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BASIC CATEGORIES OF STUDYING LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AS A SOCIOCULTURAL PHENOMENON

The article is devoted to the research problematics of Linguistic Landscape as a sociocultural phenomenon. More specifically, based on the study of the existing materials in this field, the main concepts and methodologies of LL are identified, critically analyzed and presented. The systematization and formulation of these basic categories can be used by scholars in the study of LL as a sociocultural phenomenon, as well as by communication practitioners in taking concrete steps towards improving LL, which is especially important in the context of modern globalism for creating more harmonious relations at various levels.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, society, culture, terminology, methodology.

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БАЗОВЫЕ КАТЕГОРИИ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОГО ЛАНДШАФТА КАК СОЦИОКУЛЬТУРНОГО ЯВЛЕНИЯ

Статья посвящена исследованию проблематики лингвистического ландшафта как социокультурного феномена. В частности, на основе изучения существующих материалов в этой области определены, критически проанализированы и представлены основные терминологические понятия и методы изучения лингвистического ландшафта. Систематизация и формулировка данных базовых категорий могут быть использованы учеными при изучении лингвистического ландшафта как социокультурного феномена, а также специалистами в области коммуникации при принятии конкретных мер по улучшению лингвистического ландшафта, что особенно важно в контексте современного глобализма для создания более гармоничных отношений на разных уровнях.

Ключевые слова: лингвистический ландшафт, социум, культура, терминология, методология.

Introduction

The article is devoted to the study of the problems of linguistic landscape (hereinafter – LL) - various visual means of constructing the territory and an important component of modern linguistic ecology. LL is formed at the intersection of a number of disciplines and is a complex phenomenon that determines many socio-cultural conditions of human life. LL began to be actively investigated in the process of expanding and intensifying language contacts, in connection with migration processes and multilingualism processes, being a reflection of the general processes of globalization [Baranova, Fedorova, 2017; Gritsenko, Kirilina, 2014; Peshkova, 2019; Shustova, Osheva, 2011].

LL has recently become more and more actively investigated. Most of the research is devoted to the study of LL in such areas as advertising, commerce, toponymic signs, branding of the territory, small business, as well as in the socio-political space, including language policy and public policy mechanisms. Meanwhile, the term LL itself is often interpreted in different ways, sometimes being identified with purely speech characteristics of certain social groups and problems of linguistic geography. In addition, the issues of LL research methodology deserve closer attention of scientists. The study of LL requires a more systematic development of its fundamental characteristics, especially given its potential to improve the general linguistic ecology and the socio-cultural sphere as a whole.

Discussion

The subject of the article is the basic research categories of LL, which can be applied in its study to answer a number of questions of socio-cultural orientation, including the following: (1) how does LL contribute to the formation of ethno-cultural identity? (2) how does LL act as a motivational factor of creative professional and socio-political activity? (3) how does LL perform the function of relieving social, political, ethno-cultural tensions and preventing conflicts? (4) how LL acts as a mechanism of state policy in the socio-political field.

The general purpose of the article is to formulate the basic categories of the study of LL as a socio-cultural phenomenon, which will allow answering the questions, some of which are given above. More specifically, firstly, the article aims to identify, critically analyze and present the main substantive concepts of LL based on the research of existing scientific materials on this issue; and, secondly, the goal is to identify, critically analyze and present the main methods of LL research. Thus, the LL area will receive the necessary systematization in the form of basic terminological and methodological categories that can later be used by scientists in their research.

Methods and material

This article uses methods of analytical review, description, classification, semantic and critical analysis. All these methods are aimed at systematization, evaluation and organization of a set of basic terminological and methodological categories in the field of LL study.

Results

The main **terminological** categories in the field of LL study are given below and briefly described: (1) definition of LL and similar concepts; (2) definition of the disciplines by which LL is studied; (3) perception of LL and examples of applied areas of its application.

(1) Definition of LL and similar concepts:

LINGUISTIC landscape – visual and *verbal* representation of different communicative and linguistic systems in the socio-cultural space; *cf.* the language landscape. Unfortunately, in modern Russian science, the concepts of “*linguistic landscape*” and “*linguistic/verbal landscape*” are not divorced or divorced inconsistently. The first term is borrowed, as you know, from English-language science and in many ways has become quite superficial to denote any language, speech and even metalanguage fragments, mixing real phenomena and scientific constructs. It is more expedient, in our opinion, that the representation of different language systems in a single socio-cultural space should be called LL, and the representation of texts (oral, written, and also polycode) should be called a linguistic landscape and even a textual one.

A **VISUAL LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE** is a visual representation of the objects of a city (another locality).

LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE (text) – the representation of texts (oral, written, and also polycode) in the socio-cultural space. The term continues traditional research in the categories of “language of the city”, “language space”, “language environment” and under.

A **SIGN OF A LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE** is a cultural and symbolic reality that represents the properties or relations of a socio-cultural space and is used for the acquisition, storage, processing and transmission of information.

TYPES OF LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE. The main types are visual, auditory, kinesetic. Each view can be static or dynamic.

VISUAL DIALECT is the dialect name of a geographical object, visualized in the form of a plate. See dialect toponymy.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CITY is “a historically formed set of types of urban speech used within the boundaries of the city by various social groups united by knowledge of the “**city code**” [Yunakovskaya, 2011, p. 194]. At the current stage of the development of such studies, it is obvious that the “language of the city” is a multi-level and multidimensional education, and its components have both different and general indicators. The latter include, in particular, the protest mood, the denial of the surrounding world by the subject of speech, the designation of his own position in the dismemberment of the world and the nomination of its phenomena. These features are reflected by the word-formation system of the language of the city. Conducted by A.A. Yunakov’s research revealed a number of word-forming means of the all-Russian language (most often unproductive), based on ancient impulses - primitive thinking, archetypes – and their linguistic expression [ibid., p. 197].

(2) Definition of the disciplines by which LL is studied:

VISUAL LINGUOGEOGRAPHY is a discipline that studies and models visualized speech phenomena and processes of speakers of a geographical territory. Traditional linguistic and geographical studies are supplemented by the description and analysis of the visual component of the object: handwritten or printed text, photograph, picture, graffiti or drawing, diagram, map, various pointers. Of course, this is not the first time linguistics has worked closely with geography. One of the most serious methods of linguistic research of the XX century . an areal, geographical one appeared [Areal Studies ..., 1983].

POLITICAL LINGUISTICS is a discipline at the intersection of political science and linguistics that studies the patterns of interaction and mutual influence of socio-political events and language/languages. Incorrect from the point of view of political linguistics and linguoecology is the use of certain precedent phenomena that cause a negative reaction among educated citizens, inappropriate use of the names of mythological or literary characters and raises the question of the relevance of language policy and the need for censorship to regulate the language situation in the city. Within the framework of our research, the linguistic landscape is considered as a mechanism of state policy.

A **MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT** is a communicative space using two or more languages.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and the social conditions of its existence.

TOPONYMY is a section of onomastics that studies geographical names (**toponyms**), their origin, lexical meaning, development, current state, spelling and pronunciation.

URBANISM is a science that studies the ways of development of various urban systems (transport, pedestrian infrastructure, ecology, healthcare, and others), their interaction with each other and with the residents of the city.

URBAN LINGUISTICS is a linguistic discipline that studies polycode communication processes in urban space.

ECOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS (ecolinguistics) is a branch of linguistics that studies ways to preserve, safely develop and use the linguistic sphere of a person and society.

ECOLOGY OF COMMUNICATION is a discipline that explores the ways and mechanisms of developing an effective and safe exchange of information (more broadly, *ecology of mass communications*).

(3) Perception of LL and examples of its application areas:

PERCEPTION OF THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE. A special focus of research LL is the study of the perception of the urban linguistic landscape a) people, b) the tourists) temporarily working foreigners and other groups, because every language policy in the field LL, unconditional, should be built taking into account the views of communicants *on issues of clarity, comfort, non-contentious cultural richness* of specific objects (units) and LL to provide this level of comfort, eliminating different kinds of conflict situations.

- assessment of the degree of intelligibility/incomprehensibility of LL objects;
- assessment of the degree of attractiveness/unattractiveness of LL objects;
- assessment of the appropriateness/inappropriateness of LL objects;
- assessment of the degree of offensiveness/non-offensiveness of LL objects;
- the presence of cultural and symbolic (historical) realities of the region, city;
- the language of LL objects.

LANGUAGE POLICY is a system of measures and legislative acts carried out by the authorities and/or public institutions of the country in the field of functioning of languages and dialects.

LANGUAGE PLANNING is a conscious influence on the development of any language in use, regardless of its origin.

The main **methodological** categories in the field of LL study are given and briefly described below:

METHODOLOGY OF LINGUOLANDSCAPE RESEARCH. The depth of interpretive methods of linguolandscape research also depends on the purpose and specifics of the material. This is the level of fixation of the representation of languages in the design of tablets, inscriptions, this is the level of deep symbolic saturation of cultural meanings represented by these tablets, sounds, movements.

FIELD RESEARCH is the study of people acting in the natural conditions of their daily life. A field researcher decides to enter the world of other people in order to learn “first-hand” about how they live, how they talk, behave, which fascinates and disappoints them... It is also a method of study by which researchers try to understand the meanings (meaning) of the observed activity for those involved in it [Newman, 1999; Emerson, 1983].

Stages of field research.

1. Prepare yourself, read literature, without focusing on something specific.
2. Select the field site and get access to it.
3. Enter the field and establish a social relationship with the group members.
4. Accept a social role, thoroughly study the environment, establish friendly relations with group members.
5. Watch, listen and collect quality data.
6. Start analyzing the data, summarize and evaluate working hypotheses.
7. Focus on the specific aspects of the environment and use theoretical modeling.
8. Conduct field interviews with informants.
9. Leave the field, finish the analysis and write a scientific report [Newman, 1999, pp. 111-112].

PRIMARY DATA – data collected by researchers (volunteers) directly in the socio-cultural space of the city; within the framework of this Project – photographs taken with cameras, phones, and other gadgets, suitable for extracting textual information and subsequent processing. The primary data is the property of the Project and is stored on the electronic media of the Project.

SECONDARY DATA are the results of previous scientific research, publications in professional publications, articles in the media, as well as data collected and published by government organizations (for example, the population census) and private agencies (for example, data on the costs of tourists).

VOLUNTEER (from *lat.* voluntarius - eternally hungry) – a person who carries out voluntary activities in the form of gratuitous performance of works, provision of services (voluntary activity); within the framework of this Project – a person collecting primary data.

GOOGLE FORM (*eng.* Google Forms) is a survey administration application included in the Google Drive and Google Classroom office suite together with Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides; within the framework of this Project – a form (questionnaire) that allows processing primary data in digital format.

PHOTOBANK is a corpus of photographs of objects of the linguistic landscape, structured according to the type of carrier of visual and verbal information: advertising (billboards, billboards, banners, ads, etc.), a plaque (memorial, toponymic, etc.), a sign, graffiti, an ad, a pointer (road, navigation, etc.).

COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH

Currently, approaches to the multidimensional study of the LL of a city are being developed depending on political, economic, social, cultural and other factors (the size of the city, the history of the city, the number and number of diasporas, ethnic communities, communities, migration processes, the level of stability/instability, etc.).

An example of a comprehensive study using a number of methods is the study "Linguistic landscape as a mechanism of public policy: socio-cultural and communicative aspects", conducted within the framework of the RFBR grant "Linguistic landscape as a mechanism of public policy: socio-cultural and communicative aspects" 20-011-31742.

The general scientific approach developed for this project is reflected in the specific methods that are applied at each stage of the study. In accordance with the general approach, three stages of research were identified – Technological, Epistemological and Phonetical. The task of the Technological stage is to identify various types of LL, i.e. to describe their classification. Here, the main research methods were empirical methods, for example, observation, questionnaires, content analysis. The task of the Epistemological stage is to understand what is behind each type of LL. Accordingly, interpretive methods were used here, such as semiotic analysis, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis. The task of the Phonetical stage is to propose concrete steps that can lead to the improvement of LL as a linguistic human habitat. Praxeological methods such as critical analysis and cultural analysis were used here. Thus, as LL research progressed, the emphasis shifted from more descriptive and quantitative methods to more phenomenological and qualitative methods [Kusenbac, 2003]. The importance of such dynamics is becoming increasingly realized in the works on LL in recent years, which call for paying more attention to how LL is perceived by specific people in specific socio-cultural situations.

Conclusion

Thus, in this article, based on the study of existing scientific materials on this subject, the main terminological concepts and basic methods of LL research have been critically analyzed and presented. The systematization and formulation of the basic categories of data can subsequently be used by scientists in the study of LL as a social and cultural phenomenon, as well as when taking practical steps to improve the LL, for example, in the form of recommendations on language policy, conflict resolution, etc., which is extremely important in the context of modern globalism to harmonize communication on various levels – from interpersonal to inter-cultural, inter-ethnic and international communication, as well as in a variety of contexts – from academic to professional, from socio-political to diplomatic. In general, this study can be used in the analysis of any theoretical and practical situations related to the problem of LL as a mechanism of the socio-socio-cultural sphere.

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