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## Multilingualism and Identity in the Visual Space: Linguistic Landscape in the Urban Periphery

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**Abstract.** This study is devoted to the analysis of the linguistic landscape in the periphery of Ufa, the capital of the Republic of Bashkortostan, Russia. Periphery, in this paper, stands for three settlements bordering Ufa. Specifically, we address the connection between the region's multilingualism and identity to discover if the periphery complies with the regional language policy and how this translates to the local identity. Procedure-wise, we collect the samples of the local linguistic landscape to see what languages are used and what functions they perform. The interpretation of the collected material allows making an inference about the language situation in the periphery and linking it to the local identity. The analysis demonstrates a weak connection between the landscape and regional multiethnicity: smaller businesses and private individuals tend to ignore the local language policy, while state institutions and larger enterprises meet the bare minimum of the requirements. Therefore, it can be concluded that the local authorities use an identity tactic named “adequation” aimed at highlighting the interethnic similarities and neglecting the differences. Such practice may have an adverse long-term effect resulting in social instability.

**Keywords:** linguistic landscape, identity, periphery, language policy, multilingualism

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## Многоязычие и идентичность на визуальном пространстве: языковой ландшафт на городской периферии

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**Аннотация.** Настоящее исследование посвящено анализу языкового ландшафта на периферии г. Уфа, столицы Республики Башкортостан. В данной работе периферия включает в себя три населенных пункта в непосредственной близости к Уфе. Авторы исследуют связь между региональным многоязычием и идентичностью, что позволяет ответить на вопрос, насколько соблюдается языковая политика региона и каким образом это связано с местной идентичностью. Анализ показал, что связь между многоязычием и идентичностью слабая: малые предприятия и частные лица часто игнорируют языковую политику, в то время как крупный бизнес и государственные предприятия выдерживают лишь необходимый минимум требований языковой политики. Таким образом, можно заключить, что местными властями используется тактика «адекватации», которая подразумевает уравнивание всех этносов и нивелирование различий между ними. Данная практика может иметь отрицательные долгосрочные последствия.

**Ключевые слова:** языковой ландшафт, идентичность, периферия, языковая политика, многоязычие

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### Introduction

This field research was designed to reveal the relationships between multilingualism and identity in the linguistic landscape in the periphery of Ufa, the capital of a multiethnic region Bashkortostan, Russia. In this study, we stem from the theoretical framework of the the-

ory of linguistic landscape but also rely on the center-periphery studies, and identity theory.

Linguistic diversity in a place where more than one ethnicity lives and more than one language is spoken usually presents a researcher with an abundance of material on linguistic relationships in such a location. Aware of com-

plex linguistic interactions, linguists take the opportunity to explore them. In diverse places, the investigation of the linguistic landscape is seen as one of the most productive ways to make a snapshot of interlinguistic relationships.

The idea behind the linguistic landscape is essentially behavioristic. It is based on the assumption that the implicit relationships between the languages spoken in the area become explicit when language is used in space: on billboards, street advertisements, store signboards, graffiti, and other public spaces. Despite the known limitations of the behavioristic approach, the registration of the spatial linguistic arrangement is one of the reliable and unbiased methods to learn about areal multilingualism. Other methods may include quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and focus groups, but these methods remain outside the scope of this research.

This study is designed to answer the following research questions which help to give a linguistic definition of the capital's periphery and explore the manifestations of multiculturalism:

RQ1. Does Ufa periphery reflect the multiethnicity of the city? Are languages in the periphery used in compliance with the local language policy?

RQ2. How does the use of languages in the landscape inform us about the local identity?

## Background

The Republic of Bashkortostan is one of the Russian regions separating the European and Asian parts of the country. It is defined as a multiethnic and multilingual region with over 100 ethnicities inhabiting it. The major ethnic groups are Russian, Bashkir, and Tatar; the namesake languages constitute the region's multilingualism. The region is named after the indigenous population: the Bashkir people, originally semi-nomadic tribes that joined the Russian state in 1557. According to the 2010 census, 36.0 % of the population is ethnic Russian, 29.5 % are Bashkir, and 25.4 % are Tatar (Natsional'nyi sostav..., 2012: 30). The use of the languages does not follow the pattern: Bashkir is spoken by around 75 % of the Bashkir, and Tatar is used by almost

86 % of the Tatar (Vladienie iazykami...). Compared to that, Russian is used more widely: by 96.4 % of the Bashkir and 98.3 % of the Tatar (Natsional'nyi sostav..., 2012: 33–37). Besides, the census registers the fact that the language is known, but it does not mean it is necessarily used in households. Today, the Russian language dominates in the region, and most educational institutions and authorities offer services in Russian. Meanwhile, the local laws guarantee support for the preservation of the languages of the indigenous population. The Bashkir language, as the language of the titular ethnicity in the region, was named the region's official language along with Russian as a national language.

Professor Aiupova proposed a formula to describe the linguistic situation in the region:  $3L_{maj}^* + 10L_{min} + 5L_{spec}$ . It means that there are three main languages (Russian, Bashkir, and Tatar), 10 secondary languages of the largest linguistic minorities (Chuvash, Mari, Mordovian, Udmurt, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Latvian, Estonian, German, and Kazakh), and five special languages: four of them are learned as foreign languages (English, German, French, and Turkish), and one is used in religious rites (Arabic) (Aiupova, 2000: 13). In many ways, the formula remains correct despite it being proposed in the year 2000. Yet, there are several inaccuracies to point at. First, one more language could be added to the formula: Chinese is becoming increasingly important as a foreign language. Second, the formula does not reflect the social functions of the languages: to what extent and how these languages are used, and if they are used, does matter when we compare the usage of the languages.

Regional multilingualism, therefore, is not an easy phenomenon to describe, and it does not manifest itself homogeneously. In addition, the local language policy may be less observed in smaller peripheral places, which makes them particularly important for analysis. In this paper, we study the periphery of Ufa: three settlements in its vicinity, which have close infrastructural connections with the capital but constitute independent communities.

The first settlement, Bulgakovo (dates back to the late 13th century), is a site with a

population of around 6,000 people. Ethnically, it is composed of Russians, Tatars, Chuvash, Bashkir, and Mordva, where the first two dominate. The settlers enjoy a rather developed infrastructure with schools and hospitals, while the economy is based on several large businesses (primarily, agricultural) and small enterprises (Istoriia zaseleniia Ufimskogo kraia).

A second area is one of the oldest microdistricts of Ufa, the settlement Maksimovka. Founded in 1611, it has an area of around 15 square km, and its population is approximately 6,000 people according to the 2010 census (Akhmetova et al., 2011: 3). The ethnic composition of the settlement comprises 28 ethnicities. The most numerous are Russian (53,6 %), Tatar (24,5 %), Bashkir (9,8 %), and Mari (0,8 %) (Akhmetova et al., 2011: 57).

Being quite a large settlement, Maksimovka has its hospital, school, kindergarten, the center of child's craft, fire-fighting department, church, mosque, several supermarkets, and numerous other services. A new settlement has recently been built on the territory of the former airdromem, and 33 new streets have been added to Maksimovka. The territory of the settlement is surrounded by forests, a lake on the east, and the hill Kurochkin Mountain on the west. The river Ufa flows along the eastern border of Maksimovka. The largest business in the settlement is Ufavodokanal, which collects and purifies water for Ufa.

A third location, Zhukovo, is a rapidly developing settlement established in 1980. It is named after Mikhail Zhukov, a lieutenant, who arrived to Ufa in 1700 and by 1735 became a large landowner (Istoriia zaseleniia Ufimskogo kraia). The official website of the local administration puts the number of residents of Zhukovo at 1,714 (Zhukovskii sel'sovet). In 2007, the regional authorities approved and sponsored a social program "Svoi dom" which was to provide accessible housing for families in need. As a result, a new settlement was built near the village which later became known as the 'old Zhukovo.' In its current condition, the 'new Zhukovo' is proud to have paved roads, its kindergarten, and a freshly built school, three supermarkets, and several smaller shops. The

building of the administration is still situated in the 'old Zhukovo,' together with the medical and obstetric station and the post office. There is a church and a Muslim Mosque in the old part of Zhukovo as well as local stores and small businesses, such as tire fitting.

The regional language policy is reflected in the Law of the Republic of Bashkortostan No. 216-z as of February 15, 1999 (as subsequently amended). It provides that the state guarantees the development of ethnic languages, bilingualism, and multilingualism. All the languages used by the people living in the region are acknowledged to be equal. However, Article 3 of the Law grants the Bashkir and Russian languages the status of the official state languages. Therefore, Chapter Fourteen of the same document provides that "all texts of the visual information shall be ordered the following way: text in Bashkir is on the left and the top, text in Russian is on the right and the bottom; letters are supposed to of the same size" (Zakon Respubliki Bashkortostan...). This provision is going to be the key consideration when deciding about the compliance of the text in the visual space with the local language policy. Ufa mayor's office provides recommendations designed to help businesses and institutions to comply with the regulation, which is also taken into account in this paper.

### Theoretical Framework

The main theory we rely on in this study is the linguistic landscape framework. It normally describes a field research of the languages used in a certain location. The notion of linguistic landscape is relatively new, and, like many novice developments, it lacks an established definition. The most commonly cited one, though, was provided by Landry and Bourhis: "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" (Landry, Bourhis, 1997: 23). More specifically, field research qualifies as a linguistic landscape study if it corresponds to the following characteristics: (a) It is visual, not aural. It includes signboards and large printing on product packages but not audio information

such as announcements in a subway car. (b) It is in public spaces, not private; thus, it includes a sign in a store window, but not a sign inside a home like “God bless our mess”. (c) It is aimed at multiple and unspecified readers. It would include a note on a shop door that says “back after lunch”, but not such a sign on the door of a home. (d) It is information acquired passively. It would include headlines at a newsstand but not articles in a magazine. (e) It gives us a sense of being in a particular place or which affects our perception of that place (Long, Nakai, 2014: 229).

The first study of this kind was authored in the 1960s by a Japanese geographer Masai Yasuo who analyzed one of the Tokyo districts as a manifestation of multilingualism in Japan (Masai, 1972). For many years ahead, Masai set the research trend towards analyzing commercial signboards which employ the English language “as a symbolic resource and marker of modernity, internationalism, globalization, ‘high class’, and so on” (Jaworski, Thurlow 2010: 14). Japan became one of the prominent centers of linguistic landscape research, and the first book on the linguistic landscape was written based on the materials collected in Japan: *Linguistic Landscapes: a Comparative Study of Urban Multilingualism in Tokyo* (Backhaus, 2007).

At the moment, linguistic landscape research is a growing field with many more locations where multilingual relationships are explored through visual space. New forms and best research practices are developed and shared during the conferences specifically devoted to linguistic landscape research. Many globally known capitals became the source of linguistic landscape material: Jerusalem (Rosenbaum et al., 1977), Brussels (Wenzel, 1998), Montreal (Monnier, 1989), Gent (Collins, Slembrouck’s, 2007), etc. The reason why researchers find inspiration in such places is that the size and opportunities offered in such cities attract people from many places and cultures, and such diversity is reflected in the linguistic landscapes. The advancement of technology contributed to the proliferation of the field as well (Gorter, 2019).

However, smaller peripheral places may be equally interesting from the researcher’s viewpoint and become a destination for complex scholarly explorations as in (Kotze, du Plessis, 2010; Pietikäinen et al., 2011). These studies are placed within the dichotomy of the center and periphery. According to Pietikäinen, “*centre-periphery* is a common spatial metaphor used to describe and explain the unequal distribution of power in the economy, society, and polity” (Pietikäinen, Kelly-Holmes, 2013: 3). More specifically, “the centre is typically defined in terms of its advancement, metropolitanism, and political, economic, and trade power, while the periphery is characterized as marginal, the opposite of the centre, the boundary or outer part of it” (ibid). The important detail in this definition is that the periphery is always defined in comparison to a certain perceived center. It makes the center-periphery theory vulnerable because depending on the reference point, the same location may be named both a center and a periphery. Reciprocity is not included in this model as well: “This centre-periphery model has been criticized on a number of grounds ... for example ... for failing to take sufficient account of flows of knowledge from periphery to centre as well in the opposite direction” (Burke, 2000: 57).

The ground under the center-periphery theory is shaky due to several reasons. First, this theory puts the center above the periphery even though studying peripheral sites is just as important as exploring centers. It is necessary to explore smaller places because they “are often constructed from the centre as linguistically and culturally homogeneous,” while in fact “the everyday language practices tend to be mixed, flexible, and diverse” (Pietikäinen, Kelly-Holmes, 2013: 2). Due to the ongoing globalization processes, peripheral sites tend to change as well, and the center-periphery opposition becomes a discursive concept. Peripheral sites have increasingly more in common with the center. Yet, in a globalized context, the periphery may approximate with a center other than the nearest one, and the dependence of the periphery on the center becomes questionable. Such globalizing processes may add to multilingualism (e.g., introduce English as a lingua

franca) or dismantle it (e.g., by reducing the practice of using the indigenous language).

Second, scholars tend to see language as a local practice: “The notion of language as a system is challenged in favour of a view of language as doing” (Pennycook, 2010: 23). Language as a system becomes increasingly abstract because in different locations it can be influenced by the environment or other languages: “The notion of language as practice takes us away from a notion of language as a pre-given entity that may be used in a location and looks, by contrast, at language as part of diverse social activity” (Pennycook, 2010: 24). Practice theoretician Bourdieu believed that the repetition of language and other social practices shapes a person’s being which he named a “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1977). Local language practice does not cancel the idea of language as a system. However, to understand the use of language, one will have to explore it in the context of a particular location.

Third, it is hard to classify languages and see their places in multilingual environments without analyzing the everyday language practice. For instance, de Swaan reveals super-central languages (*lingua franca*), central languages (official state languages), and peripheral languages (spoken by minorities) (de Swaan, 2001). Despite the inherent logic of this classification, it omits the fact that peripheral languages can have the status of state languages which does not make them central languages though. It is the analysis of language practices in peripheries that allows confirming the central or peripheral status of the language.

The relationship between the center-periphery dichotomy, globalization, and multilingualism is further complicated by Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia, which denotes not only linguistic diversity but also the diversity within one language: “... language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects ... but also ... into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, “professional” and “generic” languages, languages of generations and so forth” (Bakhtin, 1981: 272). The centripetal forces in language are outbalanced by centrifugal forces, and their struggle helps the language to evolve. For linguistic landscape stud-

ies, it means that the analysis of the language in the visual space shall take into account the inherent linguistic inhomogeneity. Researchers should observe not only which languages were used but also how they were used in a particular location.

The material analyzed in this study is interesting from two perspectives. First, Ufa as a regional capital is peripheral in comparison to the Russian capital Moscow, and from the nation’s center, it may look homogeneously multilingual, which may not be true. Second, the locations in Ufa’s vicinity are peripheral to the region’s capital, and from Ufa as a center, they may look homogeneous too. A closer look into the smaller places near Ufa may reveal the complex process of renegotiation of the center-periphery relationship and reveal the true status of minority languages outside Ufa as a perceived center.

### Literature Review

Linguistic landscape research is particularly fruitful in multilingual and multiethnic regions where ethnicities live together on the same territory or when an ethnicity lived on a certain territory and then left behind its heritage after leaving. For example, Pecnikova analyzes the Soviet heritage in Zvolen, a city in central Slovakia, which used to be a sitting place for the Soviet military up until the collapse of the USSR (Pecniková, 2017). The linguistic landscape offers a possibility for various interpretations and informs researchers about interlinguistic relationships. The Russian Federation as a multiethnic state is also attractive for the exploration of landscapes. Of particular interest are the regions of Russia where the local population is composed of several ethnic groups that safeguard their identity.

One of the most consistent investigations of the linguistic landscape was undertaken in the city of Cheboksary, the capital of the Republic of Chuvashia. Sociolinguist Alos i Font explores the status of the Chuvash language of the indigenous population by exploring the compliance of the texts on streets with the language policy of the region (Alos i Font, 2014a), analyzing the use of language in the social space (Alos i Font, 2019), and reflecting on

indigenous language education in the region (Alos i Font, 2014b).

Analytical research was undertaken by a group of researchers in the Republic of Tatarstan, another multiethnic region of Russia. The authors focused on the compliance of the verbal text in the urban visual space of Kazan with the local language policy. Specifically, they revealed inconsistencies in the use of verbal language and the nature of these inconsistencies. This study was designed to point at the unequal use of the languages in their region (Gabdrakhmanova et al, 2015).

The relationship between the language and ethnic identity of the Urums and Rumeis was thoroughly studied by Dr. Baranova (Baranova, 2010). The author points to the inhomogeneity of the language-identity relationships in these two groups and their unconventional character. Dr. Grigoriev addresses the language of the ethnic markets (bazaars). Specifically, he analyzes the Chinese markets in the Russian city Irkutsk (Siberia) as well as Russian markets in China (Grigoriev, Guzei, 2017). In his monograph, he covers different aspects of a bazaar, including its mobility, dynamics, myths, and language. One of the important conclusions the researcher makes is the versatile nature of ethnic markets and their dependence on numerous characteristics: "What distinguishes each of them is the variety of their inner structure, locality and functions in the urban space, the role they play in urban community, and the type of relationship they have with the ruling authorities" (Grigoriev et al, 2019: 246).

Well-explored linguistic landscapes are in Moscow and St. Petersburg. These largest cities of Russia, the current and the former capitals, attract ethnicities from within the country and from the outside. The cities are, therefore, abundant with the manifestations of different languages and cultures. For instance, Dr. Fedorova investigates Moscow linguistic landscape with a special emphasis on the dynamic landscape (e.g., demonstrations and protests) (Fedorova, 2014). Professor Kitaigorodskaya analyzes commercial signs in Moscow as an example of the ongoing linguistic processes (Kitaigorodskaya, 2003).

Moscow and St. Petersburg as the destinations of most migrants in Russia prompt the exploration of the relations between migrants, multilingualism, state policy, and identity. Researchers Fedorova and Baranova look into language and identity as reflected in language management at the macro-level (policy) and micro-level (practice at a workplace) with special emphasis on the language of labor migrants (Baranova, Fedorova, 2018). Drs Fedorova and Gavrilova investigated the strategies of native speakers when communicating with an international person (Gavrilova, Fedorova, 2011). Dr. Gronskaja takes a look at this topic from the viewpoint of liberal language policy as a threat to linguistic identity: migration, in her opinion, and tolerance to language mistakes leads to the erosion of the Russian linguistic identity (Gronskaja, 2011).

To date, the linguistic landscape of the Republic of Bashkortostan and its capital city Ufa have not been thoroughly investigated. The few attempts undertaken to date were sporadic and, to a degree, inconsistent. We could argue that the region has not been explored in this field.

This overview of the existing landscape studies in Russia is far from complete but it allows us to make two major conclusions. One is that the topic is underinvestigated: not all the multiethnic Russian regions are studied or studied sufficiently. Not to mention the fact that few studies go beyond the analysis of the surface landscape trying to describe the social implications. The other one is that the linguistic landscape is a research object targeted by experts from various walks, such as sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, and linguists (primarily, sociolinguists). Therefore, the research methodology may be quite diverse and used less consistently depending on the researcher's liking.

### **Method and Procedure**

The nature of the research entails collecting visual material using field methods such as capturing photos and/or videos of landscapes as well as traditional research methods, including but not limited to interpretation and classification. The collected pictures are divided

into groups according to the type of the message carrier (e.g., a billboard or a commercial sign), language, accompanying visuals, and a few others. A discursive approach is assumed as an overarching structure that helps to take into account the temporal and cultural context of a verbal message.

The material was collected in three settlements peripheral to Ufa: Bulgakovo, Zhukovo, and Maksimovka. Specifically, we have chosen the main streets of the settlements which are most visited by the locals and, therefore, contain the greatest number of verbal messages in the visual space. We have covered five streets in Bulgakovo, five streets in Maksimovka, and 16 streets in Zhukovo. Because the settlements are not large, we believe that the material is representative of the settlements. The material was collected in the period from April 15 to April 30, 2021.

The languages we expected to find are Russian, Bashkir/Tatar, English, and also Chinese. Russian as a state language and the language spoken by most of the population was naturally expected. We did not make any difference between the use of the Bashkir and Tatar because the languages are very similar, and native Bashkir and Tatar fully understand each other. Besides, the use of these languages denotes the use of an indigenous language, which is what we intend to register. English was expected to be found as a lingua franca, while Chinese was sought because of the increasing economic cooperation between Russia and China. Other languages were expected to be used sparsely or not used at all.

## Results

This section is devoted to the outcomes of this study. It is divided into two parts to respond to the research questions outlined in the Introduction hereto. *Use of Language in Linguistic Landscape* is designed to track the use of languages in the settlements under question: how many languages are used and how often. We aim to show the social functions of the languages visible in the landscape. The other section *Multilingualism and Local Identity* shows the relationship between the linguistic situation in the settlements and identity.

### *Use of Language in Linguistic Landscape*

In this section, we analyze the results of our study to answer the first research question. We have found that the linguistic landscape in the peripheral settlements is represented by two main languages: Russian and Bashkir. A few samples were in English and French. There were no examples of the use of other natural languages. Moreover, the Russian language dominates in most cases, while the use of the Bashkir language seems to be used solely to comply with the language policy. The use of the English language is limited to advertisements and business names.

We have concluded that the local population is largely unlikely to feel the need to use any language other than Russian. It is visible in the linguistic landscape of the settlements whereby the public and private institutions, as well as private individuals, use the Russian language as their primary means of communication. The Russian language is found, in



Fig. 1. Library No.4 of Bulgakovo



at least some form, in all the examples of linguistic landscape. This language is employed to convey the information which the author of the message would like to communicate to the recipient be it organization names, advertisements, or warnings.

The Bashkir language is used not infrequently. Yet, it is employed only to duplicate the information in Russian rather than produce any original content. We have not found any examples where the verbal information would be entirely in the Bashkir language without the use of Russian. This fact proves the secondary role of the indigenous language.

There are several typical cases when the Bashkir language is used. First, on the signboards of public institutions: the law provides that such institutions are supposed to give their name in both state languages of the region.

In a similar study in Tatarstan, the authors found that state institutions were less likely to comply with the local language regulation similar to that in Bashkortostan: the law is observed only in 20 % of cases (Gabdrakhmanova et al, 2015: 52–53).

In our study, we have not found any examples when such a requirement would be ignored by a public institution: the information in Russian is always repeated in the Bashkir language. The requirements as to the arrangement of such information are met in most cases: the Bashkir is either on the top or on the left to the information in Russian.

Like public institutions, most private institutions would duplicate the information on their signboards in Bashkir. In a few examples, businesses ignored the requirement, though (cf. Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

Again, the situation was different compared to Tatarstan. While in Tatarstan the ethnic minority language is more often (insignificantly more, though) ignored by the federal networks (Gabdrakhmanova et al, 2015: 50), in Bashkortostan, the businesses which ignored the Bashkir language were the smallest enterprises.

In few instances, organizations complied with the requirement to use both Russian and Bashkir on their signboard but failed to arrange the languages in the proper order: the Bashkir was on the right rather than on the left as provided by the law (Fig. 4) and on the bottom side rather than the top one (Fig. 5):

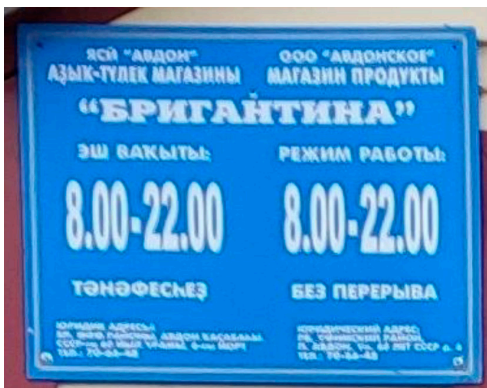


Fig. 2. Brigantina, a groceries store: Russian and Bashkir (Zhukovo)



Fig. 3. Groceries store: only Russian (Zhukovo)

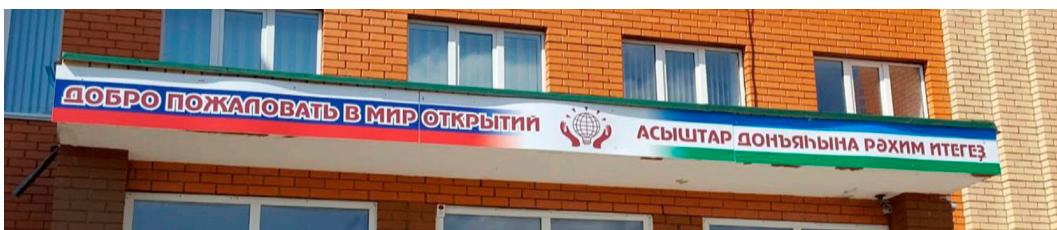


Fig. 4. Bulgakovo Lyceum



Fig. 5. Edelweis, a groceries store (Zukovo)

Apart from that, some private and public institutions tend to use larger fonts for the Russian language. For instance, the nameplate of Tochka Rosta center in Bulgakovo (Fig. 6) shows the Russian name capitalized in the center and capitalization of its description in Russian (the federal network of digital and educational centers), while the name in Bashkir, as well as description, are not capitalized.



Fig. 6. Tochka Rosta center (Bulgakovo)

located, is in Russian, while the translation in Bashkir is missing. Fig. 7 is a typical example of putting Russian in a more dominant position: while the smaller nameplate shows both Russian and Bashkir, Russian alone is used on a larger signboard to attract customers.

A third case when the information is communicated in both Russian and Bashkir is the names of streets on street nameplates. A few examples show that the street names are given in two languages. Yet, many examples show only Russian. Moreover, in neither of the settlements, we find a homogeneous approach to writing the names. In Fig. 8 and 9, street nameplates on the same street either observe or ignore the language policy.

On the one hand, the Bashkir language is used in a few cases, and it may seem that the language is fairly well represented across the linguistic landscape of the settlements. On the other hand, there are several limitations to the use of this language. A major one is that both public and private institutions provide the information in Bashkir only to comply with the regulations. Other critical information conveyed by the organizations is in Russian only. Even if the information contained on the sign is



Fig. 7. Brigantina, a groceries store: Russian and Bashkir (Zhukovo)

important for health and life, it would normally be in Russian only.

Another limitation to the use of the Bashkir language is that private institutions do not use Bashkir to advertise their products (Fig. 11). On banners and stands, they prefer Russian only to promote their products. It means that businesses consider Russian to be the preferable means of marketing communication with higher promotional capacity. Private advertisements by individuals such as when someone sells something privately or private inquiries are always in Russian, too (Fig. 12). Therefore, among private individuals, Russian is seen as a universal tool generally accepted and acknowledged by

everyone. Occasionally, public institutions, too, omit the Bashkir language on their banners (Fig. 13).

The English language was used in a handful of cases by private businesses only. Normally, foreign elements are used to appeal to the audience and elevate the status of the business. For instance, a beauty business in Bulgakovo (Fig. 14) used a French name because France is known to be a leader in fashion and beauty. In other cases, English was used as a universal tool for adding foreignness to the name of a business (Fig. 15). In Maksimovka, English is used mostly in beer places (Fig. 16). Other cases of using English include a flower shop, a sports bar, and street food. On the whole, the



Fig. 8. Mechnikova Street, Maksimovka (Russian and Bashkir)



Fig. 9. Mechnikova Street, Maksimovka (Russian)

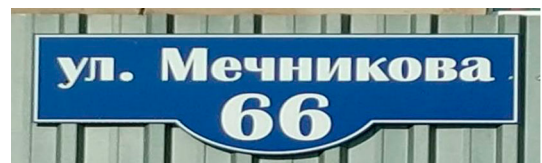


Fig. 10. Critical information: no swimming allowed on this spot; save forests from fire (Russian only, Maksimovka)



Fig. 11. Advertisement banner of a local business in Russian (Zhukovo)



Fig. 12. Private advertisement: On Sale (Zhukovo)



Fig. 13. Children's Hospital #4 (Maksimovka)



Fig. 14. Beauty shop (Bulgakovo)



Fig. 15. Beauty shop (Bulgakovo)

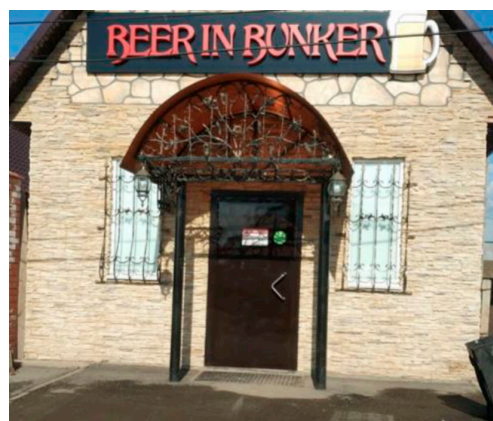


Fig. 16. Beer place (Maksimovka)

use of foreign languages is not consistent in the Ufa periphery, and local businesses seem to rely on them without any particular strategy or knowledge. For instance, “La’ Roche” is writ-

ten with a mistake (unnecessary apostrophe), while beer would be better associated with Czech or German (stereotypical beer nations) rather than English.

### ***Multilingualism and Local Identity***

The relationship between language and identity has been recognized by scholars across disciplines: “Language and identity has emerged as a transdisciplinary field of research, spanning linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics and concerned with how languages, broadly understood, shape and are shaped by diverse identities” (Zenker, 2018: para. 1). Moreover, scholars have emphasized the role of language for constructing identity: “Language is central to the production of identity” (Bucholtz, Hall, 2005: 370). This is true if we construe identity as a result of practice and language. Yet, it does not mean that sharing language is enough to share identity in a community: identity can be constructed through similarities as well as through differences. Heller provides an example whereby a group of young adults formed an identity based on the ethnocultural diversity of its members (Heller, 1999). Identity is presented as a multidimensional phenomenon: “an outcome of cultural semiotics that is accomplished through the production of contextually relevant sociopolitical relations of similarity and difference, authenticity and inauthenticity, and legitimacy and illegitimacy” (Bucholtz, Hall, 2005: 382). This definition due to its complexity allows covering the different aspects of identity and reflects its ambivalent nature. In this section, we focus on the relationships between language practice and identity in the periphery of Ufa.

The Republic of Bashkortostan, according to Article 1 of the regional Constitution, is a multiethnic constituent of Russia (Konstitutsiia Respubliki Bashkortostan). It acknowledges the fact that more than one ethnicity inhabits the region, and their rights to use their own language, adhere to their own culture, and identify themselves shall be protected at all times. Census, as we have seen earlier, also shows that most people belonging to ethnic majorities and minorities normally know their indigenous languages. Yet, knowledge of a language does not necessarily imply its practice. The fact that the Russian language prevails over other languages across the linguistic landscape means that the local identity is not necessarily related

to the indigenous languages such as Bashkir or Tatar. This kind of identity needs to be defined, therefore.

Bucholtz and Hall propose the term “tactics of intersubjectivity” whereby intersubjectivity is “meant to highlight the place of agency and interactional negotiation in the formation of identity” (Bucholtz, Hall, 2005: 382), and the subject is “both the agent and the patient of social action” (ibid). The authors distinguish three pairs of tactics which they name “adequation” and “distinction,” “authentication” and “denaturalization,” and “authorization” and “illegitimation.” Each of them “foregrounds a different use to which identity may be put: the establishment of relations of similarity and difference, of genuineness and artifice, and of legitimacy and disempowerment *vis-a-vis* some reference group or individual” (Bucholtz, Hall, 2005: 383) with a purpose to examine the relational dimension of identity categories, practices, and ideologies. These pairs sketch a model of identity building mechanism. The authors design these pairs to describe the alternative ways of identity development by addressing the three main concepts related to identity: markedness, essentialism, and institutional power. Equipped with this tool, we have explored the identity-building mechanism in the region based on the results we have obtained and the history behind the local ethnicities.

The best way to describe identity in the peripheral settlements under consideration is to consider the tactics of adequation, which highlights the process of similarity in identity building. Adequation (adequacy and equation) takes place when “potentially salient differences are set aside in favor of perceived or asserted similarities that are taken to be more situationally relevant” (ibid). It means that similarities are enforced, while differences are neglected by the constituent members of the group who build a shared identity. It is not a natural likeness which exists among the members of ethnicity that brings them together but “a motivated social achievement that may have temporary or long-term effects” (ibid).

A typical example of such strategic social achievement comes from the Milanche region in Mexico where the indigenous language Mex-

icano is suppressed by Spanish but the community does not fall apart due to the “rhetoric of continuity” whereby the language differences are neglected. Moreover, speakers of both Mexicano and Spanish place themselves within two different frames of identity but a single sociolinguistic system (Hill, Hill, 1986). Such a dual frame of identity ensures the stability of the community and helps to avoid social strains.

The periphery of Ufa presents an example similar to that of the Malinche region. In the locations analyzed in this paper, speakers of different languages set aside their linguistic differences for achieving a shared identity. At the same time, though, minority languages are underprivileged because the majority language is used extensively: in the sociolinguistic system of the region, the use of the Russian language may be more common than the use of the indigenous one, as we see from the analysis of the local linguistic landscape.

It is interesting that Bucholtz and Hall stress that adequation may be a result of political decision to build alliance: “It may involve coalition-building across lines of difference, or it may collapse these boundaries altogether for the sake of a politically motivated strategic essentialism” (Bucholtz, Hall, 2005: 383). For centuries, the Bashkir people have been allies to the Russian state and displayed their loyalty by partaking in the wars Russia waged outside. However, the pace of integration increased after the 1917 revolution when the new Soviet government decided to incorporate the existing minorities into the nation. In 1939, the Bashkir people, who had been using Arabic for writing, received their first Cyrillic-based alphabet. Schools and universities were established, and the Soviet policy of education gradually led to partial eradication of the ethnic languages. Despite the disempowerment of the Bashkir language, the local policy was aimed at keeping an alliance with the Russian state. Therefore, adequation came out as a strategic solution for maintaining the social contract at the time. The tactic still prevails today under the strategy of interethnic rapprochement promoted by the local government.

On the one hand, adequation helps to remove any social strains that may exist when

two or more ethnicities live on the same territory. On the other hand, though, the tactic takes its toll. The analysis of the linguistic landscape above displays the domination of the national language over the indigenous ones. Specifically, it dominates the language practice of private individuals and local businesses. Smaller businesses and regular people ignore minority languages and prefer the national language to communicate their messages. This language practice diminishes the role of the minority languages. The “indigenous” frame of identity gives way to the “national” frame. Apparently, it is unlikely that two such frames could be strong within a single sociolinguistic system: one will have to yield to the other.

It could be argued that the trend discovered in the periphery of Ufa could be extrapolated to the capital city as well as other places in the region. Yet, we believe that the periphery shows it more vividly because peripheral places are normally less regulated by law, including the local language policy, and people are free to express their identity. In this respect, the results shown here are more likely to display the real nature of the relationship between multilingualism and identity.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study allow several major conclusions. First and foremost, the linguistic landscape in three peripheral locations in the vicinity of Ufa is inhomogeneous. It incorporates several languages, primarily Russian and Bashkir, as well as sparse use of foreign languages. At the same time, Russian prevails as a means of communication among both public and private institutions, while other languages perform subsidiary functions. Thus, Bashkir is only used to comply with the local language policy, which prescribes the use of the indigenous language along with the Russian. English and French are used by businesses to elevate the status of their enterprises, though both are used without any particular strategy.

A second conclusion, therefore, is that the peripheral linguistic landscape does not comply with the local language policy, and it largely does not reflect the cultural diversity of the region. If the central parts of Ufa show a more

consistent use of the indigenous and foreign languages, the peripheral parts do not follow suit. Oftentimes, smaller businesses and individuals choose (or forget) to comply with the language policy and do not provide information, such as names of businesses, in Bashkir along with Russian.

A third conclusion is that the identity tactics in the region is adequation, whereby any differences between the ethnicities are diminished, while similarities are made salient. As a result, the national language started dominating as a primary means of communication. The indigenous language was pushed into the oral sphere, and the written landscape is dominated by other languages.

It may be argued that within the center-periphery framework, the periphery of Ufa does not readily comply with the regulations from the center or copy the center's habituals. Rather, the periphery can be metaphorically compared to an echo of the center: it does reflect the central language policy but the degree of it is far less. The smaller the business, the less it is likely to comply with the regulations from the center. In fact, only the state-funded organizations and the large business networks comply with the region's language policy.

It is important to address the reasons why the peripheral locations do not reflect the region's multiethnicity to a substantial degree. Even though ethnic Russians comprise a larger part of the periphery's population, the number of the Bashkir and Tatar population is still enough to introduce any kind of change into the linguistic landscape, which does not happen. It seems that the best way to explain this is through the tactics of adequation, whereby interethnic differences (including the linguistic ones) between ethnicities are neglected.

The reason why such conclusion about the adequation tactic is justified is because the local policy emphasizes the rapprochement of the region and the federal center. For instance, one of the ongoing slogans of the local authorities is "forever together" implying that the region is going to stay a loyal constituent of Russia. This intention is a continuation of the long-standing tradition: the USSR tended to collect its constituents into a unity and encourage them to

stick together. To this end, the Communist Party used various resources ranging from financial assistance to soft power tools. In the Soviet movies, for example, the representatives of the smaller ethnicities always enjoyed a positive appeal, which was meant to convey their positive images. It was a matter of reciprocity, whereby ethnicities were expected to drop their dissimilarities. However, the Russian culture as a culture of the majority survived, while the indigenous cultures could suffer. As a consequence, we find a landscape almost entirely devoid of its smaller languages. If Bashkir is used for language purposes only, other languages (Tatar, Mari, Udmurt, etc.) are not used at all.

It may be argued that adequation is a tactic which sacrifices smaller identities but preserves peace through unity. With Bashkortostan, this is only partially true. The region prides itself on being a peaceful and prosperous Russian constituent. However, this might be more complicated because the local activists are not always happy with this policy. One of the activist organizations, Bashkort, was named extremist and prohibited in Russia for organizing a demonstration in support of the Bashkir language (Asaf'ev, 2020). Outbreaks of discontent take place rather regularly. Every time, activists talk about the disparity between the national and indigenous languages, as well as the identity crisis.

Therefore, it may be suggested that the adequation tactic might be less suitable at the moment, and a different approach to identity building (and linguistic landscape) might be needed, one that would take into account the minority languages as well. In the long run, it may decrease the level of discontent among the indigenous population.

We believe that this research is significant both locally and nationally because it offers a procedure to be replicated in other multilingual regions to analyze the efficiency of and compliance with local language policy, local multilingualism, and other linguistic arrangements of the local space. At the same time, such study may have its limitations. First, it is necessary to make sure that the material collected for the study is consistent and sufficient. Second, the material should be interpreted according to the

same standards. In other words, an intercoder reliability must be ensured. Third, the study must be triangulated as much as possible, meaning that both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used.

We believe that this study did not suffer from such limitations. Our team has covered the major periphery areas nearby Ufa. The saturation point has been reached, and any further collection of material in other locations would provide similar results. Other limitations are also unlikely to substantially undermine the reliability of the results. The strict sampling procedure and double-check control

of the outcomes helped to ensure reliability of our coding and interpretation. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods is also used. However, in the future, the study could be enhanced with a survey and follow-up interviews to hear the voices of the people living in the periphery.

The periphery of Ufa offers an interesting case for analysis due to the adequation tactic of identity building in a multilingual area. A better understanding of it could be a contribution to the improvement of the local policies as well as to the center-periphery and linguistic landscape frameworks.

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