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LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE
An innovative tool for documenting and analysing linguistic landscapes

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Abstract – Language Landscape (www.languagelandscape.org) is a website aimed at documenting, investigating and promoting linguistic diversity. It is a user-generated map, where particular instances of language use in speech, sign or writing can be geo-tagged on the map of the world with the information about when and by whom they were made. In this article, we propose that Language Landscape (henceforth LL) can be a valuable tool for studying the fluidity of linguistic landscapes, and explain why this is the case. We show how the website can be used in researching linguistic landscapes, and discuss the issues pertinent to doing research on crowd-sourced data. We discuss one method of studying linguistic landscapes in particular, namely Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Subsequently, we focus on those functionalities of LL which are particularly useful to scholars investigating linguistic landscapes from the CDA perspective, pointing to those features of the website that can contextualise and enrich such studies.

Keywords: language mapping, language documentation, crowdsourcing, linguistic landscapes, Critical Discourse Analysis.

1. Issues in language mapping and rationale behind Language Landscape

Language Landscape (LL) was created in 2011 in London, as a project aimed at mapping the languages spoken at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. After samples of over 50 languages were collected, the creators of the project, who at that point were MA students in the Language Documentation programme, realised that if the language samples were to be situated within their sociolinguistic reality, they should be placed on the map of London, rather than in the countries from which the languages, or people, originated.

This gave rise to Language Landscape (LL) in its current form. It is an interactive, online platform, where a data point is a recording of a language (in the visual, audio or audio-visual format), tagged to the location where it was made, and time-stamped for the date and time of its recording. By

treating instances of language use as data points rather than languages, Language Landscape aims to achieve a more realistic representation of the increasingly fluid linguistic practices which take place in today's globalised world. This not only includes global cities like London (Block 2006) which we expect to be multilingual, but also smaller urban or rural spaces which are less likely to be perceived as being as diverse as they truly are. Furthermore, the LL platform offers a more accurate rendering of traditionally multilingual areas which have existed on the planet for centuries, in particular in Africa (Di Carlo, Good 2014; Lüpke, Storch 2013; Weidl, Goodchild in press), South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific (Cunningham *et al.* 2006).

In both new and traditional multilingual scenarios, the most commonly used two-dimensional language maps, where languages are represented as points or polygons, are of little use, as too much information renders them unreadable and uninformative (Dahl, Veselinova 2006). Moreover, polygon- and point-based maps cannot avoid giving precedence to the languages with larger numbers of speakers, which might in turn perpetuate the idea that 'bigger' languages are more worthy of representation and more important than those spoken on a smaller scale, thus fostering dominant language ideologies and attitudes. Using data points representative of individual speakers does away with the dichotomy between languages based on the size of the population of their speakers, and places every speaker wishing to represent their language on an equal footing. Moreover, it allows for the depiction of individual multilingualism, something traditional maps also cannot do (Ritchie *et al.* 2016).

The above applies to spoken and signed languages, which were originally the main focus of the Language Landscape project. However, over time, the LL team has become increasingly aware of the value and importance of including visual representations of language, particularly when framed within the linguistic landscapes of cities. As such, efforts have been made to increase the functionality of the LL platform in order to be more inclusive of such data points, namely visual representation of languages in the form of written signs. It is this particular functionality that constitutes the focus of this paper. The following sections will be devoted to how Language Landscape can be incorporated into the innovative methodology of studying linguistic landscapes.

2. Researching linguistic landscapes

2.1. Linguistic landscape: definition and functions

The academic interest in linguistic landscapes is relatively recent. Nonetheless, the notion of *Linguistic Landscape* has already been defined in

several ways (see Brito 2016 for an overview of definitions and methodological approaches). Linguistic landscape can be understood as the "language of public road signs, boards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings" (Landry, Bourhis 1997, p. 25). It can also be defined more broadly, as "language that is visible to all in a specified area" (Gorter 2006, p. 2). The latter definition, to which we adhere on the following pages, is more flexible as it allows for inclusion of mobile expressions of language in the public sphere: leaflets, flyers, and even clothing of passers-by (Torkington 2009).

What makes linguistic landscape an important and attractive subject of study from the linguistic, and particularly sociolinguistic point of view, is that it provides insight into how individuals and communities create, appropriate, negotiate and resist particular linguistic practices (Moriarty 2014) and discourses, thus contributing to the construction of public space. This is in line with Landry and Bourhis's (1997) observation that linguistic landscape has two main functions: an informational and a symbolic one. The exploration of the latter can be particularly revealing if we realise that language present in public spaces can be analysed as a "social reproduction system" (Blommaert 1999, pp. 10-11) which reproduces linguistic (and other) ideologies. Blommaert identifies multiple "social reproduction systems", including schools, administration, army, advertisement, publications etc. (1999, pp. 10-11). He further observes that these systems play a key role in the normalisation of certain ideologies, in the sense that they reinforce the perception of the dominant discourse as the 'normal' one, to the detriment of the content and discourses that come to be perceived as non-dominant. As Blommaert (2013, pp. 39-40) remarks in his more recent work, public spaces are "neither constructed nor experienced passively". Instead, they are shaped by a range of historical, social and political forces, which can be either contested or reinforced by the use of language in public space (Brito 2016, pp. 1-2).

What follows is that linguistic landscape transmits multiple layers of sociolinguistic information. As a complex object of analysis which has to do with construction and reproduction of socio-political power relations, it lends itself particularly well to investigation by means of Critical Discourse Analysis, which aims to uncover discursive construction of power (Fairclough 2010). Many current research endeavours looking into linguistic landscapes adopt this theoretical framework, among them e.g. the Observatory of Discourse (*Observatorio del Discurso*) within the EDiSo (Association for the Study of Discourse and Society, *Asociación de Estudios sobre Discurso y Sociedad*). In the following sections we explore how the Language Landscape platform can be used as a tool to study linguistic landscapes. While we focus mostly on how it fits within the CDA research

programme, we also show that it is versatile enough that its use is not limited to a study conducted within any particular theoretical framework.

2.2. Language Landscape as a tool for studying linguistic landscapes

The basis for any study of linguistic landscape is the collection of data from a defined geographical space. Displaying images representative of linguistic landscapes on an interactive map such as Language Landscape has many advantages, both in terms of the ease and accuracy of the presentation of the data, and its subsequent analysis. Moreover, the uniqueness of LL as a research tool lies in the fact that it is flexible enough to be able to accommodate a broad range of data, thus allowing the researchers to adopt even the broadest definition of what linguistic landscape is, like the one given by Torkington (2009). This definition adopted in this article, includes mobile expressions of language, such as T-shirts, leaflets and so on. Gorter (2013, p. 199) further expands this list, adding new types of signs, such as "electronic flat-panel displays, LED neon lights, foam boards, electronic message centres, interactive touch screens, inflatable signage, and scrolling banners". This list is by no means to be taken as an exhaustive inventory of examples of media that can act as support for linguistic landscape. Given the versatility of linguistic landscape, and the ever-growing repertoire of its possible expressions, adequate study of it requires a complex tool. Language Landscape is one such tool, and its main advantages are outlined below.

Firstly, LL allows for the placement of a representative photograph or video on a map and annotating it with a range of metadata necessary for subsequent analysis. The metadata that LL allows include, but are not limited to, its exact location, the time when it was photographed/recorded, its linguistic content with transcription and the required translations, identity of the creator, if known, a narrative description, the type of recording equipment used, recording conditions, access rights and so on. While this might seem overwhelming at the initial stages of any project, such a broad range of metadata ensures that the collected data can subsequently be used with a variety of research questions in mind, including those which the researchers may have not initially foreseen.

Secondly, LL allows for anchoring multiple instances of language use to the same geographical location, which makes it possible to monitor and analyse the development of linguistic landscapes over time. This feature is particularly important from the point of view of researchers interested in Critical Discourse Analysis; it allows for tracking how the creators of linguistic landscapes respond to political and social events, and how this response evolves and follows the unravelling of the extra-linguistic situation.

Thirdly, LL has a feature of 'projects', whereby each user can create

sub-maps of the main map. The main map features all data points ever added to the website,[1] whereas the projects feature allows for the creation of a personalised website where only the recordings and data belonging to that project are visible. Projects can focus on any research issue, including among others, specific geographical areas, features of a linguistic landscape or expressions of linguistic landscape in a particular language(s). Projects can also be time sensitive and focus on a particular period of time (e.g. the duration of a political campaign), and the permanence, or any given technique or characteristics, of the sign (shop signs, government signs, graffiti, etc.) can also be considered.

Lastly, LL is free to use and completely user-generated. These features make it a great tool for crowd-sourced and collaborative research projects, as anyone with an LL account,[2] can be invited to participate. This, in turn, can increase a research project's scope both in terms of time-depth and the coverage of a given space, or simply allow for inclusion of those instances of data that a small research team might overlook or not successfully capture. The fact that LL is free-to-use and online also makes it an ideal platform for the dissemination of research results. In fact, LL has already been used to this end by research projects focusing on different aspects of socially situated use of language, including linguistic landscapes. Some examples of existing linguistic research projects include: *Arnado – Comunidad de Canto y Habla*[3] by the user miguel_angel, *Análisis de Interlengua: Influencia del idioma chino en el paisaje lingüístico español*[4] by the user blanca, and *Vatlongos, Southeast Ambrym Project*[5] by the user Eleanor_Ridge.

2.3. Methodological consideration

2.3.1. Presentation and collection of data

Since a systematic study of linguistic landscapes is still in its early stages, it is important to develop a sound methodology for the collection and analysis of data within the discipline. In the process of establishing a methodology for the study of linguistic landscapes, the question arises of what serves as data and who decides this. This includes the question of what constitutes a text and a sign, and what counts as text/sign in a public space (Brito 2016).

[1] As of December 17th 2017, there were 771 data points on the main Language Landscape map.
[2] Accounts can be created within minutes, as long as users agree to the Terms and Conditions which state that all activity must be respectful and non-discriminatory.
[3] See: http://www.languagelandscape.org/project/ARNADO
[4] See: http://www.languagelandscape.org/project/Interlengua
[5] See: http://www.languagelandscape.org/project/VatlongosSEA

Despite the fact that we tend to think of written, public expressions of language as permanent, linguistic landscapes are subject to a relatively rapid change, due to national and local policies, and – perhaps most importantly – the fluidity of the linguistic repertoires of the local population. Therefore, the methods of collecting the data on linguistic landscapes should allow for both diachronic and synchronic comparison. It also seems logical that, since linguistic landscapes are anchored in a given area, they are best represented in the form of a map, which is precisely the opportunity that Language Landscape provides.

As a user-generated database, LL takes on a bottom-up approach to research by offering an equal opportunity to non-academic users, language communities, and researchers to create (research) projects on the topics they find to be of most interest and value. Consequently, LL allows the user to simultaneously create and fulfil the demand for research on a specific topic. This stands in contrast to a top-down approach, where an academic researcher external to the language community selects a research topic that is of their individual interest, but not necessarily of use, interest or benefit to non-academic audiences.

Nevertheless, the use of bottom-up approaches does bring up the issue of reliability, as non-academic researchers who take up their topic of interest outside of the framework provided by academia might not have access to guidance regarding conducting research. Language Landscape addresses this by providing guidance on how to make and upload the recording or photo, as well as on collecting metadata and obtaining informed consent from speakers (the latter is less relevant for linguistic landscape research in particular, but crucial for sociolinguistic enquiry). All data must have accompanying metadata which in turn aids with the interpretation of data. As such, each data point has a minimum amount of metadata which must be associated with it, namely language name, location and time of recording, however additional information can also be added as the users see fit. In general, more detailed metadata improves the user experience for those interacting with the research project as this means there is more content for users to engage with. The Language Landscape team, which is composed of linguists of different specialties, ranging from sociolinguistics through semantic and pragmatics to syntax, is also available to inform the potential projects developed on the website, should the researcher express a need for guidance.

Given that the LL platform is completely user-generated, there is a potential for the skewing of data if there are not enough individual projects to represent the larger whole. If a particular geographical area is represented by only one or two projects, it cannot be said that the views or data presented within those few projects are representative of the area as a whole. Though we term the input of information onto the LL platform as ‘data’, it is up to the

individual researcher to decide what counts as data and what does not. As such, representation of the information or data points on the site can be subjective rather than objective. This is a limitation of the site that can be overcome by the collective participation and engagement of users and contributors to the LL map.

Lastly, the functionality provided by LL has the potential to enrich the methodology of future study of linguistic landscapes. While the current trend is to use photographs and videos of the visual representations of language in the public sphere, this only tells us part of the story about how language is used in a given space. A platform like Language Landscape, which allows for uploading audio, video and pictures, could be used to amplify that perspective. Therefore, users can upload data to show how linguistic landscape correlates with language use. LL can accommodate instances of linguistic landscape alongside interviews with passers-by, or even recordings of the 'linguistic soundscape' of any given place, including the street sounds and the languages spoken in the place where the linguistic landscape is documented.

2.3.2. Insights from Existing Projects

As is discussed in Section 1, Language Landscape is a digital map designed to showcase the geographic representation of language diversity and multilingualism. The digital map consists of audio and video recordings, geotagged to the location they were made rather than the geographical origin of the language(s) spoken. The idea is to create and represent a crowed-sourced database of languages which can be used to raise awareness and encourage interaction with the languages spoken in a specific geographical area (Ritchie *et al.* 2016). Over the course of the last six years, Language Landscape has hosted a range of projects with different research foci. Many of them focused on dialectal variation and multilingualism, and several have also had linguistic landscape at their core. In the following paragraphs, we discuss some of those projects, concentrating on the aspects of them that are potentially relevant to future studies of linguistic landscapes, with emphasis on their multilingual component.

Firstly, we focus on the project conducted in 2013 with pupils from Bow School of Maths and Computing, located in the borough of Tower Hamlets, which is one of the most linguistically diverse boroughs of London (Baker, Eversley 2000). The project's aim was to explore the multilingual settings in which the pupils live, and to encourage them to embrace, value and take advantage of their multilingual heritage. While overall the project was successful, what the organising team noticed over the course of the 8-week series of workshops is that the pre-conceived focus on multilingual practices and the value of multilingualism has proven problematic, given that

some students in the class were monolingual English speakers. At the stage of planning the project, we overlooked this issue, and the workshops for pupils later needed adjusting so as not to make the monolingual participants feel excluded or not valued.

The experience we had at Bow School can be extrapolated onto the studies of linguistic landscape, in particular those with a focus on multilingualism. In the same way as we might be drawn to 'unusual' behaviour and omit widespread practices, we might tend to pay attention to those elements of linguistic landscape which we find problematic or unusual, and omit the most typical instances of it. Within a context of a dominant language, the researcher's attention might often be drawn to multilingual signage or signs in minority languages, which tend to be more salient against the background of the 'unremarkable' signs in the dominant language. Consequently, the multilingual/minority language linguistic landscape can receive more of the researcher's attention, especially if the study is to be presented in a printed form, where space is limited. This naturally forces the researcher to make choices, most likely foregoing the representation of the signs in the dominant language. This, however, can have a profound effect on the outcomes and perceptions of the study itself. While multilingual and minority language linguistic landscape is a legitimate focus of study, it is equally important to represent it in context, which gives the instances of minority language use a more situated meaning. While this might be impossible in a book or journal publication, one could easily envisage a data set containing a greater number of signs created as a project on Language Landscape, and linked to the printed study. Moreover, since LL uses the functionality of Google Maps, it is possible to access the street view as well, and consequently to situate the instances of linguistic landscape recorded by the researchers against the background of the architecture and the cityscape/landscape in general. It is of course necessary to take into account that the street view might change over time, while the images which count as data points will remain the same.

Another issue which has surfaced in several projects over the years is that of the 'correct' use of language. Within the context of L1 and L2 teaching, a focus is often placed on the 'correct' way of using language. When we created Language Landscape, it was particularly important to us that every language should be treated on an equal footing. Hence the function which allows every speaker to choose the name of their language, while the names chosen previously by other users available as a drop-down list. By the same token, we subscribe to the view that language is a fluid form of social practice, and so norms are less important than what people actually do when they communicate. Thus, we do not subscribe to the prescriptive idea of a 'correct' use of language, and resist flagging 'mistakes' in the existing projects.

This aspect of our approach to linguistic enquiry can also be applied to the study of linguistic landscapes, in particular in the context of studying multilingual landscapes involving pidgins and creoles, or those of neighborhoods inhabited by immigrants whose native language is not the same as the language of their host country. In such contexts we are particularly likely to encounter spellings which might be perceived as diverging from the established norm. Sometimes, this practice might be intentional, and thus carry a particular message. On other occasions, it could be a feature of a language contact situation. In any case, the usage-based approach, to which Language Landscape subscribes, urges caution before classifying a particular instance of language use, be it written or spoken, as an error. In the study of linguistic landscapes as a method of constructing public space, such classification could be particularly harmful to the face of the author of a sign in question, since it is more permanent than speech and exhibited in public space.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis of linguistic landscapes

3.1. Requirements, aims and challenges of CDA

In this section, we focus on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a method for researching linguistic landscape. We describe how and why some of its basic aspects could be used to analyse linguistic landscape, and explain how Language Landscape could be used to facilitate such analysis. To begin with, we clarify the notion of CDA.

Fairclough (2010, 2012) describes CDA as a method of discourse analysis aimed at systematic exploration of the relations between discourse and other social elements, in particular focusing on power relations and the mutual influence between them and discursive practices. CDA stems from "the critical tradition of social analysis" and thus, rather than just describing the relations mentioned above, it also evaluates them (Fairclough 2012, p. 9). CDA is more adequately described as a research programme than as a theory. As observed by Van Dijk (1995), CDA is multidisciplinary and problem- or issue-oriented. It aims to "uncover, reveal and disclose what is implicit, hidden or otherwise not immediately obvious" in texts (Van Dijk 1995, p.18). Moreover, CDA is an analysis which aims to have practical applications, and thus researchers working within it are expected to have a certain "political and social ethic" (Van Dijk 1995, p.19) which would guide them towards practically-oriented findings meant to counter the power imbalance existing within a society. Van Dijk also remarks that "discursively implemented dominance involves preferential access to text and context" (1995, p. 20). CDA can look for such discursive implementation of dominance not only in

spoken discourse, but also in other "semiotic dimensions" (1995, p. 18). Linguistic landscape is one of such semiotic dimensions, where relations of power are translated into access to public space, the capacity to influence it and the means at one's disposal if one wishes to make an ideological stance within it.

From the CDA perspective, the main aim of studying linguistic landscape is to uncover why and by whom certain content is presented in the public space, and what the rationale is behind presenting them in a certain way. The manner of presenting information is not limited to the choice of words used to convey it, but also includes the choice of certain languages or linguistic repertoires (Goodchild 2016, in press). All of the above aspects can be evaluated critically to uncover the message they send to those who frequent the public space under analysis, and many studies of linguistic landscape are conducted with this aim in mind (Landry, Bourhis 1997).

Important challenges in any study using CDA as the method, including the study of linguistic landscape, consist of choosing adequate and representative samples of texts and analysing them in a way which accurately uncovers the power relations. A danger implicit in such an enterprise is to make sure that one takes into account what is important and telling in an appropriate context. Because CDA is openly recognised as ideologically involved, researchers come to it with not only their own academic interests, but also with their own social and political convictions. Those, in turn, could possibly influence the choice of data to be analysed, and could lead to a focus on salient phenomena, which could skew the results of the analysis.

This is in turn opens a discussion on the representation of the author's intention or opinion behind a particular sign. If a researcher seeks to claim representation of opinion or ideology, the author of the written event should be given the chance to present their views or intentions via a sociolinguistic interview. However, this is not always a reasonable expectation as in many instances, the author is not known or may want to claim anonymity depending on the context in which the written event has arisen. Having said this, if a linguistic landscape study wishes to claim to be representative of voices and opinions of a particular population, it should attempt to also engage with the people within the same geographical area. By only engaging in documenting the visual representation of language without additional sociolinguistic interviews to document the reasons behind the linguistic event, the research project leaves itself open to criticism about power relations between the researcher and the researched.

Linguistic landscapes can be exclusive of large portions of the population within a specific geographical area, for example people who are visually impaired, illiterate or have low levels of literacy in the written sign's language. Although people with varying levels of blindness and literacy may

be able to engage with the linguistic landscape, they may not be able to access the full range of meanings and products. Signage may be available and targeted at specific groups within a given population (e.g. signs in braille), but this does not mean that the linguistic landscape as a whole will be accessible to any one given person. This is very much indicative of the power relations and imbalances within a given society. Linguistic landscapes can act as a manifestation of power and exclusion depending on the choice of language or even through the mere existence of a written event at all.

The subtleties of the social and political context of the linguistic landscape of a given area cannot be deduced by simply observing the visual representations of language immediately available to the naked eye. Rather, it is important to also engage with the population of that same area, while also considering their relationship of individuals to the physical space (are they inhabitants or visitors?). The following section, will discuss the role that Language Landscape can play in the facilitation of the issues outlined above.

3.2. Language Landscape as a mode of data display for CDA

The functionality of the Language Landscape website, and how it can enhance the study of linguistic landscape, has been discussed in Section 2. Here, we focus on how LL can be incorporated into the set of tools used by researchers using Critical Discourse Analysis to describe and analyse linguistic landscapes.

Firstly, LL is an interactive map, which allows for addressing a big challenge in both the CDA and linguistic landscape research: it allows to present data in a rich and multi-faceted context.

As mentioned above, the Google Street View functionality of the map allows users to consult satellite images of the terrain where the data were collected, and juxtapose them with the data collected within the research project. This feature also allows for tracking the changing context of the collected samples of linguistic landscape over time, as well as a possibility to verify whether the samples themselves have not been removed or modified. The possibility of presenting the images in context also has the advantage of allowing the researcher to come back to the 'raw' linguistic landscape data. As in the case of any sample of language, once it has been recorded and transcribed, it is removed from its original context: the communicative situation. An analogous situation takes place with instances of language landscape when they are photographed and presented against a body of analytical text, rather than against the social and public space within which they were created and used. Thus, the possibility of coming back to the map and the street view offers the researchers a possibility of approximating the natural context of their data in a post-fieldwork situation.

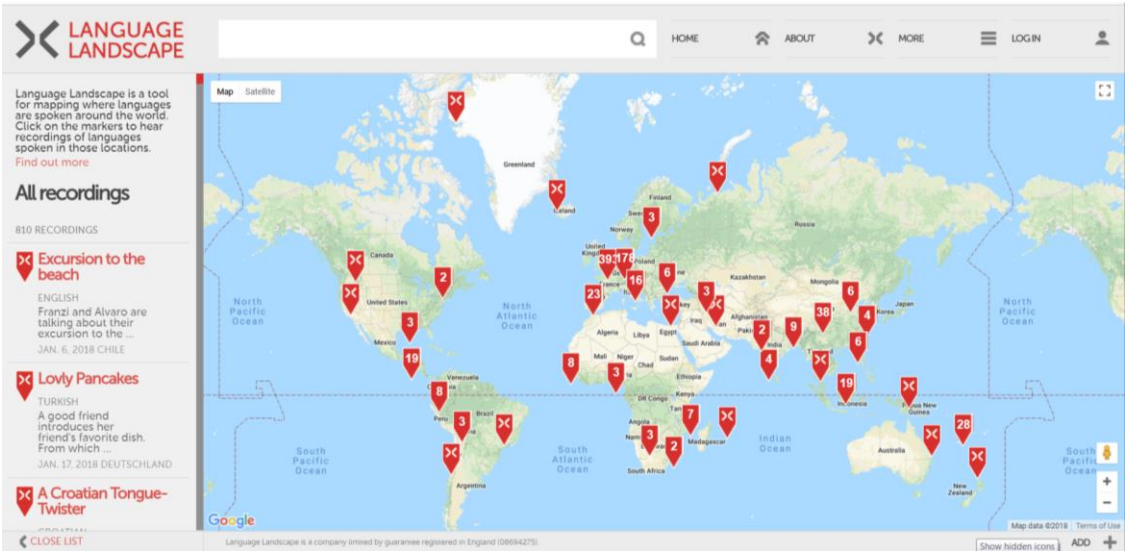

Figure 1
Language Landscape Interface: Map.

Secondly, as mentioned in the previous section, CDA is a methodology which emphasises the fact that the researcher takes a certain ideological and political stance while interpreting the data. LL allows for presentation of linguistic landscape data and gives room for their subjective interpretation, and annotation of this interpretation alongside the data. As mentioned previously, labels for language names are chosen by users, as is the description of the genre and the topic of a given text. Language Landscape also allows for uploading multiple images of the same data sample, thus allowing for showcasing a subjective and/or multiple perspective through graphic representation of the data. Moreover, the website allows for adding a commentary to the data, which allows for storying the researcher's interpretation alongside the data, or if it is available, the author's commentary on the data. On top of that, the platform allows for adding a transcription and multiple translations of a given text, which could give the researchers room to annotate the source text in any way they see fit and useful for their research purposes.

As mentioned previously, LL is entirely crowd-sourced. Anyone can add data, but there are various options available to users. Anyone has the possibility to create a 'private' project, the link to which won't be publically available (the individual recordings would still be visible online). The opposite approach would be to create a public project, opening it for contributions from other users. From the point of view of critical analysis of linguistic landscapes, this could open up a research project for community collaboration, as well as allow for incorporation of the data that might be inaccessible to the researchers involved in the project, be it due to its location (staircases of public houses), or its ephemeral nature (a graffiti covered overnight).

All the above aspects of LL as a research tool add up to a crucial advantage it has as a platform for showcasing data: it affords ease of triangulation. Any well-conducted scientific investigation should be replicable. The demands of replicability and thus, transparency, is particularly important in case of social sciences, as they describe a subjective reality in which we all live, and are often responsible for giving policy recommendations. In order to avoid accusations of unsoundness, any study within social sciences, linguistic landscape research and CDA included, must be able to demonstrate clearly where it draws its conclusions from. Presenting data on linguistic landscapes on LL allows just that: data are publically accessible and open to scrutiny, and so are the annotations and interpretations added to the website. Furthermore, the form in which all this information is represented is transparent and easy to navigate, and thus accessible for both academic and non-academic audience.

4. Conclusions

In this article, we have discussed Language Landscape, an interactive, online language mapping platform, as a tool for linguistic landscape analysis. We have presented the rationale behind LL, explaining why it focuses on instances of language use as data points. Subsequently, we have discussed the main features of the website's functionality which make it useful for researchers interested in linguistic landscape.

Subsequently, we have elaborated on a particular method of approaching the study of linguistic landscape, namely Critical Discourse Analysis. We have shown how the aims of CDA and linguistic landscape research align, and we have proceeded to demonstrate that LL possesses a great many functions which could be of value to researchers interested in how discourse and power are intertwined in the visual representations of language present in public spaces.

Our main aim was to introduce an innovative and versatile research tool and to show its possible applications. At a time when researchers and academic institutions are being pushed to demonstrate the wider impact of their research and to be more open and transparent about their research outcomes, particularly in the UK, platforms like LL offer a solution to the demands of further social engagement in academic research. It is through platforms like Language Landscape that community driven research can have a recognizable voice. It offers under-represented voices the opportunity to be heard and thereby establish links with other interested groups be they academic or not. It is with the aim of making academic research more collaborative that Language Landscape has created its tool for research, or dissemination of its results, in an accessible, open and engaging format.

Nonetheless, the functionality of tools such as Language Landscape is limited without user interaction and input. Although snapshots of linguistic landscapes as documented by previous users can be viewed via the website, such landscapes are constantly evolving and require continuous interaction and updating. It is our hope that researchers using CDA will engage with the platform and that future studies of linguistic landscape will consider collecting and exhibiting their data on Language Landscape. We also help to engage our current and prospective contributors in a discussion about how the platform can evolve and develop to respond more accurately to the agendas and goals of linguistic landscape research.

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Ebany Dohle is completing her PhD in Linguistics at SOAS, University of London, due for completion in 2018. Ebany is a co-director of Language Landscape and has been involved with its activities since 2012. Other research activities include her work with Plants.Animals.Words. (PAW), an interdisciplinary research initiative. Her research is focused on the encoding of environmental knowledge within Náhuat-Pipil of El Salvador and the creation of semantic and cognitive categorization systems in relation to this. Ebany has carried out field based linguistic research with communities in Central America and South-East Asia with particular focus on language documentation and revitalization methodologies.

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