

Book Review

Reterritorializing linguistic landscapes: Questioning Boundaries and opening Spaces. Edited by David Malinowski and Stefania Tufi. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2020. ISBN: 9781350077966, 432 pp.

The field of Linguistic Landscapes (henceforth LL) has diversified since Landry and Bourhis' (23) often-cited definition of "the visibility or salience of languages on signs." This seminal volume, edited by leading scholars David Malinowski and Stefania Tufi, brings together innovative methodologies, approaches, and themes from this exciting field.

The volume's title, *Reterritorializing Linguistic Landscapes: Questioning Boundaries and Opening Spaces*, summarises the timeliness and applications of this work to LL scholarship. Malinowski and Tufi explain that the term "questioning boundaries" seeks to critically address the underpinning ontologies and approaches of LL research, as space operates at a "variety of scales and conceptual/material specificities" (3). The editors remark that LL researchers must increasingly (and reflexively) account for methodologies and approaches which highlight our ever-complex world. "Opening spaces," the second strand of the title, demonstrates the spatial, linguistic, and semiotic transformations afforded by the landscape, which "open" opportunities for "flows of capital" and new "social futures" (8). Therefore, "reterritorializing linguistic landscapes" shows how dynamic social activity leads to an "un- and re-doing" of public space (2).

The volume is divided into four sections: "Questioning Disciplinary and Methodological Boundaries;" "The Spaces and Places of LL research;"

“Re-Writing, Re-Working, and Re-Inventing Place;” and “Experimenting Space.” While these are, broadly, thematically aligned, Malinowski and Tufi recognise that each chapter could well be placed into another section. This blurry thematic organisation, however, provides thought-provoking “spaces” for the reader to innovate, by drawing on their own approaches to talk back to the discipline (9).

In this review, I will focus on (re)considering spaces, a theme which spans the volume’s four sections. This theme will be reviewed from methodological, spatial, and theoretical lenses. Of course, such lenses reflect how foci, like a landscape itself, fuse in a kaleidoscope. For, our investigative apparatuses, such as epistemologies, frameworks, and methodologies, are intertwined, and thus difficult to discuss in isolation (for review, see Maxwell, 5).

Lyons broadens the methodological spaces in chapter two, encouraging the reader to (re)consider “the quality of quantity.” By focusing on the newly-gentrified Mission District of San Francisco, Lyons transcends a purely descriptive study of counting languages, thus drawing attention to how quantitative data on language choice can intersect with socioeconomic factors. In doing so, she develops a rich dataset by mixing approaches of a social, numerical, and spatial nature. In reconciling methodological debates in LL around the utility of quantitative methods, Lyons maintains the importance of contextualising linguistic findings in relation to patterns of social usage and representation.

As well as methodological considerations, the volume also achieves a (re)considering of boundaries from a spatial perspective. For example, in chapter four, Mac Giolla Chríost encourages reflection around how a unit of analysis may be defined, another often-debated concept, by using the example of the London Underground. Following Deleuze and Guattari, this chapter urges the reader to think of a landscape in the form of flows and networks. Mac Giolla Chríost considers the entirety of the Underground as a landscape by drawing on the cartographies of Harry Beck and reflects on how these have become etched into the Underground’s history itself. Beyond these, Mac Giolla Chríost questions whether the Underground is composed of visual language, and, if so, how

this might manifest. He concludes the existence of a linguistic (although not strictly visual), form, the utterance “Mind the Gap.” According to Mac Giolla Chríost, “Mind the Gap” is commodified and appears on visual forms for tourist consumption - from mugs and clothes to doormats. He thus determines that the linguistic “Mind the Gap” offers scope for the exploration of its spatial recognisability.

In chapter eight, Machetti and Pizzorusso urge the reader to re(consider) more fundamental theoretical underpinnings on which our studies may premise, by drawing on a semiotic shift within sociolinguistics (from language, towards broader semiotic resources drawn upon to make meaning). Such a shift can be traced back to Jaworski and Thurlow’s seminal volume, *Semiotic Landscapes*, which, I would argue, has not been sufficiently nor consistently developed in LL scholarship. Machetti and Pizzorusso break language-centred work which has long dominated the field, focusing instead on meaning-making resources more holistically. Their chapter outlines a historical study of urban art, demonstrating how new artwork in Italian urban centres may be traced to a tradition of sgraffito (layering of coloured plaster) on Florentine façades – a practice attributed to wealthy families. Machetti and Pizzorusso argue that this has shaped a modern process whereby the city’s administration, (charged with “revitalising” neighbourhoods), projects images of power onto derelict façades. In their conclusion, Machetti and Pizzorusso call for exploration into the “global” and “local” dynamics of urban art, with such work being indexical of both the local and global (174). Although work is needed within this framework, we must recognise that scholars in the field of small languages have already explored such global-local blurring to a certain extent (see Pietikäinen et al.). Machetti and Pizzorusso therefore, perhaps unwittingly, overstate this chapter’s contribution.

Machetti and Pizzorusso’s broadening of the LL towards the visual provides a transition to Blackwood, whose chapter explores three regenerated and adapted urban sites across France. Blackwood’s triad of case studies is united by the idea of “adaptive reuse,” whereby redundant industrial buildings are re-generated for other purposes (307). Focusing on a swimming pool-turned- gallery, Blackwood shifts to two further rich

examples: a former biscuit factory, now a cultural centre, and a slaughterhouse, transformed into a modern art venue. Although on the surface different to traditional LL studies, Blackwood’s chapter rightly highlights that such sites undergo a shifting of meaning-making resources in their re-invention of space. Here, we see the relevance of such a focus in LL studies, if we are to take a broad approach to the aesthetics of buildings, and their communicative purposes. As such, Blackwood adeptly outlines where architecture and sociolinguistics could begin to produce effective and collaborative synergies. For, as Blackwood argues, sociolinguists have much to contribute to the field of urban regeneration around how the usage of linguist, and broader semiotic resources, generate sociocultural meanings for groups (307). This research direction is particularly productive, and speaks to nascent literature in the urban studies field, which is interested in how semiotic resources interact on a social level (Andron; Raaphorst et al.).

Whilst some argue that LL studies lack “shared conceptualisations” (Laur; Mac Giolla Chríost, this volume), this edited volume is a testament to the richness of this ever-evolving field. In the true spirit of “opening spaces,” it may not be advisable to restrict oneself to “boundaries” in our disciplinary “space,” for our real-world is hardly like this. Indeed, Malinowski and Tufi urge us to (re)consider many facets of our field, to embrace methodologies and transcend disciplinary silos. For, language in space is ever-intertwined with many meaning-making resources, and determined by a spectrum of dynamic historical, geographical, socioeconomic, and spatial factors. This is what makes LL such a compelling research space, and one which, with this volume, will inspire researchers to broaden their praxes and tackle the most pressing issues in language and society.

Katy C Humberstone
University of Exeter

WORKS CITED

- Andron, Sabina. "Interviewing Walls: Towards a Method of Reading Hybrid Surface Inscriptions." *Graffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City*, edited by K. Avramidis and M. Tsilimpounidi, Routledge, 2016, pp. 87–104.
- Beck, Harry. "Harry Beck's Tube Map." 1933, Digital Image, *TfL Culture and Heritage*, <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/culture-and-heritage/art-and-design/harry-becks-tube-map>, Accessed 24th October 2021.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Athlone Press, 1987.
- Jaworski, Adam and Crispin Thurlow, editors. *Semiotic Landscapes: Language, Image, Space*. Bloomsbury, 2009.
- Landry, Rodrigue and Richard Y. Bourhis, "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1997, pp. 23–49.
- Laur, Elke. "Book Review: Durk Gorter (2006): 'Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism.'" *Linguist List*, 10th April 2007, <https://linguistlist.org/issues/18/18-1072/>, Accessed 24th October 2021.
- Maxwell, Joseph, A. "Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach." *Applied Social Research Methods Series*, Sage Publications, 2012.
- Pennycook, Alistair. "Translanguaging and Semiotic Assemblages." *International Journal of Multilingualism*, vol. 1, no. 14, 2017, pp. 269–82.
- Pietikäinen, Sari, et al. *Sociolinguistics from the Periphery: Small Languages in New Circumstances*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Raaphorst, Kevin, et al. "The Semiotics of Landscape Design Communication: Towards a Critical Visual Research Approach in Landscape Architecture." *Landscape Research*, vol. 42., no. 1, 2017, pp. 120-133.