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Heiko F. Marten and Luk Van
Mensel (Hampshire: Palgrave
Macmillan, 2012)

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Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape, edited by Durk Gorter, Heiko F. Marten and Luk Van Mensel, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, xii + 335pp., £55.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-230-27244-6

'Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape' edited by Durk Gorter, Heiko F. Marten and Luk Van Mensel is one of the volumes in Palgrave Macmillan's series on 'Minority Languages and Communities'. This edited collection examines the approaches adopted by researchers aiming to investigate the ways that the study of Linguistic Landscape (LL) can benefit research on minority languages. Each chapter considers a different instance of linguistic politics reflected in the LL, in contexts including the Basque country, Belgium, Brunei, Catalonia, Finland, France, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, Ukraine and Wales. In each of these places, the data provided by the LL can be used to illuminate the complex interaction of language, culture, identity and power.

In chapter one, 'Studying Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscape', the editors provide an overview of the language varieties and geographical areas under consideration within the volume, setting the scene with a practical summary of the broad remit of LL research to date. Demonstrating the benefits of LL research to minority language research, the editors summarise the approaches adopted by contributors to the volume. Significant recurring questions centre on the visibility of different languages, and the use of the LL as a guide to the power relationships between majority and minority groups. While there is some inevitable (and comparatively instructive) overlap between the issues considered in each chapter, the first three sections ostensibly concentrate on the thematic categories of 'ideology', 'language policy', and the 'distributions of languages', while the fourth and final section looks at 'fresh perspectives which open up new theoretical and methodological views on linguistic landscape research' (p. 9).

Part I (chapters 2–6) focuses on 'Language Ideologies and the Linguistic Landscape', considering a range of case studies that use the LL to examine wider linguistic perceptions and beliefs within specific communities. The first of these is Heiko F. Marten's chapter: "'Latgalian is not a Language": Linguistic Landscapes in Eastern Latvia and how they Reflect Centralist Attitudes'. Although Latgalian is widely spoken in the Latgale region of Latvia, it is not generally viewed as an appropriate written medium. From an examination of current attitudes, Marten argues that the limited presence of Latgalian in the LL is largely the result of the Latvian state's policies which have long marginalised the language. In contrast, Aneta Pavlenko's chapter on 'Transgression as the Norm: Russian in Linguistic Landscape of Kyiv, Ukraine', describes the process by which Russian has been downgraded to minority status in Ukraine, following the official change of the state language to Ukrainian in 1991. Currently, official and commercial signage typically adheres to this new standard, but Russian is still widely spoken and understood, and remains highly visible in the unofficial LL of Kyiv. Pavlenko argues that these instances of Russian in the LL should not be interpreted as 'conscious act[s] of resistance' (p. 53), but rather as a reflection of the extant 'bilingual Russian-Ukrainian norm' prevailing in less formal contexts. In 'Minority and Semiotic Landscapes: An Ideological Minefield?', Michael Hornsby and Dick Vigers consider the visual and linguistic impact of bilingual signage in Welsh and English in Wales, and of Scottish Gaelic and English in Highland Scotland. Employing an ethnographic approach, their study demonstrates that the use of such signage in these areas remains controversial and highlights various ideological 'tensions' between those imposing the signs and those experiencing them as part of the LL (p. 71). A more extreme case is discussed by Máiréad Moriarty in 'Language Ideological Debates in the Linguistic Landscape of an Irish Tourist Town'. The Irish town known traditionally as 'Dingle' (in English) and as Daingean Uí Chúis (in Irish), was re-designated 'An Daingean' in accordance with the Irish Government's Place names Order (2004). For some, this new name was an 'incorrect' Irish form, while for others, by overwriting 'Dingle', it robbed the town of an established, commercially helpful tool. Some local people set up a committee to protest and reverse the decision, while others 'graffitied the name Dingle over An Daingean' on road signs (p. 80). Moriarty suggests that the public debate, much of which itself took place within the LL, demonstrates that the LL is 'a space for indexing and performing

language ideologies' and in this specific instance attests to the view that 'the Irish language ... is not seen as the language that will get things done' (p. 86). In 'Linguistic Landscape as a Tool for Interpreting Language Vitality: Arabic as a "Minority" Language in Israel', Elana Shohamy and Marwan Abu Ghazaleh-Mahajneh compare the widespread use of Arabic in the city of Ume El Pahem with the complete absence of the language in the LL of Haifa University's campus. Arabic is an official language in Israel, and the high visibility of Arabic in the city is unsurprising, but on the campus, where a quarter of the students population is Arabic, the composition of the LL raises several questions. The authors argue that students 'perceive the LL situation as further evidence ... of their feeling of lack of rights' (p. 102), and suggest that the LL should be employed 'as an activist tool to bridge communities' (p. 104).

Part II (chapters 7–10) takes as its theme 'Linguistic Landscape and Language Policy' and begins with Robert Blackwood and Stefania Tufi's chapter: 'Policies vs Non-Policies: Analysing Regional Languages and the National Standard in the Linguistic Landscape of French and Italian Mediterranean Cities'. The authors examine language policies and the LL with particular reference to the representation of Corsican, Catalan and Provençal in relation to French, and Genoese, Sardinian and Neapolitan in relation to Italian. Blackwood and Tufi argue that while France has actively suppressed these varieties, Italy has ignored and neglected them. Both sets of minority languages have been stigmatized as 'anti-modern', yet remain present to differing degrees in the LL. In chapter eight, 'Two-Way Traffic: How Linguistic Landscapes Reflect and Influence the Politics of Language', Guy Puzey reflects on the relationship between the LL and language policy for Sámi in Norway, Scottish Gaelic in Scotland, and 'local languages' in Italy. The official LL, notably visible in road signs and other authority-driven environments, is considered in relation to tourism, cultural identity and perception. Although the implementation of bilingual signage is often controversial, Puzey argues that 'well-designed linguistic landscaping' (p. 144) can mitigate the power imbalance between minority languages and their majority counterparts. Similar issues are pursued in Durk Gorter, Jokin Aiestaran and Jasone Cenoz's chapter, 'The Revitalization of Basque and the Linguistic Landscape of Donostian-San Sebastián', in which the authors consider the LL of a city in the Basque Autonomous Community. Research into the LL of the city has made an important contribution to local language policy, particularly because of the unanticipated finding that 'Spanish was much more dominant' (p. 159), despite the Basque-only 'top-down' policy. The LL also reflects a complex pattern of interaction between Spanish and Basque, indicative of the code-mixing and code-switching noted in a wide range of contexts and registers within the region (p. 161). This section concludes with Luk Van Mensel and Jeroen Darquennes' chapter: 'All is Quiet on the Eastern Front? Language Contact along the French-German Language Border in Belgium'. Mensel and Darquennes research combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to examine the LL of the German-speaking municipality of Eupen and the French-speaking municipality of Malmedy, both in New Belgium. In each of these contexts, the population generally adheres to local language policy, yet accepts other linguistic practices. The authors argue that this study supports the idea that the LL of 'well-protected or privileged minority language situations' is uncontroversial because 'there is nothing to be symbolically struggled for' (p. 178).

Part III (chapters 11–14) looks specifically at 'The Distributive Approach to Linguistic Landscape'. In 'The Linguistic Landscape of Three Streets in Barcelona: Patterns of Language Visibility in Public Space', Llorenç Comajoan Colomé and Ethan Long analyse names for establishments and identify a close relationship between demography and the LL. Although language policy, enforced by law since 1998, dictates that signs should be displayed in Catalan (additional language being optional), each of the streets contained a significant proportion (25%–46%) of Spanish-only signs. Next, Sebastian Muth considers the 'Linguistic Landscapes of Chişinău and Vilnius: Linguistic Landscape and the Representation of Minority Languages in Two Post-Soviet Capitals'. In the areas studied, the LL of the Moldovan capital revealed that Romanian-only signage was more dominant than other forms of signage, with Russian being the next most visible language, chiefly in Romanian/Russian bilingual signs. In the Lithuanian capital, however, English was the second most visible language after Lithuanian. Unusually for the linguistic demography of Vilnius, very little Russian or Polish signage was found. This raises further questions, for which some

speculative answers are provided; a still more informative account could perhaps have been generated through qualitative analysis of public opinion and the LL. Two further contexts are compared by Paolo Coluzzi in 'Multilingual Societies vs Monolingual States: The Linguistic Landscape in Italy and Brunei Darussalam', the LL of the latter never having previously been investigated within an academic study. Coluzzi's research considers street signage in specific areas of Milan and Udine (Italy) and of Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei Darussalam), and although his findings for each area are very different, they both demonstrate 'the monolingual tendency of the state and the multilingual tendency of the people' (p. 238). In contrast, Hanni Salo examines more closely related regions in 'Using Linguistic Landscape to Examine the Visibility of Sámi Languages in the North Calotte', shifting the focus from an urban to a rural context. The North Calotte / Sámiland (Sámpi) includes areas of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, and the autochthonic Sámi languages of these areas are all endangered. Salo's study concentrates on twenty locations in four cities: Karasjok (Norway), Kiruna (Sweden), Inari (Finland) and Lovozero (Russia), and suggests that the language policies of these areas strongly influence the visibility of Sámi languages.

Part IV (chapters 15-18) considers several 'Fresh Perspectives on the Linguistic Landscape'. In 'Discourse Coalitions For and Against Minority Languages on Signs: Linguistic Landscape as a Social Issue', Eszter Szabó Gilinger, Marián Sloboda, Lucija Šimičić and Dick Vigers focus on perceptions of the LL from the viewpoint of minority language users. Employing Sabatier and Weible's advocacy coalition framework and discourse coalitions theory, they focused on perceptions of signs in Hungary, Wales, Croatia and the Czech Republic, using qualitative data gathered from interviews, newspaper articles and internet sources. From their study they concluded that 'public discourses about the LL treat signs explicitly as either instrumental objects or symbolic spaces' (p. 278). In 'The Linguistic Landscape of Educational Spaces: Language Revitalization and Schools in Southeastern Estonia', Kara D. Brown draws on theories from cultural geography, place-based education and linguistic ecology. She argues that 'language plays a role in the emergent pedagogy of place as reflected in the linguistic landscape of schools' (p. 281), basing her research findings on analysis of measures taken to revitalize the regional language, Võro, in Southeastern Estonia. While education is predominantly conducted in Estonian, Võro is found in 'crucial symbolic sites' (p. 287) within schools, namely foyers, classrooms and museums. The resources used to facilitate teaching of minority languages are of particular relevance to Larissa Aronin and Muiris Ó Laoire's chapter, 'The Material Culture of Multilingualism'. Their wide-ranging discussion invites further research specifically on the analysis of material culture as a subset of the LL, defined very broadly, to include everything from air waves and stone carvings to teaching materials. In the closing chapter, 'Minority Languages through the Lens of the Linguistic Landscape', the editors draw together some of the prevailing ideas and conclusions present in the volume as a whole. The complexity of the study of the LL is underlined, and Mensel, Marten and Gorter sensibly point out that the chapters raise many more new questions (p. 319). In relation to minority language research, the LL clearly provides a rich supply of interesting data relevant to major issues including the visibility of different languages, the degree to which language policies are enacted in the public sphere, and the impact of tourism.

Overall, this is a very interesting volume that gathers together a wide ranging set of case studies and analyses of the LL and its implications for minority languages and minorities themselves. Many of the chapters break new ground, either in terms of the language varieties or geographical locations they consider, or the theoretical positions and research methodologies they combine. The chapters in part IV are particularly provocative, and invite further (or comparative) research in other contexts. Brown's work in Southeastern Estonia, for example, could be replicated in other areas where language revitalization is taking place, as her arguments for the impact of educational 'ideological spaces' on linguistic perceptions is compelling. As the authors conclude, the LL is 'a heuristic appropriate and relevant for a wide range of minority language situations' (p. 319). Any criticisms included here are therefore minor. The 'overview map' illustrating the geographical locations of each case study (p. xii) is generally helpful; towns and cities are reasonably clearly mapped, but the scattering of 'territory' labels could suggest that Corsica and Scotland have the same relative political status as Lombardy and Eastern Belgium. It would perhaps have

been instructive to highlight every area discussed, especially those such as the Basque Autonomous Community, often absent from generic maps. Within the work as a whole, the authors have generally been careful to provide a clear explication of any politically-laden linguistic terminology (see e.g. Blackwell and Tufi (p. 110)). It would however have been helpful for some general agreements about the use of recurring terms such as ‘minority language’, ‘dialect’, ‘local language’, ‘regional language’ and so forth, to have been housed in the introduction. Similarly, many contributors cite the same influential texts, and the editors could have pulled some of these ideas together in a more foundational introduction, allowing individual authors more space to focus on their research findings. Some repetition is of course inevitable in such a collection of papers, and in framing the volume with the introductory and concluding chapters, editors have taken some steps to ensure that key themes and ideas are captured cohesively. This is an important work for anyone interested in linguistic landscape research and on the status of minority languages. It comprehensively demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of LL research, showcasing the wealth of data available and the robust, theoretically informative lenses through which the representation of minority languages and cultures may be understood.