs and texts – signs which have some degree of stability, at least as regards their spatial position – but we might add other, more ‘mobile’ forms of text to the list. Such texts could be leaflets and flyers being distributed (and perhaps discarded) in the street, advertising on vans, buses and other vehicles that pass through the streets of the area under study, free tourist maps and other publications available on counters and desks of hotels and tourist information centres and many more examples besides. Some texts are more visible than others, but they are all potentially readable in public spaces.

The texts making up the LL may be monolingual, bilingual or multilingual, reflecting the diversity of the language groups present in a given territory or region. However, code preference is never the result of an arbitrary decision. The linguistic code choices evident in the public sphere therefore serve to index broader societal (and governmental) attitudes towards different languages and their speakers. Thus the predominance of one language may reflect the relative power and status of the ‘in-group’ speaking that language as regards competing language groups, whether majority or minority groups.

In two of the earliest studies of the LL, Spolsky & Cooper (1991) and Landry & Bourhis (1997) suggested that code choice in the LL acts as both an informational marker and a symbolic marker of the territory or geographical space in question. According to Landry and Bourhis, the informational functions of the LL include serving as “a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community”; thus informing in-group and out-group members about the “linguistic characteristics, territorial limits, and language boundaries of the region they have entered”, and indicating that the language in question can be used “to communicate and to obtain services within public and private establishments” within that region (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25). In this way, the LL may be said to index the geopolitical world in which we find ourselves. Thus a predominance of signs in, say, English or Chinese tends to index our location in the midst of an English-speaking, or Chinese-speaking, community (Scollon & Scollon, 2003: 116).

However, as Scollon & Scollon (2003: 118) quite rightly caution, assumptions made on this basis can be deceiving. The use of ‘foreign’ languages, particularly on commercial signs, may have a symbolic rather than indexical function. In the case of English, for example, shop name signs written in English but located in a Chinese-speaking community might be symbolizing foreign tastes, fashions or associations between particular products or types of businesses and English-speaking culture. It might also be that English is perceived as being more modern and prestigious than local languages, particularly when these local languages are spoken by very few people in the world beyond the regional or national borders (see Ben-Rafael *et al.*, (2006), for the case of Hebrew; Cenoz & Gorter (2006) for Frisian and Basque). On the other hand, a prevalence of signs in English often marks a ‘tourist space’ and can thus be interpreted as serving both informational and symbolic functions, since there is a need

to communicate with tourists via a *lingua franca* as well as to promote the image of the place as tourist-friendly and cosmopolitan.

We might argue then, following van Leeuwen (1993), that no matter how 'ideologically innocent' signs (and the social practices of which they are a part) may seem, they may in fact be powerful instruments in the (re)production of the social world in which they form part of the landscape. In multi-ethnic neighbourhoods or areas with large communities of immigrants, for example, the symbolic function of language use on public signs can be affectively charged, particularly in places where language has emerged as a strong marker of ethnic identity. The inclusion of the in-group language in the LL is symbolic of the strength or vitality of one's own language group in relation to other language groups, whilst the exclusion of the in-group language in the LL can give out the message that the language has no status in the public social world (Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

It is clear, then, that the public signs of the LL are potential symbolic markers of status and power. As Scollon & Scollon (2003: 7) argue:

All semiotic systems operate as systems of social positioning and power relationship both at the level of interpersonal relationships and at the level of struggles for hegemony among social groups in any society precisely because they are systems of choice and no choices are neutral in the social world.

The LL can therefore be considered to reflect the overt language policies of a state, or the more localized language practices of a community (particularly those tokens employed by the private sector) and to provide "a window into the power relations in a community" (Huebner, 2006: 32). As Cenoz & Gorter (2006) note, the relationship between the LL and the sociolinguistic context is bi-directional: the LL reflects the relative power and status of different languages in a particular sociolinguistic context, whilst at the same time contributing to the construction of that very sociolinguistic context.

In short, the LL appears to be a worthy object of investigation since:

- linguistic choices (including choice of code) in public spaces index broader social attitudes;
- linguistic tokens in public spaces may be symbolic markers of status and power;
- the study of the LL may therefore provide insight into the social identities and ideological orientations of a community.

The study of the LL to date has been largely driven by quantitative methods, usually by counting and classifying all the public signs in a specific area of a city according to the language(s) used and the 'producer' of the sign (a distinction is generally made as to whether the sign is 'officially' or commercially produced). There is a growing body of evidence to show that English is rapidly spreading through the streets of cities

around the world (e.g. Backhaus, 2006; Griffin, 2004; Huebner, 2006; MacGregor, 2003; McArthur, 2000; Schlick, 2003). Studies such as these have concluded that one reason for this is the proliferation of English as a *lingua franca* in tourist areas. A further reason has to do with the symbolic value of English for the local population, as a language of international prestige, or status marker (Backhaus, 2006; Huebner, 2006) or the language of global youth and fashion – an identity marker (Griffin, 2004). Such studies provide a useful snapshot of a particular LL, and some have indeed applied social theories as an interpretation framework to answer hypotheses about why a specific LL might be shaped in a certain way (e.g. Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006).

However, there is ample space in the field for a more qualitatively-driven, critical approach. Whilst it is useful to know how much English is visible at a given time in a particular public space, it is also pertinent to examine the nature of the texts themselves and to ask why this particular text is in this particular place, at this particular time, in this particular language. In other words, a study of both the situational context in which the LL is embedded along with a more detailed examination of the interactional context of the signs themselves would help to reveal something about the collective identities and ideological orientations of the social groups that make up the community in question.

A useful methodological approach in this case might be informed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Proponents of CDA claim that discourse, as a social practice, is both socially conditioned and socially constitutive (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). For van Dijk (2001a), however, a CDA perspective needs to take cognitive processes into account, since cognition mediates between society and discourse. One of the principal ways in which this mediation is achieved is through social representations, which emerge from ideologies shared by a social group. Ideologies, in this sense, form the organizational basis of what group members believe is “good or bad, right or wrong, *for them*, and to act accordingly” (van Dijk, 1998: 8). The producers of the LL may thus be acting on the basis of their ideological orientations. In this way, the LL may be contributing to the reinforcing of hegemonic ideologies by the (re)production of particular social representations. Furthermore, we might argue that identities (of both places and people) are often based on ideologies and beliefs about the characteristics of social groups and the implications of belonging (or not) to them (De Fina, 2006). It would seem, then, that a CDA perspective would lend itself perfectly as a complementary means of exploring the LL and the more complex social realities which contribute to its shaping. It may also reveal something about the social identities of the place in which it is embedded and the people who ‘consume’ it.

The following case study of the LL of a particular part of the Algarve therefore uses mixed methods. On the one hand, I carried out a quantitative study of one of the main streets in the town of Almancil, in order to get a more objective feel of the LL in terms of linguistic code choices and preferences. The fixed signs in the street were counted and classified, firstly according to the languages used and then according to the category of producer and the type of discourse produced. On the other hand, although I use the term *case study* here primarily in the sense that it involves a delineated choice of what is to be studied rather than a methodological choice (Stake, 2003), case studies are particularly associated with qualitatively-driven fieldwork

methodologies such as ethnography and participant observation. These methodologies typically yield unstructured data, with researchers seeking to construct cases that emerge from naturally occurring social situations (O'Reilly, 2009: 24). A case study approach generally entails drawing in multiple perspectives, often from multiple data collection methods (Lewis, 2003). The study is therefore complemented with ethnographic data, including descriptions of the area under study and photographs of signs and billboards. Other relevant background data is also introduced, including an examination of the legislation governing the LL. Finally, the texts of some signs are used as data for a more critical, qualitative exploration of the discursive construction of the identity of the 'Golden Triangle' and those who inhabit it.

Case study: Almancil and the 'Golden Triangle'

The Algarve, in the south of Portugal, is a region which has witnessed tourism development on a massive scale since the 1970s. Over the last two decades, in a parallel process many coastal resort areas, including the so-called 'Golden Triangle' of the Algarve (Figure 1), have been undergoing a gradual transformation into more residential places, becoming increasingly popular among northern European lifestyle migrants² and second home owners (mainly British, Irish, Dutch and German).



Figure 1 (Approximate) location of the 'Golden Triangle'

² I take 'lifestyle migration' to mean the discernable north-south migration trend in Europe which is clearly different from more traditional migration patterns in that it is not motivated by economic hardship or the search for work or some form of financial security. Lifestyle migrants are already 'relatively affluent' individuals (O'Reilly, 2007) who have made a conscious choice not only about *where* to live but also about *how* to live (Hoey, 2005).

The 'Golden Triangle' area, which roughly corresponds to the *Freguesia* (parish) of Almancil,³ includes the upmarket golf and beach resorts of Vale do Lobo and Quinta do Lago. These resorts were first developed for tourism in the late 1960s and early 1970s on sites which previously had been scarcely populated and were characterized by sand dunes, scrubland, pine woods and agricultural small-holdings. The construction of 'luxury' resorts in such an undeveloped, rural setting by the sea led to a phenomenal increase in the value of the land, and the coining of the 'Golden Triangle' name by the (predominantly northern European) real estate agents operating in the area, since land prices rose rapidly to reputedly become among the highest per square metre in Portugal.

It is worth considering how this name has become part of the discursively constructed identity of the place. Place naming is one of the most basic ways that places are given identity. As the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1991: 688) has argued, "naming is power – the creative power to call something into being, to render the invisible visible, to impart a certain character to things". The use of the adjective 'golden' calls into being a place with a character that is irrevocably associated with wealth, luxury and privilege. It also has connotations of magic, myth and fairy tales (e.g. the Golden Goose, King Midas and his golden touch). Cresswell (2004: 98) further notes that the act of naming locates places in wider cultural narratives. The cultural narrative in question here is clearly one that belongs to the 'new' residents of this place, for whilst the northern Europeans residing in this area are certainly familiar with the designation 'Golden Triangle', the name appears to be restricted to the English language. It is therefore not widely known by the Portuguese, even the Algarvians themselves. On the other hand, the fact that this English name for the area has spread beyond the doors of the real estate agencies and has acquired a relatively stable, fixed status in the English-speaking community is evident in the way that it appears in the titles of free local English language publications such as *Inside Almancil & the Golden Triangle* magazine and *The Golden Triangle Directory* (Figure 2) which are distributed widely throughout the area and as such are part of the 'mobile' linguistic landscape.

³ This *Freguesia* is part of the Loulé Municipality. It has an area of 63.4 km² (12 km of beaches) and 8799 inhabitants, according to the 2001 National Census. Before the arrival of tourism, the traditional activities of this area were small-scale agriculture (cereals, fruit, almonds, carob, figs, vines, olives), fishing and salt extraction.



Figure 2 Covers of free publications

The area also includes the small town of Almancil, which, although located just 12km to the west of Faro (the regional capital and site of an international airport) and 6km from the coast, is not generally thought of as a tourist town. Indeed, despite being considered the northern apex of the 'Golden Triangle', the town itself has very little to recommend it to tourists. It has no seaside, no historic monuments, no picturesque streets and very little in the way of nightlife or other forms of entertainment. Even the restaurants are not particularly popular with tourists, who tend to prefer the restaurants with outdoor dining areas along the country roads outside the town or near the beaches. Most tourists seem to do little more in Almancil than pass through on their way to the coast, perhaps stopping for food shopping, the bank or the post office, or maybe visiting one of the countless estate agencies with the idea of buying a second home in the Algarve.

Almancil is in fact known as being a 'support' centre for the tourism developments in the municipality of Loulé and for the growing numbers of northern European second-home owners and migrants who have settled in the surrounding area. In the town itself, there are communities of African origin - originally immigrants from the former Portuguese colonies - and migrant workers from the rural areas of northern Portugal and Eastern European countries, attracted by the employment opportunities offered by the construction and service industries in the area. Due to the lack of tourist attractions in the town itself and its generally rather shabby and down-at-heel appearance, relatively cheap rented accommodation is in plentiful supply.

In certain parts of the Algarve, particularly along the coast, the huge volume of and dependence upon international mass tourism, originating principally from the UK, Ireland and Germany, means that the use of English (and, to a lesser extent, German) has become commonplace in the LL, and can be largely explained by the "good reasons/meeting expectations" hypothesis proposed by Ben-Rafael *et al* (2006: 9-10). From this perspective, the structure and characteristics of the LL should be interpretable in terms of rational choices on the part of the LL producers. These choices

are informed by perceived attainable goals. In other words, producers of signs are concerned to meet the expectations of tourists, since they are themselves expecting to benefit from attracting tourists.

However, the town of Almancil is interesting both for what it is not (an obvious centre of tourism) and for what it is: a place where communities of different geographic, ethnic and social origins live side by side.⁴ The immediate surrounding area, on the other hand, is an area of upmarket tourism characterised by ‘luxury’ resorts and expensive villas that is gradually taking on a more residential character and is increasingly populated by communities of wealthy northern Europeans.⁵

In the next section, an LL analysis of one of the principal streets in Almancil is presented. This is followed by an investigation of the legislation governing the LL in Portugal, and then by an exploration of the LL of the area outside the town, the ‘Golden Triangle’.

The linguistic landscape of the Rua da República, Almancil

The Rua da República is generally considered to be the centre of Almancil. It is about 100m long and is generally busy during the weekdays as it includes the town’s post office, a large newsagent, two cafes and an assortment of shops (see Figure 3).

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Electro Edir ELECTRICAL MATERIALS & APPLIANCES | Papelaria Viegas NEWSAGENT & STATIONERY | Cinema Miranda (NOW DERELICT BUILDING) | Al-Mansal Villas REAL ESTATE | Battering Plaice 'FISH & CHIPS' TAKEAWAY | Correios POST OFFICE | Café Palmeira |
|--|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|---------------|

RUA DA REPÚBLICA

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|--|---------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Photo Viegas PHOTOGRAPHERS' | Crédito Agrícola BANK | Pastelaria Aladino | British Butcher | (House) | Rumours | (House) | Ristorante Grissino RESTAURANT | (House) | O Nosso Café RESTAURANT | Ervanária Saúde HEALTH FOOD SHOP | MECHANICS |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|--|---------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|

Figure 3 Layout of the shops and businesses on the Rua da República, Almancil

⁴ According to figures from the Immigration Services (SEF), 3906 foreigners were registered as living in Almancil in 2005, accounting for over 40% of the population. 25% of students in state schools in Almancil schools are foreign, with 30 different nationalities represented (the largest groups being Cape Verdian, Romanian and Ukrainian).

⁵ In 2005, 1143 residents from the UK, Ireland, Germany and Holland were registered in the parish of Almancil (source: SEF). The private international school located near the resort of Vale do Lobo currently has around 300 students enrolled.

Most of the shops are locally-owned and have been there for many years, as has the mechanics' workshop and a branch of the Crédito Agrícola bank.⁶ At night, there is a bar frequented mainly by British residents, a 'British' fish and chip shop and two restaurants, one of which (an Italian restaurant) has a mainly foreign clientele. The other, a fairly 'typical' Portuguese family-owned restaurant, is popular with local residents, both Portuguese and foreigners. The street has obviously seen better days, however. The former cinema now stands boarded up. The floors above the shops and businesses of the somewhat run-down terraced buildings on the other side of the street provide rented accommodation, mostly for migrant workers.

The fieldwork for this case study was carried out in September 2007. The first stage was to count and classify all the fixed signs visible in the street or in the shop windows.⁷ In order to decide what qualifies as a 'sign', the unit of analysis I used was Backhaus' (2006: 55) definition of "any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame", regardless of size or salience. A total of 225 signs were counted and classified according to the language(s) used, and the type of discourse (regulatory, infrastructural, commercial or transgressive). Further discussion of these discourse categorisations will follow below.

Table 1 shows the language(s) used on each of the signs counted.

| Language(s) | Nº of signs | % |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Portuguese only | 112 | 49.77% |
| English only | 74 | 32.88% |
| German only | 1 | 0.44% |
| Portuguese and English | 30 | 13.33% |
| Portuguese and Italian | 1 | 0.44% |
| English and Italian | 2 | 0.88% |
| Portuguese-English-French | 1 | 0.44% |
| Portuguese-English-Italian | 1 | 0.44% |
| English-German-French | 1 | 0.44% |
| Portuguese-English-German- Russian | 1 | 0.44% |
| Portuguese-English-German- French | 1 | 0.44% |
| TOTAL Nº SIGNS | 225 | 100% |

Table 1 Language(s) on signs in Rua da República, Almancil

⁶ This bank was originally set up in order to give loans to farmers and still has branches in most small towns and villages in Portugal

⁷ Only signs actually attached to the windows were counted, even where it was possible to see other signs inside the shops or businesses.

I had expected to find a good deal of bilingual signs in Portuguese and English, given that the street potentially caters to a great deal of northern European tourists and residents, but in fact only 13.3% of the signs counted can be classified as such. Half the signs were in Portuguese only, and, perhaps surprisingly, given that the municipal regulations for signs state that all signs must be written in Portuguese (see below), a third of the signs were in English only. Only five signs used more than two languages.

When considering the total number of signs that display some use of each of the languages found in the LL of this street (i.e. on both monolingual and multilingual signs), we can see that English appeared on around half of the signs (Table 2). Only 65% of all signs contained some Portuguese, which means that a striking 35% did not. German, French and Italian (the first languages of many tourists visiting the area) figured only marginally in the LL of this street, and Russian appeared only once, on a fly-poster advertising Portuguese language courses at a local language school.

| | % of all signs displaying a language |
|------------|--------------------------------------|
| Portuguese | 65.0% |
| English | 49.3% |
| German | 1.8% |
| Italian | 1.8% |
| French | 1.3% |
| Russian | 0.4% |

Table 2 Percentage of signs on which each language appears

Other Eastern European languages were found to be completely absent from the LL. In the case of Romanian this is surprising, given the large community of Romanians in Almancil.⁸ The lack of Romanian in the LL therefore suggests that this language has no status in the local public social world. In fact, contrary to the communities of northern Europeans, Eastern European migrants are expected to (and indeed do) learn Portuguese rapidly in order to integrate and work in local society. Their own languages are only spoken amongst themselves and remain ‘invisible’, with no symbolic capital in the region, positioning speakers of these languages as a linguistic out-group. English, on the other hand, is the language of symbolic power in the Algarve. The predominance of English in the LL reflects the relative status of the ‘in-group’ speaking that language as regards competing language groups.

Having thus obtained a general picture of which languages make up the LL of the street, and in what proportion, we now turn to the questions of how and why this particular LL composition has come about. One of the first lines of inquiry is to consider who the producers of the signs are, and what their intentions might be in producing texts with linguistic code preferences.

It is useful here to divide the signs into categories according to their producers. Other studies of the LL have looked at the differences between items which have

⁸ According to the Immigration Services (SEF), almost 700 Romanians were officially registered as living in Almancil in 2005, which was around 7% of the town’s registered population.

variously been termed 'official' and 'nonofficial' (e.g. Backhaus, 2006), 'governmental' and 'non-governmental', (e.g. Huebner, 2006) or 'top-down' (issued by national and public bureaucracies, administrations and institutions) and 'bottom-up' (produced by individual social actors, and including all commercial enterprises) (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006). Besides the top-down/bottom-up distinction, I take the categorisation a step further to consider the type of discourse represented by each sign, as this gives some indication as to the intention of the producer of the message. In their discussion of the semiotic aggregate of a particular place, i.e. the convergence of multiple discourses in that place, Scollon & Scollon (2003: 181) distinguish four general categories into which they claim the discourses commonly found in town and city streets fall: regulatory discourses, infrastructural discourses, commercial discourses and transgressive discourses.

I found that in the Rua da República, just eleven of the 225 items counted could be classified as 'top-down' (Table 3). Of these, eight were examples of what might be classified as 'official regulatory discourse', such as parking restrictions, or the display of the municipal business licence in a shop window. The remaining three belonged to 'infrastructural' discourse (a plaque displaying the street name, for example). Unsurprisingly, all these signs were in Portuguese only, since Portuguese is the only official language of this country.⁹

| Production type | Type of discourse | N ^o signs (n = 225) | Languages used |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Top-down | Official Regulatory | 8 | PT only |
| | Infrastructural | 3 | PT only |
| Bottom-up | Commercial | 210 | PT, ENG, FR, GER, IT, |
| | Transgressive | 4 | RUSSIAN PT, ENG |

Table 3 Production type and discursive function of signs

It is in the 'bottom-up' signs, however, that languages other than Portuguese, primarily English, are used. The main type of discourse is, unsurprisingly, commercial. For the sake of convenience, this is taken here to mean any discourse produced by commercial entities, with the main functions of commercial signs being selling (or persuading to buy) and informing (about shop and business names, opening hours, or monitored security systems, for example). As all the shops and businesses in this street may potentially cater to a non-Portuguese speaking clientele, it is therefore likely that they would wish to target these clients in a language they might understand. As in many parts of the world, English is the obvious choice for the *lingua franca*, and producers of commercial signs using English may thus be applying the 'good reasons' principle

⁹ This does not mean that all top-down items in the Algarvian LL are Portuguese-only, however. I have observed, in other locations, a growing number of signs produced by official entities that are bilingual (Portuguese and English), for example public information signs by the beaches.

referred to above. This certainly seems to be a reasonable assumption in the case of the bilingual signs. The machine selling stamps outside the post office has its information and instructions for purchase in both Portuguese and English (Figure 4), thus facilitating the stamp-buying process for tourists wishing to send postcards home, for example.



Figure 4 Stamp machine, Rua da República

In fact, in the age of electronic communications, it might be that the post office sees tourists, with their tradition of writing postcards, as a good source of clients. This would account for the advertising poster on display in the post office window where English is clearly salient (Figure 5).



Figure 5 Poster in post office window, Rua da República
'Everything but the words. Só faltam as palavras. Prepaid postcards with stamp included. Buy here. Postais ilustrados com selo incluído. Compre aqui'

However, as already noted, the majority of signs observed in this street were *not* bilingual but monolingual, either in Portuguese or English, with many of the shops showing a clear preference for one language or the other, thus perhaps indicating that identity work is being done here. The English-only signs outside the Rumours Sports Bar, advertising sports matches to be shown on TV, 'today's specials' and regulating the entrance of animals, along with the Union Jacks in the windows, make a clear statement about the identity of the bar and its clients (Figures 6a and 6b); likewise the Battering Plaice across the street which announces that it sells 'British Fish & Chips' and displays a menu in English only in its window (Figures 7a and 7b).



Figure 6a Rumours Bar in the Rua da República Figure 6b Sign outside Rumour's Bar



Figure 7a The Battering Plaice Rua da República Figure 7b Menu on display in window

Other shops and establishments, particularly the longer-standing ones, seem to prefer Portuguese only in their signage. This was the case of the electrical shop, the photographer's and the mechanics workshop (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Mechanic's workshop, Rua da República

On the other hand, the code preference may simply be due to a lack of knowledge of other languages on the part of the producer. More research would be necessary here for a greater depth of understanding – for example by conducting interviews with the shopkeepers and business owners.

I found four examples of ‘transgressive’ items in the Rua da República (all small stickers calling for social action, placed on top of other signs or unauthorised places). The choice of language on these stickers appears to have been chosen according to the intended receiver of the message. One sticker (Figure 9), found on a municipal rubbish bin, has text in both Portuguese and English. However, it is interesting that the message addressed directly to the receiver, by means of the imperative ‘NÃO ENVENENEM MAIS ANIMAIS’ (which translates as ‘Don’t poison any more animals’) is in Portuguese, implying that the agents of the verb ‘poison’ are Portuguese speakers. The poisoning of dogs and cats is a fairly frequent occurrence in the Algarve and, as I have often witnessed, a common topic of conversation among British residents. Since the Portuguese are stereotypically seen by the northern European community in the Algarve as being generally insensitive to animal welfare (this opinion is evident, for example, in the Letters to the Editor pages of the local English-language press), it is certainly the Portuguese who are seen by this group as the perpetrators of domestic animal poisonings. On the other hand, the sender of the message, the Action Against Poisoning group,¹⁰ chooses to ‘sign’ the message using the name of the group (which might also be interpreted as an activist slogan) in English. This signifies that it is the English-speaking community who are perceived by the addresser as being concerned enough about this problem to take ‘action’ against it.



Figure 9 Sticker, Rua da República

Another sticker, found on a traffic sign, was in English, asking for support (presumably financial) for people with AIDS, whilst the other two were in Portuguese (‘Defende a vida, faz o teste do VIH/Sida’), urging people to take an HIV/AIDS test (this sticker, on the stamp machine, can be seen in Figure 4 above). These stickers seemingly have different addressees in mind, employing different code choices accordingly.

¹⁰ A visit to the website advertised on the sticker reveals that Action Against Poisoning is an international association based in the Netherlands.

Shaping the LL: Legal requirements and possible restraints

A factor which may reasonably be expected to affect the production of commercial signs, including choice of language(s), is the law. In Portugal, Municipal Councils draw up their own sets of regulations defining the criteria for granting licences for any kind of advertising or publicity which emanates from commercial activity. Therefore, the Municipality of Loulé, which includes Almancil and the 'Golden Triangle' area, has its own 'Regulations for Publicity and Advertising'.¹¹ The kinds of advertising or publicity that require licensing include: all kinds of fixed signs, illuminated or electronic signs, billboards, sandwich boards and other movable objects to be placed on the pavement, flags and banners, shop awnings, posters, inflatables and balloons, mobile billboards and vehicles. The Regulations are lengthy and detailed, giving specifications as to size, materials and positioning, for example, as well as to restrictions imposed. As far as language use is concerned, Article 14 specifies that:

- (1) Advertising messages must be written in the Portuguese language.
- (2) The inclusion of foreign words and expressions can be authorized in the following situations:
 - a) In the case of registered brands or names of companies;
 - b) In the case of names of people appearing in the message or film, theatre, variety or sports titles or events.¹²

In other words, these regulations permit bilingual or multilingual signs in some (very limited) circumstances, but do not allow for monolingual signs in languages other than Portuguese at all. Yet, as already discussed above, there are countless examples in the area of signs which are written only in English, in a seemingly flagrant disregard for the local regulations.

I visited the department that receives applications for advertising licences in the offices of the *Junta de Freguesia de Almancil*¹³ to ask why there are so many signs in apparent contravention of the Regulations. The members of staff I spoke to suggested that possible reasons might be that the signs date from before 2005 (the date of the latest Regulations), that there was a certain amount of 'ignorance' as to the law, or that there was perhaps not enough official monitoring and therefore many people were 'getting away with it'. Despite the highly restrictive regulations on language use, the fact that they are widely ignored coupled with the fact that the local authorities do not seem, in practice, to be particularly concerned with the issue implies that the Municipal Regulations are not systematically applied.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Municipal Council must respect the principle of 'hierarchy of sources', and therefore should not contradict the national legislation. If, in the case of a conflict, the matter were taken to court, the national law

¹¹ 'Regulamento da Actividade Publicitária na Área do Município de Loulé' de 6 de Janeiro de 2005

¹² My own translation

¹³ Each Municipality in Portugal is divided into 'Freguesias', the smallest of the administrative areas, each of which has its own elected 'Junta'.

would be applied. This is another possible explanation for why so many businesses do not bother themselves with local regulations, for if they are familiar with national law, they know they are ultimately safeguarded by the National Advertising Code.

All advertising in Portugal is governed by the law as set out in the National Advertising Code, originally passed in 1990¹⁴ and last updated in 1998. The law regarding the use of languages other than Portuguese in advertising is stipulated in clauses 3 and 4 of Article 7, which concerns what is 'permissible' in advertising:

- (3) The use of languages of other countries in advertising messages, even when used in conjunction with the Portuguese language, is only permitted when the advertising message is directed exclusively or primarily at foreigners, with the exception of the provision in the following clause.
- (4) The exceptional use of words or expressions in languages of other countries is permitted when they are necessary to the attainment of the desired effect in the conception of the message.¹⁵

Two things stand out from the discourse of this extract of the law. Firstly, there is an obvious attempt on the part of the government to control the use of languages on non-official signs in public places, by defining what is permitted and when. Secondly, there is a striking appeal to a national identity through exophoric spatial deixis which associates language with geopolitical borders. The Portuguese language is set against not merely other languages, but 'languages of other countries'. The implication here is that there is only one language used by the citizens of the nation-state Portugal, thus reproducing the discursive representation of a monolingual country, despite the fact that there are more than a quarter of a million immigrants with legal status as residents in Portugal,¹⁶ plus an untold number of those without legal status, many of whom certainly bring 'other languages' with them.

However, a salient point of this law is that there is no actual stipulation to *always* include the Portuguese version of the advertising text. The interpretation of the phrase 'even when used in conjunction with the Portuguese language' has to presuppose situations where the other language is being used *without* the Portuguese language, for example signs in English only. Furthermore, the possible interpretation and hence the application of the legislation appears to be rather deliberately open, for who is to decide to whom the message is 'exclusively or primarily directed'? It is certainly the case that in the Algarve many businesses could claim to be directing their services primarily at international tourists, thus giving them the legal right to use languages other than Portuguese. It is also noticeable that businesses, shops and other commercial services which cannot make this claim do advertise in the LL almost exclusively in Portuguese. This is the case for most banks, for instance, and large supermarket chains.

¹⁴ Decreto-Lei nº 330/90 de 23 de Outubro

¹⁵ My own translation

¹⁶ Sources: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE); Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF).

To investigate this further, I photographed large (and therefore highly visible) advertising billboards found along the roadsides around the Almancil area. A striking case of the contrast between advertising in English-only and Portuguese-only can be seen in Figure 10. Here, two supermarkets are advertising side by side, just outside Almancil. One of these supermarkets, Apolónia, is a local, Portuguese family-owned supermarket which over the years has built up a huge clientele of Northern Europeans (both residents and tourists from around the Almancil area and beyond) as it stocks a wide range of imported goods, as well as delicacies, specialities and luxury foodstuffs which cannot be easily found elsewhere in the Algarve. The text of the billboard tells us (in English only) that Apolónia is “where shopping is a pleasure. It’s like being back home... they’ve got everything!” The fact that the text is clearly aimed at a foreign clientele is evident not only through the choice of English for the text, but also the deictic expression ‘back home’. Their claim to stock ‘everything’ and to make shopping a ‘pleasure’ is equated with the experience of shopping ‘back home’. The implication is that Apolónia provides not only a non-typical Portuguese shopping experience, but a better one, thus creating an identity for the supermarket-as-place which is positioned as being superior to other, ‘local’ places through its association with foreignness.

Aldi, on the other hand, is an international chain of discount supermarkets, with branches throughout Portugal and indeed Europe. The billboard announcing the new Almancil branch features only Portuguese text. The content of this text has a primarily informative function, giving the location, opening times and stating some of the products and produce available (fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, frozen food, non-food products). There is a simple slogan, in a smaller font at the bottom of the text: “Qualidade máxima, preço mínimo” (*Maximum quality, minimum price*). The explanation for the Portuguese-only text may be due to company advertising policy, possibly in compliance with the law. Perhaps the supermarket expects to attract mainly Portuguese-speaking shoppers.



Figure 10 Supermarket advertising hoardings, near Almancil

In any case, the juxtaposition of these two billboards (and indeed the actual supermarkets) is quite revealing in terms of symbolic power relations. Apolónia,

through its range of products, its higher prices, its reputation for impeccable customer service, and its northern European clientele, is associated with what is perceived as an exclusive, economically and socially powerful group in the Algarve. By advertising in English, the language comes not only to represent this group, but also to exclude those who do not understand it. This both reflects and reinforces the widely-held belief in the Algarve that the English-speaking *estrangeiros* (foreigners) are uniformly wealthy and therefore economically powerful. In contrast, on the Aldi hoarding, Portuguese is the language that represents those who potentially wish to shop in cheap, discount supermarkets.

The linguistic landscape of the ‘Golden Triangle’: advertising billboards.

In the ‘Golden Triangle’ area, to the south of Almancil, where the real estate prices are supposedly the highest per square metre in Portugal, a distinctive feature of the linguistic landscape are the billboards lining the roadsides advertising the services of real estate agencies and property developers. The texts of these billboards are frequently written in English only (Figure 11), or, when Portuguese is also present, it is the English text that is salient, typically coming above the Portuguese text, in a larger font size and stronger colour (Figure 12).



Figure 11 Real estate advertising, near Quinta do Lago



Figure 12 Real estate advertising, near Almancil

This salience gives a clear message about the relative importance and status given to the language by the producers of the sign. Once again, English is the code of an elitist, exclusive in-group. It seems to be the assumption of the producers of these texts (estate agents and property developers who are often of northern European origin themselves) that it is primarily those belonging to this in-group who will have the economic power and motivation to consider buying property in this area and therefore there is little point in advertising in Portuguese.

Although 'elite' membership status is clearly grounded in economic privilege, it is not a clear-cut, structural social category. An 'elite' identity is an ideological subject position; it is semiotically achieved and enacted through social practices, including discourse (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2006). Membership is therefore relatively open – and through the repetition and routinization of discursive practices such as the processes of symbolic differentiation (including, in this case, through the foregrounding of English rather than the local language in highly visible LL texts), elitist identities are reproduced and reinforced.

The discursive construction of an elite identity is also realized linguistically through the actual texts of these billboards. In Figure 12, readers are urged to 'live the difference'. Like much advertising discourse (see, for example, Cook 2001), the connotations of this metaphoric expression are perhaps intentionally ambiguous, leaving the receiver of the message to work out what the 'difference' is and how it should be 'lived'. However, the images of a leisure-based lifestyle and a luxurious villa, besides being intertextual references from typical tourism promotional media, also activate cultural schemata that suggest the difference is based on social class.

At the same time, the identity of the 'Golden Triangle' is being consistently reproduced as a place where English-speaking people have their homes: a sense of place with boundaries (symbolic and ideological rather than material) is being constructed for these 'outsiders' who may have no real sense of physical, cultural or ancestral ties with the place they have chosen as home. An ideology that equates 'home' with private land or property ownership is being reinforced. In this way, a sense of place and feelings of belonging are created which are simultaneously both integrating (through in-group membership) and exclusive, since a 'frontier' of difference is constructed leading to a powerful sense of distinctive social identity.

The billboards advertising the Vale do Lobo resort make the promise of 'exclusivity' explicit (Figures 13 and 14), once again with the English text in an unmistakably salient position. Through the use of the nominalization 'exclusivity' as actor in the metaphorical process "exclusivity awaits you" (Figure 13), the place itself is positioned as being synonymous with a privileged, elitist lifestyle and identity. This is reiterated through the slogans 'exclusive living since 1962' (Figure 13) and 'Vale do Lobo: an exclusive way of living' (Figure 14).



Figure 13 Billboard, Vale do Lobo
(Box on the right: 'Vale do Lobo, EXCLUSIVE LIVING SINCE 1962')



Figure 14 Billboard near Almancil

In short, the texts on the majority of roadside billboards in the Golden Triangle are clearly directed at English-speaking groups of foreigners from the north of Europe who are seeking second homes or alternative places of residence. The aspirations of these potential property buyers appear to be based on the premise of an extension of the tourism experience – an escape from ‘reality’ to a place where leisure, luxury and exclusivity are constant possibilities. In other words they are involved in a social practice whereby they are stylizing themselves as members of the ‘super-elite’ (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2006) whilst simultaneously being strategically stylized in the same way by others - the ‘producers’ of the LL, who of course stand to gain economically from the selling of goods (particularly land and property) perceived necessary to embody this identity.

Conclusions and indications for further research

Tourist destinations throughout the world increasingly have a great deal of English in their LLs, since English is internationally recognised as the *lingua franca* of choice for tourists. The study of the public signs visible in the Rua da República in Almancil, which revealed a strong presence of English (found on almost 50% of signs), could easily be taken as evidence of this. Furthermore, since it is in the ‘bottom up’ production type of signs with a predominantly commercial discursive function that

English is used, it would appear that as tourists undoubtedly contribute to the local economy, the use of English in this particular LL is the result of a rational choice by the producers, based on expected material benefits.

On the other hand, given that most signs in this street are not bi-lingual Portuguese-English but show a preference for one language or the other (despite the municipal regulations which state that Portuguese should always be present), it could also be argued that something seems to be going on in terms of identity construction and the creation of symbolic boundaries between social groups – (non-) English-speakers and (non-) Portuguese-speakers.

In order to investigate this more thoroughly, advertising hoardings in the surrounding area were examined. The majority of the billboards in the 'Golden Triangle' area advertise land and property sales/development, predominantly in English. This contributes to a social representation of the area as being up for sale to English-speaking buyers, through English-speaking intermediaries. Furthermore, a closer examination of some of the discourse features of these advertisements reveals the discursive construction of an elitist place-identity based on privilege and difference. It is in this way that the LL functions as a kind of interface between between place and identity, since these highly visible texts of the LL are part of the process of the discursive construction of a place and also impact upon the discursive construction of the individual and collective identities of those who stake a claim to the place by material investment in it.

In short, the sense of place being created by the predominance of English in these LL texts is not merely that of a tourist space, but an ideologically constructed place of luxury and privilege. Through allegiance with an elitist identity and subject position that have been, in part at least, discursively achieved, the choice of the English language as the preferred code in this LL creates an in-group/out-group boundary that surely has something to say about the symbolic power relations between social groups living in the area. Further investigation of this would seem to suggest a logical next step in the research, for although I have suggested in this paper that a CDA approach to this particular LL may uncover such power relations, I am aware that I have barely touched the surface of this. Much more could be said about the social contexts in which the LL is embedded, and a far more detailed and systematic discourse analysis of the LL signs needs to be carried out. Although the relatively limited analysis permitted by this small, exploratory case study does appear to reveal something about the place-identity of northern European lifestyle migrants in the 'Golden Triangle' area, it should be reiterated that places have multiple identities and meanings for different groups of people, and that there are many social groups (for example, other migrant groups and both the local Portuguese residents and Portuguese tourists) who also have connections with the place and 'consume' the LL. The relations between place, identity and the LL for these groups of people need to be further explored to gain a broader understanding of the impact of the LL on a community.

As a final consideration on the limitations of this study, it should also be noted that linguistic landscapes are not fixed in time, but are constantly shifting and changing. Therefore, a longitudinal study would be needed in order to get a sense of how the LL alters according to evolving social contexts.

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