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LEBANON'S LANGUAGE TRILOGY: THE USE OF
FRENCH, ENGLISH, AND ARABIC IN THE LINGUISTIC
LANDSCAPE OF NEIGHBORHOODS IN RAS BEIRUT,
ASHRAFIEH, AND GHAZIEH

by
LEYAL HASSAN KHALIFE

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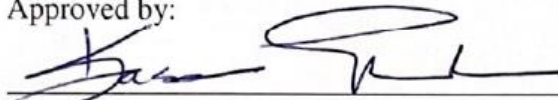
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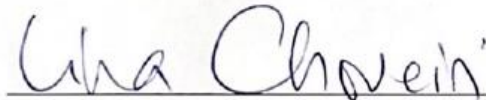
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ABSTRACT
OF THE THESIS OF

Leyal Hassan Khalife for Master of Arts
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Title: Lebanon's Language Trilogy: The Use of French, English and Arabic in the Linguistic Landscape of Neighborhoods in Ras Beirut, Ashrafieh, and Ghazieh

Lebanon's multifaceted history has paved the way for an ever-transforming landscape and identity. Using a linguistic landscape (LL) approach, this study examines the use of English, French, and Arabic in the signs of privately-owned shops in three neighborhoods in Lebanon. These include Ras Beirut, which is home to the American University of Beirut (AUB), Ashrafieh, which is home to Saint Joseph University (USJ), as well as the southern town of Ghazieh, located 4.9 kilometers south of the city of Saida. Ghazieh has had no influence from Western missionaries throughout its history and has no universities present in its locality, making it of interest to the study for the purpose of comparing the use of foreign languages on shop signs in Lebanon. The study aims to provide insight into the role of globalization and the spread of the English language and its impact on commercial considerations in shaping the linguistic landscape of Lebanon.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUB	American University of Beirut
AUBMC	American University of Beirut Medical Center
LAU	Lebanese American University
LL	Linguistic Landscape
SIP	Service de l'Instruction Publique
UOB	University of Balamand
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USJ	Saint Joseph University

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The presence of Arabic, French, and English manifests itself in different aspects of life in modern-day Lebanon, a multicultural and multireligious area of 10,452 km². Wherever one travels in the country, they are likely to encounter Arabic, English, and French linguistic tokens. This is due to various factors, including the founding of Western missionary schools and colleges in the 1880s, the French mandate that lasted just over two decades, the rise of English as the lingua franca of the world, and other economic and social reasons (Esseili, 2017). Decades ago, foreign missionaries established educational institutions that used English and French as a medium of instruction. Coupled with the relatively recent advent of globalization, this has perhaps normalized the borrowing, use, and mixing of certain words and expressions from English and French among members of Lebanese society. The employment of English as a medium of instruction at the American University of Beirut (AUB), shortly after its establishment, has perhaps had an impact on the current linguistic landscape (LL) of Lebanon, especially in the vicinity surrounding the institution. Additionally, the prestige attributed to the English language by the Lebanese people has influenced the linguistic behaviors of individuals who aspire to be fluent in the language. To add to that, the use and presence of English in various settings are commonly associated with globalization (Gorter, 2006), which has contributed to its widespread use in various domains, including academia, business, and media, making it one of the most dominant languages in the world. It is the language that must be considered in any setting today which has achieved special administrative status in over 70 countries globally (Crystal, 2004).

Additionally, over 100 countries treat it as a foreign language, with most of them teaching it as the chief foreign language in schools.

In contrast, the French language has not only survived over the last eight decades but also expanded its influence in Lebanon, thanks to a range of factors. The most notable of these is the French mandate in Lebanon that lasted until 1943, which prioritized the French language in the education sector. To this end, the French High Commission established the Service de l'Instruction Publique (SIP), which made the teaching of French mandatory in every school under the mandate territory. This ensured that the French language thrived in Lebanon and gained its prestigious status in the Lebanese society that endures to this day.

This study investigates the extent to which Arabic, the native language, and English and French, the two prominent foreign languages in Lebanon, are utilized in the linguistic landscape (LL) of three areas in Lebanon. Two of these areas, Ashrafieh and Ras Beirut, are urban settings located in the capital city of Beirut, while Ghazieh is a rural area situated in the south of Lebanon. The study aims to explore the extent to which the use of languages like French and English is a feature of city life and to examine how globalization may have impacted the prevalence of English, a lingua franca of the world, in both urban and rural landscapes. Nevertheless, the study's focus on the written linguistic patterns of privately owned shop signs can provide insight into the use and prevalence of different languages in these distinct settings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Defining the linguistic landscape

The linguistic landscape (LL) is a term that was first coined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) as they sought to explore the role of the linguistic landscape in language maintenance among francophone high school students in Canada. They define LL as “the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings, combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration,” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). The wide range of elements involved in the formation of the LL of an area explains why the study of linguistic landscapes of interest to several fields, including sociology of language, language policy, language planning, and language selection as medium of instruction. An LL approach has also been used by many researchers when studying multilingualism to better understand the social, political, and cultural meanings of written language practices. Thus, varied definitions of LL have developed over time. One such definition states that the LL comprises “linguistic objects that marks the public space ... that may refer to any written sign one finds outside private homes,” (Ben-Rafael, 2008). By that definition, the LL of an area constitutes the decorum of the public space, making it of interest to studies exploring monolingual and multilingual societies – apart from language policies set in place. Van Mensel et al. (2016) define LL as any object of research that is a visible display of written language as well as people’s interaction with these written forms of language (p. 423).

One essential characteristic of the linguistic landscape is that it is comprised of both private and public signs. Landry and Bourhis (1997) make a distinction between public and private signs, suggesting that the difference between the two lies in the “actors” involved. Top-down items in the public sphere are designed by experts who are serving official policies and promoting the dominant culture. An example of this is road signs, which are top-down signs issued by the government. Bottom-up items, on the other hand, are designed by autonomous actors whose written linguistic choices are not regulated by governmental authorities, but rather by individual motives and strategies. An example of this is private commercial storefronts. Landry and Bourhis (1997) argue that since bottom-up signs are issued by individuals, associations, or firms that are usually not dominated by language policies and laws, they act autonomously to some extent.

The very notion of LL originated in the field of language planning in the 1970s when language planners in Belgium and Quebec began marking boundaries of linguistic territories through policies that control the language being used on public signs (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). Language policies are top-down regulations of language use in the public sphere that include overt and covert mechanisms that “serves as a device to perpetuate and impose language behaviors in accordance with the national, political, social and economic agendas,” (Shohamy, 2006). Shohamy argues that such agendas may include the preservation of collective identities, the promotion of globalization, the creation of imagined communities, and the maintenance of social and political orders (2006). Such was the case in Quebec and Belgium when clear-cut statements in official documents were drafted and enforced to protect the status, use, and visibility of French and Dutch in Quebec and Belgium, respectively (Lambert, Shohamy, & Walton, 2000).

Many countries around the world have adopted laws that only regulate certain elements of the LL including Algeria, Turkey, France and others (Landry & Bourhis, 1997.) In France, for example, there is a law mandating that the French language be used in law courts and as a medium of instruction in all schools (Lambert, Shohamy, & Walton, 2000). In other countries, the official language policy in many countries only dictates the language used on top-down signs while bottom-up signs remain autonomous. Thus, when exploring and studying the linguistic landscape of an area, separating between bottom-up and top-down signage becomes vital (Ben-Rafael, 2008).

Lebanon, whose only official language is Arabic, is a case where language policy and planning were based on pragmatism and sustainability in a country where economic and political turmoil reign (Banat, 2020). A combination of cultural, historical, educational, professional, and immigrant experiences have allowed for the development of a receptive attitude towards foreign languages. This was especially evident in the educational sector in Lebanon's early history, exacerbated by the enacted 1994 governmental trilingual decree, which stipulated that foreign languages can be used as a medium of instruction across all grade cycles. This perhaps influenced the linguistic makeup of the country, spreading beyond just education to include regulative, instrumental, innovative, and interpersonal domains (Banat, 2020). This is further manifested through the different written language choices on bottom-up commercial shop signs across the country whereby owners choose to write in either French, English, or any other foreign language to either inform readers of their services or as a marketing ploy whereby the language or script used is only symbolic in nature.

Many LL studies in the past focused on areas where language contact had resulted in political or social conflicts (Van Mensel et al., 2016). However, LL has

become an approach used by scholars to understand various aspects of an area, going beyond just the language policies in place. Previous scholars have suggested that the linguistic landscape of a given space can play informational or symbolic roles (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). When a linguistic token is informational in nature, it serves to inform both in-group and out-group members of the services/messages of public or private institutions. In-group members are those who comprehend the dominant language in relevant area; out-group members are people who do not necessarily “belong” to the relevant area, e.g. tourists. By observing and studying the LL of a given area, one can begin to formulate a sociolinguistic composition of the language groups inhabiting the space under the lens. It can also reveal dominance of certain languages, which can be associated with power-relations in some cases, as well as the absence of other languages. In addition to the symbolic use of certain languages, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) suggest that the LL can lead to the symbolic construction of the public space whereby different LL actors operate under the influence of different motives to reflect social reality in its usual state. Through various linguistic tokens, the LL carries a sociosymbolic importance as it “identifies and serves as the emblem of societies, communities, and regions,” (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006, p.8). The language choices in the linguistic landscape can symbolically construct places as globalized, modern, bilingual, international, patriotic, among many other descriptions. This notion of symbolic construction has been used a framework for more recent LL studies. Chen (2022) demonstrates how the LL of the cities Taipei and Kaohsiung in Taiwan serve to “symbolically construct these two cities as a globalized and Chinese-English bilingual place,” (p. 40). LL items are oftentimes not representative of the verbal linguistic choices of the people living in a certain area (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006), but various

tokens of the LL come together to portray an image that the officials of the country alongside ordinary citizens seek to construct. Chen (2022) investigates the use and visibility of English, Chinese, and other languages in the LL of two big cities in Taiwan, Taipei and Kaohsiung. The researcher found Taipei to have a higher percentage of English-only signs, suggesting Taipei, as the capital city of Taiwan, to be more globalized than Kaohsiung. The LL of both Taipei and Kaohsiung serve to symbolically construct these two cities as a globalized and Chinese-English bilingual place.

B. Interest in linguistic landscape studies over time

The approaches to studying LL has differed among scholars in the past. Landry and Bourhis (1997) conducted their study following the theoretical framework of ethnolinguistic vitality, hypothesizing that the LL of a certain area may encourage bilingual development. Landry and Bourhis' paper allowed for the accelerated growth in LL studies that came in the decades that followed, transforming into a methodology used to study language vitality in multilingual studies, explore language attitudes, and describe the power and status of languages. LL studies have expanded with different studies approaching LL in different ways, going beyond just the languages used in the signs but digging deeper into what those languages represent; this is particularly important because of its relation to identity, globalization, revitalization of minority groups and the spread of English around the globe (Gorter, 2006). The presence of foreign languages in a certain sphere does not necessarily reflect people's language choices or knowledge of that language; Haarmann (1986) calls this "impersonal multilingualism" and it is a common phenomenon present in linguistic landscapes around the world. Haarmann (1986) notes that the use of English and other foreign

languages in the Japanese mass media does not reflect the linguistic preferences of the widely monolingual Japanese community, adding that foreign languages in Japanese fashion magazines, for example, “serve to stimulate the reader’s feelings and to create a pleasant mood of ‘cosmopolitanism,’” (Haarmann, 1986, p.110). Similar conclusions have arisen with respect to other languages and the symbolic messages evident through the use of those languages in the commercial sphere. In their study on Jerusalem, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) articulate three rules to explain language choices on public signs. The first rule is when the sign-writer writes signs in a language you know. The second rule is when signs are written in a language that is assumed to be understood by readers. When this happens, there is economic motivation driving such decisions. The third rule, however, relates to symbolic value, in which signs are written in a language which you wish to identify with. Here, the language choices have a political and socio-cultural motivation behind them (Gorter, 2007). Thus, the language choices on shop signs can either be indexical of the presence of a certain community or symbolic in nature, representing the culture it aims to be associated with (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Several studies fall in line with such frameworks. Leeman and Modan (2009) study the ways in which the Chinese language is no longer indexical of Chinese inhabitants but is being used as a strategy by businesses to sell items, whether Chinese or not. Another 2010 study looked at the visibility of immigrant languages in the multi-ethnic Esquilino neighborhood in Rome and found the Chinese language to be the most dominant in the area, even though the majority of immigrants in the area were from Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Romania (Barni and Bagna, 2010). Van Mensel et. al (2016) also found that in the Quartier Dansaert in central Brussels, Chinese supermarkets target Chinese clientele in close vicinity to expensive Chinese shops, using the Chinese language to

target in-group consumers; the latter, however, caters to international tourists and shoppers looking for something exotic to buy, thus, using the Chinese language in emblematic capacities only. Similarly, Nikolaou (2016) found that foreign languages, particularly English, was being used by shops in Athens, Greece to signify chic cosmopolitanism, classy urbanism, and technological sophistication (p. 174). Thus, it has been argued that the initial correlation between a language's visibility in public space and its vitality is no longer a justifiable one on the backdrop of a globalized world with complex landscapes and hidden intentions (Van Mensel et. al, 2016). In fact, the use of certain languages in the public sphere reflects the outcome of an intersection of various things including ethnic, political, ideological, commercial, or economic nature of a particular societal context (Van Mensel et. al, 2016, p. 430). Thus, Ben-Rafael et al.'s definition of LL as a symbolic construction of public space becomes the most relevant definition in the study of LL today. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) uses this definition to reveal different LL patterns in various communities across Israel, revealing that Hebrew-English signs prevail in Jewish communities, Arabic-Hebrew in Israeli-Palestinian communities, and Arabic-English in East Jerusalem. They unraveled that the LL tokens are not faithfully representative of the typical linguistic repertoire of Israel's ethnolinguistic diversity, but rather displayed the linguistic resources individuals make use of in the public sphere. The same is true in Chen's (2022) study, in which it was found that the LL of two cities in Taiwan, Taipei and Kaohsiung, symbolically construct the areas as predominately Chinese and English bilingual places.

C. Structuration principles in the linguistic landscape

Ben-Rafael (2009) presents a sociological framework that has proven relevant to the current study. The framework includes four principles that may be involved in the assembly of LL including (1) the presentation of self, (2) good reasons, (3) collective identity and (4) power relations. The first principle touches on the competition for visibility among private sector owners, whereby these individuals, described as actors, seek to use vital languages in their marketing plans, including signage. The "presentation of self" is set to possibly constitute the most major structuring principle of LL as a whole (Ben-Rafael, 2009). The reasoning behind this is that LL items and their "actors" compete with one another in an attempt to attract passers-by into committing certain behaviors (e.g. walk into a shop and buy products due to the signage on the exterior). The presentation of self manifests when languages of high status or symbolic value are used to appeal to a certain audience segment. The second principle is more focused on how actors try to optimize their business activity by adapting to mainstream values and beliefs. According to Nikolaou, these two principles are of key relevance when exploring private (bottom-up) signage rather than official (top-down) signs as is the case in this study (2006). This is due to the fact that private signage is owned by independent individuals who have the autonomy to make decisions regarding their businesses and the language utilized in the signage and other marketing components. Nikolaou (2006) was attempting to study the LL of Greece, a country characterized by official monolingualism and ethnic homogenization; it is also a country that has seen the manifestation of English in public spaces in recent decades. The researcher attempted to demonstrate how these languages hold symbolic value and to demonstrate how studying the LL of a certain area can further explain the different values each

language aims to present (Nikolaou, 2006). What symbolic value do French, English and Arabic hold in Lebanon? These first two structuration principles can help answer such a question as the focus of the current study is on bottom-up signs, rather than top-down signs. The last principle, power relations, is particularly interesting to look at in places where foreign forces have played a substantial role in the country's history. In Lebanon, the power dynamic with the West has been an interesting one to look at. Perhaps it is this structuration principle that has allowed for different linguistic choices to appear across linguistic tokens in the country. Taking into account the historical context of various areas in Lebanon, and lack of laws occupying the space of private signage, these three principles are key to understanding why the LL of certain Lebanese cities may be the way they are or different than what we assume them to be. The principle of collective identity is not particularly relevant to the current study.

D. Language arrangement and order

When studying shop signs in the linguistic landscape of a particular area, the order of the languages and their respective prominence is usually visible to the reader. This language arrangement usually manifests when two or more languages appear on the same shop sign. Scollon and Scollon (2003) explore the question of geosemiotics, suggesting the following four elements to be central to the understanding of human action: social actor, interaction order, visual semiotics, and place semiotics. Their interest in visual semiotics focuses on how the placement of visual symbols affects their interpretation on the other. They discuss how language preference on signs hold meaning depending on their placement with respect to one another. They divide the arrangement as follows: vertical, horizontal, and central. All text that appears in the

upper portions of the linguistic token are seen as the ideal, while the lower portions are seen as the reality. What is presented on the left is given information, while what is presented on the right is new information. In multilingual contexts, when the languages are placed vertically with respect to another, the preferred language is the one that appears on top. When the languages are aligned horizontally, the preferred language appears on the left side. However, regarding Arabic script, this has been suggested to be reversed due to the fact that Arabic is written from right to left (ALHyari & Hamdan, 2019). Central arrangement is when the preferred language appears in the center of the sign while the secondary language is placed in the margins. In addition to their placement of languages on the signs, dominance is also reflected through font size, color, and position of the languages. These three elements are the basis of the term “routine” coined by Suleiman (2004) to explore signs in his study. Regarding font size, which would be of interest to the current study, the language that takes up a bigger portion of space on the shop sign is considered to be the preferred language. This approach to shop signs has been used by researchers in the past (ALHyari & Hamdan, 2019; Backhaus, 2006; Nikolaou, 2016).

E. Previous studies in Lebanon

As far as my knowledge goes, studies on the linguistic landscape of Lebanon have been limited to either one location, one language, or one language in a particular location. Little research has been done on LL in Lebanon with only slight representation of the various linguistic choices present in different areas. In 2016/17, a project titled "Linguistic Landscapes of Beirut" project (LLB) was carried out at the Department of English at the American University of Beirut, with some 3,000 samples taken from the

greater Beirut area, comprising the city of Beirut and adjacent municipalities over the Mount Lebanon Governorate including samples from cities like Hazmieh and Bourj Hammoud. The study adopted methods from LL studies, spatial humanities, and DH pedagogy (Wrisley, 2020). During the time the project was conducted, there was no local precedent of such a study in Lebanon. The project aimed to document the LL to allow for analysis of changing linguistic landscapes over time to show how the postcolonial city of Beirut “sketches and re-sketches” its cultural identity using written language in its streets (p.5). Wrisley (2020) described Lebanon’s LL as “chaotic,” describing the various linguistic phenomena that appear simultaneously on the samples collected (p. 3). A big portion of the signage inscribed both Arabic and Latin script on the same sign, with each language conveying different information. Furthermore, it was noted that the Arabic language sometimes appeared in Arabic script, and at other times was transliterated into Latin letters, which Wrisley refers to as Romanized Arabic, which is popularly known as Arabizi. The project unraveled spatial patterns where the use of dual numeral systems were becoming less evident in some northern suburbs. They also discovered clusters of minority language use in the LL of Bourj Hammoud, where Armenian script was present. Not only did this allow for the conclusion that multilingualism is alive and well in Beirut, but also that certain linguistic choices were predominant in certain sectarian-rich areas such as Bourj Hammoud. They also revealed that multilingual patterns and linguistic choices often relied on context, more so than geographic location, meaning that certain commercial sectors can appear in the same language, no matter what area of the country is being analyzed.

In 2018, researchers attempted to study the linguistic landscape of three streets in the capital city of Beirut (Karam, Warren, Kibler, & Shweiry). The study revealed

how the absence of certain scripts such as Armenian and Arabic in streets in Beirut are indexical of the area's changing identity and aimed to understand the presence and distribution of languages within the city and the role of language as a commodity at the intersection of capitalism and economic inequality (p.2). Karam et. al (2018) sought to study the city more than two decades after reconstruction in the Downtown district of the city began in the 1990s, following the end of Lebanon's civil war, as commercial development aimed to position Beirut within a globalized economy. To do so, they studied three main commercial streets: Foch and Weygand, situated within the Downtown district, and Émile Eddé, a street in Beirut that was not part of the reconstructed Downtown. Karam et. al (2018) found that in Weygand, 84.21% of the primary signs were monolingual, with French dominating the LL on that street (42.11%). In Foch, 70.97% of signs were monolingual with French, English and other languages comprising 22.58%, 20.97% and 17.74%, respectively, of signs on that street. In Émile Eddé, Arabic dominated the LL, representing 42.86% of the signs. English came in second place occupying 21.43% of the LL there. When analyzing secondary texts on shop signs on the three streets, Karam et. al (2018) found that there was an absence of Arabic script in both Weygand and Foch; however, in Émile Eddé, Arabic script was observed in 10 out of 24 signs with secondary text on that street, where the text not only advertised services of the store, but also advertised "free" services and Arab or Lebanese products such as knefeh and Arabic coffee. In 2018, a thesis carried out by a student at the American University of Beirut attempted to map out the LL of Hamra Main Street (HMS) to determine the ways through which the "Latin script usually associated with many foreign languages prevails over the Arabic script associated with the Arabic language," (Farran). The study suggested that the lack of

laws regarding language used on public or private signage or the lack of laws regarding urban planning could be the reason why commercial and advertising signs in Beirut vary linguistically. The past studies are not reflective of the countrywide LL as capital cities are usually considered tourist attractions, which means the presence of foreign languages in comparison with the native one is usually elevated (Nikolaou, 2016). Thus, exploring a rural area may allow one to provide a more comprehensive view of the linguistic landscape of an area like Lebanon. Furthermore, including a rural area may help to provide a more representative picture of the impact of globalization on the spread of English as a lingua franca, as it may reveal how the language is being used and adopted in areas that are not typically associated with globalization or urbanization.

F. Lebanon's medley of languages throughout history

Lebanon's complex history has resulted in exposure to various languages in different forms. Arabic was first introduced to the country through the Arab conquests and the spread of Islam in the 7th century. Foreign powers later invaded Lebanon and built religion-based alliances with Lebanese communities sharing the same faith, such as the alliance between the Frankish Crusaders and the Maronites of Mount Lebanon in the 11th-13th centuries (Baladi, 2018). This alliance continued between the French and Maronites for a long time, leading to the use of the French language in French-led schools today. Religion-based alliances between western powers and same-faith Lebanese communities were established during the Ottoman rule (1516 – 1918) in the name of education, with foreign religious missionaries leading the efforts of establishing ties and opening schools (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). These included American and German Protestants, French Jesuit, Italian Catholics, and Orthodox

Russians. In 1613, after Emir Fakhreddine Al-Maani II was forced out of power by the Ottomans, he lived in exile for five years. Upon his return in 1618, he brought with him a group of Italian architects and engineers to build castles, bridges, and basic infrastructure (Shaaban, 2017). He also imported printing presses and encouraged Jesuit priests and nuns to open schools in Mount Lebanon.

Many schools belonging to various foreign missions began their operations, with French and British missionaries allowed to use their native language as a medium of instruction (Bacha & Bahous, 2011). Armenians also settled in Lebanon, establishing the first permanent Armenian community in the country during the 17th century, and more Armenians sought refuge following the massacres of the Ottoman government and the Armenian Genocide in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Abramson, 2013). The Armenian settlement involved the use of the Armenian language in various Armenian communities in different parts of Lebanon as a communal language and a language of instruction in Armenian schools. Though Armenians live in various parts of Lebanon, their strongest presence is in the Bourj Hammoud neighborhood in Beirut and in Anjar in the Bekaa Valley that have been referred to as “Armenian cities in exile,” (Avedanian, 2018).

G. The rise of English and French in Lebanon’s educational system

In the 19th century, missionary schools dominated the educational system in Lebanon, leading to bilingualism and foreign languages being used as a medium of instruction (Esseili, 2017). French Catholic schools were concentrated in Maronite-majority areas, while Anglican schools were founded in Druze dominated areas (Haddad, 1997), leading to the use of French or English being indexical of a certain

religious background. English-Arabic speakers were mostly Sunni Muslims, Druze and Greek Orthodox Christians, while French-Arabic speakers were mostly Maronite or Roman Catholic (Shaaban & Ghaith, 2002). The Jesuit missionaries consistently adopted French language curriculum in primary, secondary and university level (Womack, 2012).

The competition between French Jesuits and American Protestant missionaries moved into higher education as well. In 1866, the American missionaries established the Syrian Protestant College (now the American University of Beirut) and initially used Arabic as the language of instruction. However, by 1879, English became the language of instruction due to difficulties maintaining up-to-date Arabic textbooks, a lack of professors proficient in Arabic, and an increase in non-native Arabic-speaking students (Bliss, 1920, p. 215). Currently, the entire university uses English as the medium of instruction, except for foreign language classes. This shift to English at AUB has been suggested to have influenced other schools in Lebanon, as students who are not adequately competent in English and desire to attend English-medium universities may be at a disadvantage (Zakharia, 2010, p. 160).

French missionaries who were closely observing what their Protestant American counterparts were doing decided to have their own higher education institutions. So, in 1875, they founded the Saint Joseph University (USJ). A medical school followed in 1882, and the Hotel-Dieu de France Hospital was established in 1923. USJ has officially adopted French as a medium of instruction since its founding (Womack, 2012). The aim was to establish French-speaking elite to compete with graduates of AUB.

In the late 19th century, Muslim and Ottoman officials established new educational institutions, mostly religious ones, to appeal to Muslim students and to counteract the influence of Christian missionary schools (Womack, 2012). The Makassed Philanthropic Association of Beirut was one such organization, which founded its own schools on three separate occasions, opposing the use of French as a language of instruction and promoting the use of Arabic (Sbaiti, 2008). However, by the end of the mandate, the Makassed schools gave in and began teaching French, recognizing the importance of language proficiency in helping students establish their professional careers. The bilingual education rivalry was strong among the private sector and among missionary schools due to the lack of a national education system in Lebanon until after World War I (Sbaiti, 2008). During the 1920-1921 school year, four-fifths of all students in Lebanon attended private schools with the remaining one-fifth attending 129 public elementary schools opened by the French High Commissioner in which French was the primary language of instruction (Sbaiti, 2008).

Upon the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I, European countries began entering the Arab region and Lebanon was no exception. During the French mandate (1920-1943) of Lebanon, the French language became the other official language in the country in conjunction with Arabic. The mandate forced public schools to follow a bilingual system, using French and Arabic as languages of instruction, (Shaaban, 1997). As for the private sector, Article 7 of decree no. 2679 of 20 June 1924, which regulated the opening and running of schools and programs, stipulated that teaching French was mandatory in all private schools (Sbaiti, 2008) whether or not they were French schools. The French also had direct authority over a network of schools such as Freres Franciscains, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, the Jesuits (including

Saint Joseph University), the Lazarists, the Marists, the Maronites, the Carmelites, and the Greek Catholics (Sbaiti, 2008). However, there were a number of schools in Beirut that operated independently from the French-imposed system such as the Makassed, the Ahliah, and College Protestant, as outlined by Sbaiti in her 2008 dissertation “Lessons in History: Education and The Formation of National Society in Beirut, Lebanon, 1920s – 1960s.” Early in the mandate, the Makassed took over two schools that once belonged to another Society due to limited resources and adapted the Makassed’s entire curriculum in a way similar to how the French SIP was offering subsidies to schools in return for using French as a medium of instruction (Sbaiti, 2008, p. 60). The latter used this strategy to gain control over the use of French, even in schools whose curriculum included lessons in reading and writing in both English and Arabic, such as Ahliah. At some point in time, Ahliah was shut down by SIP and was only reopened when it agreed to include French language classes as part of its curriculum (Sbaiti, 2008).

Following Lebanon's independence in 1943, French lost its title as an official language and educational institutions were no longer obliged to use it for teaching purposes. Though it was no longer mandatory, the Lebanese government encouraged multilingualism as a sign of ethnic and religious diversity (Shaaban, 2017). Article 11 of the Lebanese Constitution, which was promulgated in 1926 during the mandate and then amended in 1990 via the Taif Agreement, states that though Arabic is the only official national language, a law allows for the French language to be used in certain contexts. Decrees issued at the time instituted Arabic as the country's only official language, one that could be used to teach all subjects in the educational system. However, due to the religious symbolic marker attached to French prior to the aforementioned period, many non-Christian Catholic/Maronite communities began

establishing their own schools to disassociate themselves from the so-called other. In the 1950s, several schools founded by foreign authorities were exempted from using Arabic as a medium of instruction (e.g. lycée schools). Another decree introduced English as a "foreign language and a possible medium of instruction for science subjects and mathematics, on par with French, in the intermediate cycle," (Shaaban, 1997).

As for secondary education, either English or French were recommended to be used by teachers of various subjects such as mathematics and sciences. Though schools could opt to teach in Arabic, the long-established convention of foreign language use in teaching prevailed, a move that was exacerbated following the Lebanese Civil War which lasted from 1975 to 1990 (Zakharia, 2010). The belief that foreign languages, such as English and French, are the keys to success in a globalized world began during the war (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). Prior to the civil war, the number of students in public schools (grades 7-12) stood at 59% of the total Lebanese student body; during the academic year 1991-92, the number of students enrolled in public schools went down to 40% (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). Thus, parents began enrolling their children at English or French medium private institutions in hopes of securing a better future for the kids, in a country where economic instability and political turmoil have powered emigration out of the country over decades (Tabar, 2019). Emigration out of Lebanon has existed almost all throughout history, with high and low tides of emigration waves over the years. The spikes were noticeable after the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967, sparking what is known to be the third wave of emigration from Lebanon (Tabar, 2019). Thus, Lebanon bid farewell to many of its nationals who were seeking a better future; this is still the case today. Following the October 2019 Revolution, an independent Lebanon-based research body revealed that a staggering 19,263 people left

Lebanon during the last three months of 2019, compared to 14,129 in the year before (Information International, 2019). For people whose future may rely heavily on emigration, foreign languages such as English, which is the language of business, and French, the language of many African nations where Lebanese have settled, are essential.

Thus, the institutionalization of French and English has perhaps become somewhat necessary in a country where instability has obliged such a development, even in the realm of public education. When the Lebanese government established the country's first national public university in 1951, its model of education was inspired by the French and currently uses Arabic and French as primary languages of instruction (Banat, 2020). Over the years, the power of French and English grew in size as did the power and status of the country's longest standing missionary institutions, USJ and AUB, among members of society. The Taif agreement in 1989, which put an end to the Lebanese Civil War, stressed the country's commitment to Arabic as the official language but also emphasized that "proficiency in at least one foreign language for the promotion of openness to international cultures," was necessary (as cited in Shaaban, 1997). What was a goal of missionaries soon became a governmental one. Decree # 5589 in 199, which required French or English to be the first foreign language and medium of instruction with the other being the second, is proof of the government's support and encouragement of the teaching of foreign languages. The enacted trilingual policy was mainly driven by economic reasons as the nation depended on tourism, business, banking, and foreign investment for its survival (Banat, 2020). Being proficient in these languages became a personal ambition of the society as a whole due to the symbolic markers and pragmatic uses of such foreign languages. Anyone who has

lived among members of Lebanese society would know that the Arabic language is still very much present and even dominant in certain domains. It is used in the legal and administrative domains and is also the main language of newspapers, formal speeches, religious sermons and news broadcasts (Banat, 2020). However, the use of the Arabic language for official purposes did not hinder the rise of English, or French, in such domains. Esseili (2011) points out that various government-owned establishments use French, English or both, alongside Arabic – whether we are talking about signs of governmental buildings or websites. For instance, Middle East Airlines, the national carrier of Lebanon, uses Arabic, English and French; street signs and labels of governmental buildings use Arabic and English; 14 out of 16 governmental ministry websites have English as one of the available languages in use and 9 of them have English as the default language (Esseili, 2011).

H. The spread of English in a former French mandate

Lebanon was under French mandate for over 20 years, during which French was treated as an equal language to Arabic. After gaining independence in 1943, the country experienced an economic boom, leading to the rise of private elite schools and foreign universities (Banat, 2020). English's rise around the world (Melitz, 2018) has caused French to lose its dominance in countries like Lebanon. Its reputation as a universal language has led to its widespread use in Lebanon, with many people choosing to use it in various aspects such as commerce, the internet, and in the business world. This has even led to the use of English in shop signs. Many LL studies, in fact, highlight English as a language that appears in the linguistic landscape in various contexts (Backhaus, 2006; Rosenbaum et al., 1977; Ben Rafael et al., 2006). Different

factors come into play regarding the use of English. In Lebanon, the American University of Beirut "played a significant role in increasing the value of Anglophone and American culture in the region, as it attracted not only the Lebanese elite, but also students from all over the Middle East," (Baladi, 2018, p. 6). Several English-medium schools and universities were established in Lebanon years after The American University of Beirut introduced English as a medium of instruction. Eventually, English entered institutions that previously used French as a medium of instruction (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). Other French-language institutions began offering English-language courses to perhaps cater to this demand as well. Even the country's Armenian institution Haigazian College uses English as a medium of instruction. English began entering different territories, including what was once French led. English as a third language is taught in 63% of French-medium schools as opposed to the 26% of English-medium schools that teach French as a third language (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). People's perceptions regarding the English language and its importance have evolved over the years as well. A 2006 study conducted with a total of 284 students at AUB, Lebanese American University (LAU) and University of Balamand (UOB), found that the majority of the students surveyed (84%) agreed that Lebanese people feel it is important to learn English and 63% percent agreed with the same statement for learning French (Diab, 2006). The students cited various reasons why they believe these foreign languages are vital for their survival. Of the students surveyed, 81% said it is essential for one to know English for "professional reasons" because it is an "international language," (Diab, 2006, p. 90). A much lower percentage rang true for French's importance. In addition to the above, English is perceived as an "integral factor for pursuing higher education in foreign countries and for immigration to English speaking

countries,” (Banat, 2020, p. 271). Even for those who do not have plans to leave their home country, proficiency in either French or English, or both, is necessary for the job market in Lebanon. Most private-sector jobs in Lebanon also require a proficiency in either French and/or English. For example, the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) looks for staff who have knowledge of English and Arabic while Hotel Dieu De France Hospital, a French establishment in affiliation with Saint Joseph University (USJ), looks for individuals who are proficient in Arabic and French (Banat, 2020). The locations of these two medical centers and their affiliation with two prominent historic universities, AUB and USJ, is quite telling of their language preferences when recruiting.

English's rise has been expanding for quite some time so much so that in the late 1990s, then-president of USJ introduced the Sufficient and Necessary English Program in the late 1990s, to ensure the institutions students had a "good command of English," (Esseili, 2017). It appears that was when the English language began cultivating its place in Lebanon. It did not matter whether you were Arabic, French, or English educated; it was as though the latter language was important for anyone in a global world and English's title as the lingua franca of the world is proof of that. The English language has also made its way to traditional Maronite areas in Lebanon where French once reigned supreme. The establishment of English-medium schools in those areas including Sagesse, Jesus and Mary, among others, is a case in point (Shaaban, 2017). The number of native English speakers is estimated to be around 380 million; two-thirds as many speak it as their second language, a billion people across the world are learning it, and a third of the world's population is exposed to it in some shape or form (Johnson, 2009). Hence, it is no surprise that English has infiltrated not only the

educational sphere in Lebanon but has also made its mark in public spaces. Though there are no colonial residues that have led to the spread of the English language in Lebanon, Esseili (2011) suggests that USAID's (United States Agency for International Development) active role in the country has allowed for the infiltration of the English language at a much faster rate. USAID programs not only assist Lebanese municipalities through technical support, among other things, but they have also entered the educational sector through renovations of public schools and "scholarship assistance to American education institutions such as the American University of Beirut (AUB), the Lebanese American University (LAU), and the International College."

The spread of English is perhaps best explained by Kachru's model of World Englishes in the 1980s, under which the spread of the English language is decoded using three circles of language (Schmitz, 2014). The inner circle is where the language is a native tongue, the outer circle is where the language was forced upon people by Britain, and the expanding circle is where English is studied as a foreign language. The status of both English and French in Lebanon is perhaps arguable. They are not foreign languages per se, as children in the country are exposed to the languages since primary school. By this definition, French could be categorized as once belonging to the outer circle but has gradually moved into the expanding and inner circles, while English is part of the expanding and inner circles for different groups of students in Lebanon. More recently, the French language has moved into the inner circle as many French words are often forgotten to be French. Words like *merci*, *moteur*, *ascenseur* are used so frequently in the country, even by people who have not received formal education in French, so much so that that they are even pronounced as if they were Arabic words. They have become part of Lebanese Arabic without question.

When it comes to the English language, the historical link between the language and Lebanon when we are looking at the political sphere is not as prominent. Students enrolled in French-medium institutions, for example, acquire English as a third language during the seventh grade (Shaaban & Ghaith, 1999). For these students, English is learned as a foreign language, meaning it is part of the expanding circle. However, for students who acquire English during their first years of schooling, the language has somewhat become a native language for those students, particularly for those enrolled in schools who invest heavily in foreign language resources. Here, English is part of the inner circle. The labeling of English is particularly confusing when we are talking about students who have had minimal English education during their school years but are taught in the language during their university years. They must strengthen their English language skills while acquiring subject content in the language as well. Here, it becomes very difficult to categorize English under Kachru's model. It would be worth exploring the existence of English and French from a wider sociological context to see where they stand as languages in Lebanon. These two languages are no longer a privilege of missionary schools or institutions as they have permeated public spaces and private conversations across the country. The aim of this study is to investigate the linguistic landscape (LL) of various areas in Lebanon, taking into account the influence of missionary establishments, globalization, the rise of English, and many other factors in shaping the linguistic preferences of commercial establishments. I also examine the extent to which globalization and the spread of English have impacted the LL in both urban and rural areas. The study will focus on the language used on privately owned shop signs, examining their prevalence, functions, and symbolic values.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Scope of the study and research questions

The purpose of the present descriptive exploratory research study is to investigate the linguistic landscape of Ashrafieh, Ras Beirut, and Ghazieh in Lebanon and to examine the extent to which languages beside Arabic, Lebanon's only official language, occupy space in the LL of Lebanon and to understand the factors that may have contributed to their presence. The study aims to identify the languages present on shop signs, analyze the language order and arrangement, and determine the informational and symbolic functions of the languages used. Additionally, the study aims to explore the role of globalization in the spread and use of English in Lebanon. The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of language use and the impact of globalization in Lebanon.

Previous studies on the linguistic landscape of Lebanon have been limited and have not provided a comprehensive analysis of areas outside the capital city, nor have they considered the impact of globalization on the changing linguistic landscape. The analysis of private signage is significant because public signs, such as road signs, are controlled by the government, while private signs, such as shop signs, act autonomously (Barni, Rafael, & Shohamy, 2010). Thus, exploring the languages used on private shop signs will contribute to an analysis of the written linguistic choices of commercial shops in present-day Lebanon. I aim to provide insights into the linguistic landscape of Lebanon and the impact of globalization on language use in the country by answering the following questions:

1. Which languages appear on shop signs across Ashrafieh, Ras Beirut, and Ghazieh?
2. What is the language order and arrangement of the shop signs in those respective areas?
3. What are the informational or symbolic functions of the languages used on shop signs?
4. To what extent has globalization contributed to the spread and use of English in Ras Beirut, Ashrafieh, and Ghazieh?

B. The sample areas

The two sample areas that will be studied closely in Beirut are Ashrafieh and Ras Beirut. In Ashrafieh, shop signs located in Huvelin Street and streets close to the main campus of Saint Joseph University (USJ) on Damascus road as well as the Campus on Sciences on Huevlin street were examined (see Figure 1). These include Damascus, Huevlin, Adib Ishac, Furn El Hayek, Ghandour Al Saad, and Monot.

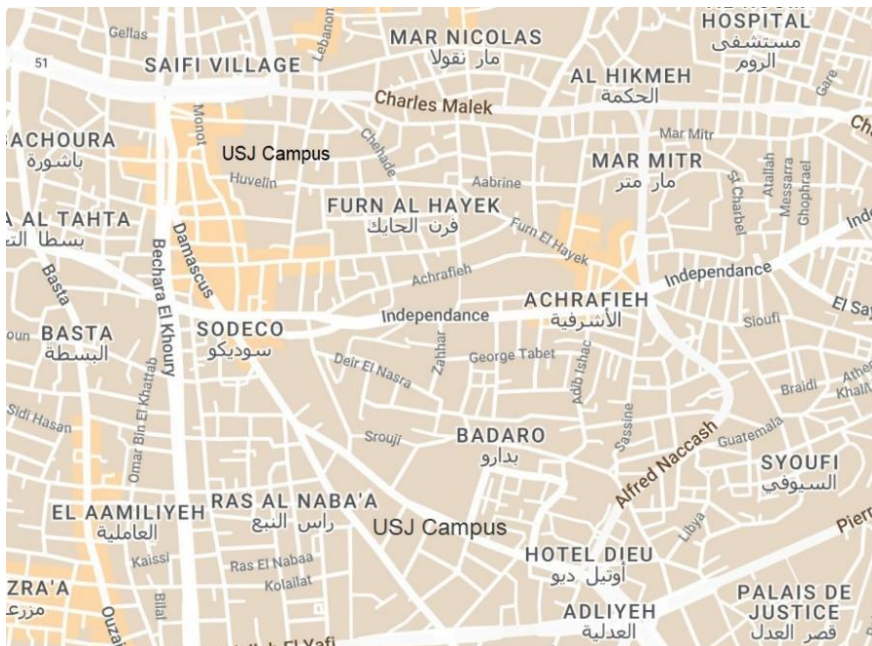


Figure 1. Map of Ashrafieh streets

In Ras Beirut, Bliss Street and nearby streets close to the American University of Beirut (AUB), namely Makhoul and Souraty, were examined as well (see Figure 2). The rationale behind choosing Ashrafieh and Ras Beirut was based on the significant historical and social impact of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and Saint Joseph University (USJ), the oldest higher education institutions in the country. These institutions played a pivotal role in establishing French and English as mediums of instruction and in normalizing their use among a certain audience that prefers these languages. Consequently, commercial establishments in these areas also aim to cater to this audience by using their preferred language.

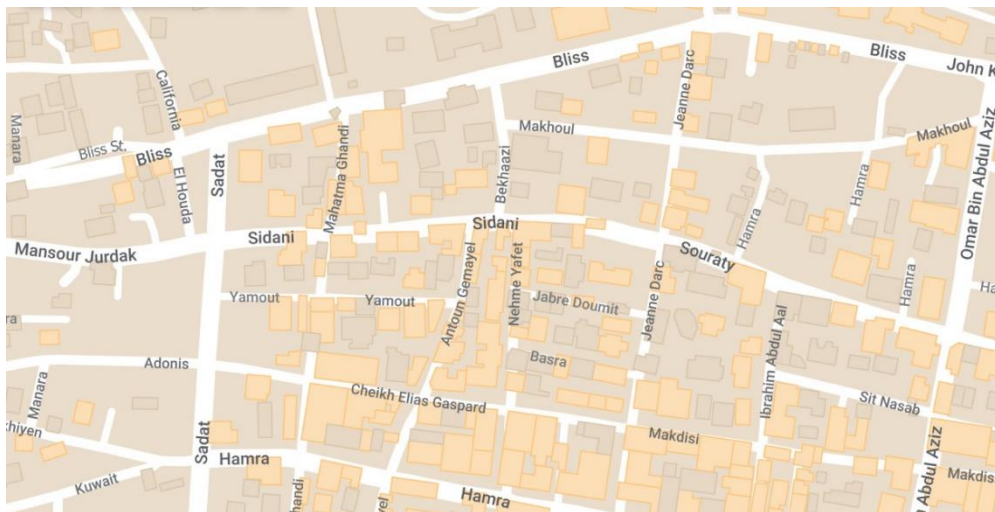


Figure 2. Map of Ras Beirut streets

The southern town of Ghazieh, located 4.9 kilometers south of Saida, was chosen as the third sample area in order to explore the extent to which foreign languages are a feature of city life (see Figure 3). This is due to the fact that capital cities are normally considered tourist attractions (Nikolaou, 2016), making them more susceptible to linguistic diversity. The rationale behind choosing Ghazieh is based on several factors. It is the town where I grew up during my adolescent years, meaning I

know it and I know its people very well. Furthermore, it has had no presence of a missionary institution over the course of its history, let alone the presence of any university. Adding Ghazieh to my study gives me room to provide a comprehensive description of the linguistic landscape of multiple locations in Lebanon.

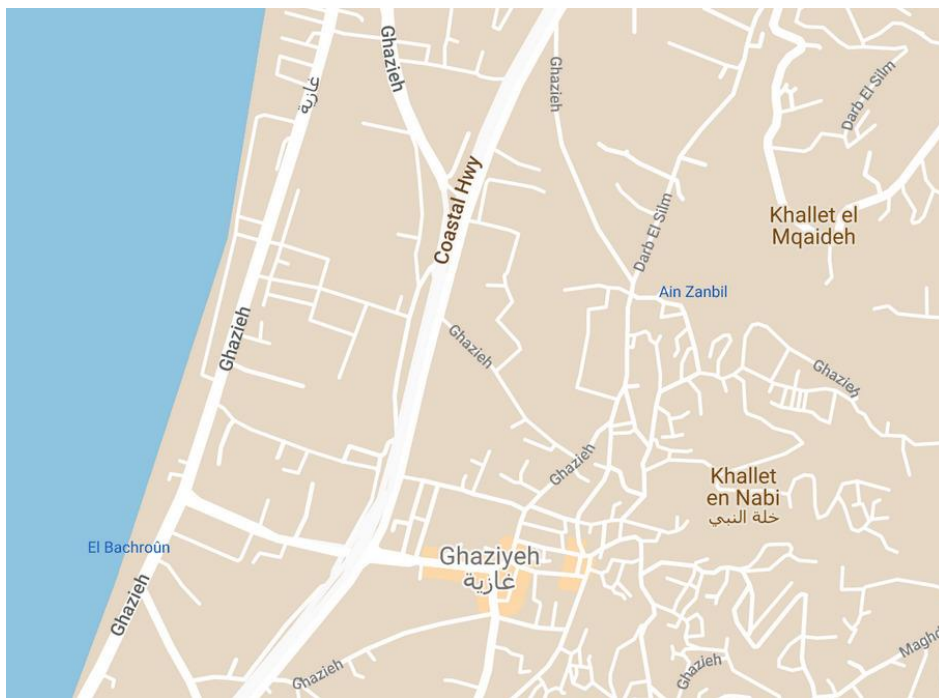


Figure 3. Map of Ghazieh streets

According to the head of the municipality of Ghazieh, Ahmad Ramzi Khalifeh, the town is estimated to have a population of 50,000 residents, 35,000 of whom are originally from Ghazieh, with social stratification ranging from upper to middle and lower-class residents (Khalifeh, 2023 Personal Interview). The southern town spans an area of about 8 square kilometers with basic necessities (e.g. internet, water, markets) available. The area is predominately Shia Muslims and its seaside road has been historically known as being an “industrial city” where many businesses set up shop. Furthermore, before the construction of the modern highway in the late 1990s, this area served as the primary road connecting Saida to other towns in southern Lebanon. As

such, it played a crucial role in facilitating transportation and commerce in the region. The area has since become a business hub, rather than just a bridge between Saida and the south. Thus, the signage of shops on the seaside business road and nearby residential areas were explored to examine whether commercial considerations have shifted the linguistic landscape in a town where life is mainly rural and radically different from city life.

C. Data collection

A total of 315 shop signs were photographed and examined. The languages used on permanent shop signs, such as supermarkets, restaurants, clothing stores, etc. were studied; however, The main shop name and any secondary text that appeared within the same spatial frame of the shop signage were included in the study. Any text that appeared on the glass storefront, stickers, menus, advertisements or posters hanging on the shop were excluded in the analysis. In Figure 4 below, the text appearing on the red part of the sign was considered in the analysis. In Figure 5, the main shop name was included in the coding process, but the Arabic text that appeared on the glass storefront, was excluded from the analysis as it is not part of the main shop sign.



Figure 4. Shop sign in Ghazieh



Figure 5. Shop sign in Ghazieh

My sample size was chosen based on previous studies conducted in the Arab region. In his study of the use of Latin script in the LL of Hamra Main Street, Farran (2018) collected a sample of 119 shop signs in the area. ALHyari & Hamdan (2019) analyzed 281 shop signs collected from two main streets in Salt, Jordan: Prince Hamza Street and Al Hamam Street. In another 2018 study conducted in Lebanon, Karam, Warren, Kibler, & Shweiry analyzed 128 private store fronts in three streets in Beirut. Thus, choosing a sample of on average 100 shop signs for each respective area, for a total of 315 signs, seemed to be representative of what the study strives to achieve.

To ensure an unbiased selection of shops, I used a systematic approach when choosing the streets and instructed a professional photographer to take photos of all monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual storefronts present on each identified street. The streets photographed in Ras Beirut included Bliss, where AUB is located, Makhoul, Souraty and nearby streets. As for Ashrafieh, Damascus Road, Rue Huvelin, and Hotel Dieu and surrounding areas were photographed. These are the streets where USJ campuses are located in Ashrafieh. As for Ghazieh, the photos were taken on the

seaside road, where many businesses run their operations, and from within the town itself. Some shop owners did not give their consent to take photos of their storefront. Thus, these shops were excluded.

Photos were taken using a digital camera. They were labeled using codes based on the street name where the photo was taken and followed by a serial number (e.g. Bliss_001). The photos were then placed in a folder on a secure server; each street had its own folder.

D. Classification of shop signs

The first step in the study involved a quantitative analysis to examine the visibility of various languages on shop signs in the area. To code the signage, I classified them by the language(s) used and by the language arrangement in which these languages are displayed on bilingual signs, categorizing them as vertical, horizontal, or central. Following in the footsteps of Scollon and Scollon (2003), I used the approach of visual semiotics, which highlights how the arrangement of different languages on a sign impacts its interpretation by the viewer. In multilingual settings where languages are juxtaposed vertically or horizontally, the favored language is conventionally positioned on top or to the left, respectively. With respect to Arabic, given its right-to-left orthographic orientation, the favored language is the one that appears on the right (ALHyari & Hamdan, 2019). Alternatively, a central arrangement is when the primary language is featured at the center of the sign and the secondary language relegated to the margins. I then classified bilingual signs according to dominance in terms of font size, which is one of three characteristics that make up the term “routine” coined by Suleiman (2004). This approach to shop signs has been used by researchers in the past

(ALHyari & Hamdan, 2019; Backhaus, 2006; Nikolaou, 2016). I also attempted to describe the informational or symbolic role of written foreign language usage. Foreign languages are sometimes used in emblematic capacities only, or what Haarmann (1986) refers to as impersonal multilingualism. The use of foreign languages oftentimes plays a symbolic role to signify cosmopolitanism (Haarmann, 1986), or exoticism (Van Mensel et al., 2016). Other times, it reflects the power, status, and economic importance of the different languages (Akindele, 2011). The final step was to see the symbolic representation of the area using Ben-Rafael's structuration principles, including the principles of presentation of self and good reasons.



Figure 6. Shop sign in Ras Beirut

As for proper names, scholars have had different approaches to the matter of proper names, particularly concerning the classification of shop signs based on their language of origin or the script employed. Prior studies by Edelman (2009), Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), and others have resorted to categorizing proper names based on both the language of origin and the script utilized (as cited in Karam et al., 2018). However, Karam et al. (2018) underscore certain methodological limitations that impede the

precise identification of word origin. As for the present study, it did not incorporate the origin of words featured in signage as part of the coding procedure. To illustrate, if a name was inscribed in Arabic script, it was classified as employing the Arabic language and not listed under the name's language of origin. In Figure 6, the main shop sign included the Arabic name Jamal, which translates to “beauty.” However, since it was written in Latin script, it was coded as using the English language, rather than Arabic.

E. Data analysis

The unit of analysis has been a critical consideration in LL research (Karam, Warren, Kibler, & Shweiry, 2018). The present study builds on prior investigations that have defined signs as "any piece of text within a spatially definable frame" (Backhaus, 2007, as cited in Karam et al., 2018, p. 201). In the context of the present research, a 'spatially definable frame' is construed as an "individual storefront or store window that displayed text identifying a business establishment" (Karam et al., 2018, p. 6). The current study aligns with the approach taken by Karam et al. (2018) in treating an individual storefront, rather than an establishment (e.g., Macy's), as the unit of analysis. Hence, each unique shop sign will be deemed a distinct entity, irrespective of whether the same shop displays multiple signs within the study's sampling area.

F. Methodological issues

Backhaus (2007) has explained the methodological challenges arising from the absence of standardization in signage across LL studies (as cited in Nikolaou, 2016). The inclusion of promotional posters affixed to walls or posting business hours on shop windows, for instance, have been topics of debate in prior research. The exclusion of

such signage in the present study may impede or bias the results in favor of the study's specific objectives.

CHAPTER IV

DATA RESULTS

The following sections provide an overview and in-depth analysis of the data collected. Firstly, the overall distribution of languages in each of the areas of interest is outlined, starting with Ras Beirut, followed by Ashrafieh, and concluding with Ghazieh. Next, an overview of the language dominance on shop signs within each area is provided. The objective is to identify patterns of language use and dominance in relation to the factors and approaches discussed in the literature.

A. Shop signs in Ras Beirut

1. Overall language visibility and arrangement

In this study, a total of 102 shop signs were collected in Ras Beirut, particularly in the Hamra area, which is located in the western part of Beirut. Data of the overall language visibility in Ras Beirut is summarized in Table 1 below, showing the overall percentage of monolingual and bilingual signs in this area of Beirut in descending order. Shop signs were collected across three main streets surrounding the campus of the American University of Beirut, namely Bliss Street, Makhoul Street, and Souraty Street.

Table 1. Language visibility in Ras Beirut

Monolingual English	59%
Bilingual Arabic & English	23%
Monolingual Arabic	8%
Monolingual French	4%
Others	4%
Bilingual English & French	2%
Bilingual French & Arabic	1%

Of the photographed signs in Ras Beirut, 59% were monolingual English signs, 4% were monolingual French signs, and 8% were monolingual Arabic signs. As for bilingual signs, 23% were written in Arabic and English, 2% in English and French, and 1% in French and Arabic. In the case of *Librairie du Liban* (see Figure 7), which opened in 1944, its main shop name is primarily in French and Arabic but includes the English word "publishers" as secondary text in the main shop sign. This naming choice likely reflects the influence of the French language, as the store was established just one year after the end of the French mandate. By adding "publishers" in English, it seems that the store is targeting people who are interested in publishing their books in English, in addition to those who are comfortable reading books in languages such as French, Arabic, and English.

Other languages appeared in the area, accounting for 4% of the total signs. These included one trilingual sign in Arabic, French, and English; one sign in Italian; one sign in Portuguese; and one sign in Turkish. These findings shed light on the linguistic landscape of Ras Beirut, and Hamra in particular, a vibrant commercial and cultural hub in Beirut. The predominance of English in the signage reflects the area's history as a hub for foreign students and tourists. The presence of other languages in the area (see Figures 8, 9 and 10) could be a ploy to symbolically construct the area as being culturally open, vibrant, and cosmopolitan, which can attract more visitors and more investment.



Figure 7. Trilingual sign on Bliss Street



Figure 8. Other languages appearing on Bliss Street



Figure 9. Other languages appearing on Bliss Street



Figure 10. Other languages appearing on Bliss Street

There was a creativity and twist of words on Bliss Street. For example, in Figure 11, Chatime plays on the Chinese word “Cha” which means tea. However, because it is written as if it were an English word, it was labeled as a monolingual English shop sign. The creativity and wordplay observed in the shop signs on Bliss

Street reflect the area's status as a hub for international students and tourists. Such linguistic and cultural interplay is not only a testament to the dynamic nature of the neighborhood but also a reflection of the globalization of commerce, particularly in cosmopolitan areas. Furthermore, it can provide insights into the marketing strategies used by shop owners to attract customers and stand out among competitors.



Figure 11. Other languages appearing on Bliss Street

The predominance of monolingual English signs in Ras Beirut is suggestive of the role the foundation of an American missionary institution, namely AUB, has played in the LL of the area. This is particularly noted within shop signs on Bliss Street which is home to many international franchises. It may also be attributed to the area's history as a cosmopolitan center, attracting foreign students, tourists, and expatriates. The prevalence of international franchises on Bliss Street, in particular, reflects the area's reputation as a commercial and cultural hub. The linguistic landscape in this area not only mirrors its historical and cultural identity but also highlights the impact of power dynamics and cultural influences in shaping the linguistic landscape of urban settings. Another explanation is that these places cater to university students, who usually are attracted to American fast-food places.



Figure 12. International franchise on Bliss Street



Figure 13. International franchise on Bliss Street



Figure 14. International franchise on Bliss Street



Figure 15. International franchise on Bliss Street

It was also noted that bilingual Arabic and English shop signs were very common on Souraty street. In fact, 60% of all the bilingual shop signs in the photographed Ras Beirut areas appeared on Souraty street (see Figure 16 below). The main name of the restaurant is written in Arabic using a creative calligraphy font, while the English name is simply a slogan that informs passersby of the type of food the restaurant offers. In doing so, the restaurant recognizes the artistic nature of the Arabic

language and uses a creative calligraphy font to showcase this side. At the same time, by including an English description in the name, the restaurant is catering to the needs of people who favor or understand English.



Figure 16. Bilingual shop sign on Souraty Street

Of the shop signs photographed, 25% were bilingual, using a combination of either Arabic and English, Arabic and French, or English and French. Data regarding the language dominance on bilingual signs, in terms of font size and placement, in the area is summarized in Table 2. They are also listed in descending order.

Table 2. Language dominance on bilingual signs in Ras Beirut

Equal Dominance	36%
English Dominance	36%
Arabic Dominance	28%

Of the bilingual shop signs photographed in the Ras Beirut area, 36% had equal dominance, meaning the two languages that appeared on the shop sign occupied identical space on the shop sign (see Figure 17 and Figure 18) whereas 36% had English dominance (see Figure 19 and Figure 20) and 28% had Arabic dominance (see Figure 21 and Figure 22).



Figure 17. Bilingual shop signs in Ras Beirut



Figure 18. Bilingual shop signs in Ras Beirut



Figure 19. Bilingual shop signs in Ras Beirut



Figure 20. Bilingual shop signs in Ras Beirut



Figure 21. Bilingual shop signs in Ras Beirut



Figure 22. Bilingual shop signs in Ras Beirut

As per Scollon and Scollon's (2003) elements of visual semiotics, the language arrangement tells a lot about the way languages are perceived in the mind of readers. When languages are aligned horizontally, the preferred language appears on the left side. This has been suggested to be the opposite regarding any signs with the Arabic language as Arabic is written from right to left (ALHyari & Hamdan, 2019). The language arrangement of bilingual signs in Ras Beirut is summarized in Table 3 below, sorted by category in descending order. Of the 25 bilingual signs, 36% had horizontal arrangement (English left, Arabic right), 4% had horizontal arrangement (English right, Arabic left), 4% had horizontal arrangement (English left, French right), 12% had vertical arrangement (English top), 24% had vertical arrangement (Arabic top), 16% had central arrangement (English) and 4% had central arrangement (Arabic).

Table 3. Language arrangement on bilingual signs in Ras Beirut

Horizontal: English left, Arabic right	36%
Horizontal: English right, Arabic left	4%
Horizontal: English left, French right	4%
Horizontal: French left, Arabic right	0%
Vertical: Arabic top	24%
Vertical: English top	12%
Vertical: French top	0%
Central: English	16%
Central: Arabic	4%
Central: French	0%

B. Shop signs in Ashrafieh

1. Overall language visibility and arrangement in Ashrafieh

In this part of the study, a total of 110 shop signs were collected in Ashrafieh, a neighborhood located in the eastern part of Beirut. Table 4 summarizes the data on language visibility in Ashrafieh, presenting the overall percentage of monolingual and bilingual signs in the area. Photographs of shop signs in the area were taken across six primary streets surrounding USJ campuses in Ashrafieh, namely Adib Ishac, Damascus, Furn El Hayek, Ghandour El Saad, Huevlin, and Monot Street. It is worth noting that due to the security measures implemented by the Lebanese General Security on Damascus Street, the photographer was unable to capture signs in the immediate vicinity of the French embassy and General Security Headquarters.

Table 4. Language visibility in Ashrafieh

Monolingual English	56%
Monolingual French	16%
Bilingual Arabic & English	9%
Bilingual English & French	5%
Monolingual Arabic	5%
Bilingual French & Arabic	5%
Other(s)	3%

The results of the study indicate that 56% of the photographed signs were monolingual English, 16% were monolingual French, and only 5% were monolingual Arabic. Bilingual signs accounted for the majority of the remaining signs, with 9% being bilingual Arabic and English, 5% being bilingual English and French, and 5% being bilingual French and Arabic. Other languages were also observed, representing 3% of the total signs. The sample included one trilingual sign and two Italian signs. The prevalence of English in the linguistic landscape of Ashrafieh may reflect the influence

of globalization and the rise of English as a dominant language in domains such as business. The area's attempt to position itself as cosmopolitan and globally connected may have also contributed to the use of English on shop signs. Overall, the linguistic landscape of Ashrafieh highlights the complex interplay between history, religion, culture, and globalization in shaping the linguistic diversity of urban settings.



Figure 23. Monolingual English signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 24. Monolingual English signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 25. Monolingual English signs in Ashrafieh

Of the shop signs photographed, 19% were bilingual, featuring various combinations of Arabic, English, and French languages. Data regarding the language dominance on bilingual signs, in terms of font size and placement, in the area is summarized in Table 5. The percentages are arranged in descending order for clarity and ease of interpretation.

Table 5. Language dominance on bilingual signs in Ashrafieh

Equal Dominance	63%
English Dominance	21%
French Dominance	17%
Arabic Dominance	0%

Of those bilingual signs, 63% had equal dominance (see Figure 26) in terms of how much space they occupied in the shop sign, 21% were English dominated (see Figure 27) and 17% had French as the dominating language (see Figure 28). This split is mainly based on the space the languages take up on the shop sign. The higher percentage of English dominance in bilingual signs when compared to French reflects the global influence of English as a dominant language in various domains, including business. The dominance of French in 17% of the bilingual signs also reflects the historical and cultural ties between Lebanon and France. Overall, the language dominance in bilingual signs provides insight into the complex interplay between language, culture, and power.



Figure 26. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 27. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 28. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

According to Scollon and Scollon's (2003) visual semiotics framework, the arrangement of languages in a sign provides insights into the way readers perceive them. Among the 24 bilingual signs, 39% had a horizontal arrangement, 44% had a vertical arrangement, and 20% had a central arrangement. The data is presented in Table 6, organized by category and sorted in descending order within each category.

Table 6. Language arrangement on bilingual signs in Ashrafieh

Horizontal: English left, Arabic right	29%
Horizontal: French left, Arabic right	10%
Horizontal: Arabic left	0%
Vertical: French top	29%
Vertical: English top	10%
Vertical: Arabic top	5%
Central: French	10%
Central: English	5%
Central: Arabic	5%

Of the bilingual signs in this area, 29% were distributed horizontally, with English on the left side and Arabic on the right side (see Figures 29 and 30); 10% were distributed horizontally, with French on the left side and Arabic on the right side. In all

shop signs, Arabic appeared on the right side, following the natural reading direction of the language. When bilingual shop signs are distributed horizontally, it suggests that both languages are equally valued and enjoy the same status among members of the society. On the other hand, when they are placed vertically or in central arrangement, it implies that one language has higher status and power over the other. This distribution of languages on shop signs could reflect the changing linguistic landscape of the area, where English is gaining ground in an area that was previously predominantly French.

Figure 29 further highlights the utilization of linguistic creativity in the LL, as evidenced by the transformation of the traditional Arabic term "Khodarje" into the more contemporary and English phrase "The Fruit Bar." This strategic choice of name suggests an effort on the part of the shop owner to appeal to a specific target audience, perhaps by positioning the shop as a unique and modern alternative to traditional fruit and vegetable shops.



Figure 29. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 30. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

Some bilingual signs (see Figure 31 and 32 below) had a vertical arrangement with Arabic appearing on top in 5% of shop signs, English appearing on top in 10% of shop signs and French appearing on top in 29% of shop signs.



Figure 31. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 32. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

Finally, some bilingual signs (see Figure 33 and 34 below) had a central arrangement with French appearing in the center 10% of the times, English appearing in the center 5% of the times, and Arabic appearing in the center 5% of the times as well with other languages appearing on the sidelines.



Figure 33. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 34. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

In Figure 35 and Figure 36, the primary texts of the shop signs are written in French. However, the inclusion of English secondary texts within the same banner is quite intriguing. In particular, in Figure 35, the phrase "Pet Shop" is included, potentially serving an informative function for an audience that may not possess knowledge of French. The incorporation of a paw print also serves a similar purpose.



Figure 35. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

In Figure 36, the primary text of the shop sign is written in French; the secondary texts include a mixture of Arabic, French, and English. The English word

internet has been used instead of the French format of writing l'internet. There is also a phrase which states "2 minutes photo passport." This text is informative in nature and seems to be targeting anyone who is looking for a professional to take their passport photo, whether for visa renewal or visa application.



Figure 36. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

In addition to the above, proper names appeared in a few of the shop signs. Many of shops with proper names were located on Adib Ishac street; 17 of the shops in that location had included proper names in them out of a total of 33 shop signs there. To compare, out of 30 shop signs photographed on Damascus street, 5 had proper names in them. Some of the names that appeared in shop signs include Simon, Jean, Phillippe, Patrick, Mikael, and Alexander. The latter name appeared in three shop signs among all 110 signs photographed in Ashrafieh. It was spelled the French way, Alexandre, once and the American way, Alexander, twice. The occurrence of names of French origin may indicate the presence of ethnic or cultural communities or may have been used in an attempt to symbolically construct the area as predominantly Christian. At the start of the civil war, Beirut was divided into two parts, east and west Beirut (Fawaz & Peillen, 2003). The former included Ashrafieh while the latter included Hamra. With this split came a major religious divide whereby East Beirut has a majority of Christians while

West Beirut has a majority of Muslims. Thus, it is not surprising to see the use of Christian names on shop signs in this part of Beirut.



Figure 37. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 38. Monolingual shop signs in Ashrafieh



Figure 39. Bilingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

The Armenian name Boghossian appeared twice in the Ashrafieh data set; the name was written in Latin script rather than Armenian script. This observation highlights the intersection between linguistic and ethnic identities in the choices made by shop owners. The use of Latin script to write an Armenian name may signify an attempt by the shop owner to appeal to a customer base that shares a similar cultural background. It may also signify an attempt to appeal to a broader audience while still maintaining a connection to their ethnic heritage. Moreover, the presence of such

language choices in the LL underscores the significance of language as a marker of identity and the role it plays in shaping social dynamics in multilingual and multicultural settings.



Figure 40. Monolingual shop signs in Ashrafieh

C. Shop signs in Ghazieh

1. Overall language visibility and arrangement in Ghazieh

In this study, a total of 103 signs were collected in the southern town of Ghazieh, Lebanon. Of those, 44 shop signs were taken from the seaside road in the area which is known as the “industrial city,” in which many of the shop signs have not been renovated or rebranded. The remaining 59 shop signs were taken from inside the town of Ghazieh, where new and modern shops open and close very frequently.

Data of the overall language visibility in Ghazieh is summarized in Table 7, which shows the overall percentage of monolingual and bilingual signs in the town in descending order. Of the total 103 signs, the majority of the signs (48%) were written exclusively in Arabic while 31% were written exclusively in English. Of the total, 18% were written using both Arabic and English and 1% used English and French. Of those bilingual signs, 45% were dominated by the English language in terms of placement and prominence. The dominance of English in bilingual signs may suggest a growing trend

towards the use of English in the business industry in the town, potentially due to globalization.

Table 7. Language visibility in Ghazieh

Monolingual Arabic	48%
Monolingual English	31%
Bilingual Arabic & English	18%
Monolingual French	2%
Bilingual English & French	1%
Bilingual French & Arabic	0%



Figure 41. English dominance of shop signs in Ghazieh



Figure 42. English dominance of shop signs in Ghazieh

As for exclusive French words, only 2% of shop signs used French on its own. There was no presence of any bilingual French and Arabic signs. Trilingual signs were not present either. The overall results demonstrate that monolingual Arabic signs are preferred in the southern town of Ghazieh. However, monolingual English signs seem to be on the rise in the town. An Arabic dominating LL in Ghazieh suggests the town to be overwhelmingly Arabic dominant with English being utilized to symbolically construct certain shops as modern, cosmopolitan, developed, and culturally open. The

widespread use of English in commercial establishments in Ghazieh also reflects the impact of globalization, which has influenced not just urban but also rural areas. This rising trend also underscores the importance of English as a global language in domains such as business, commerce, and trade. As such, it has become necessary for businesses to cater to customers who prefer or understand English, regardless of their linguistic or cultural background.



Figure 43. Monolingual English signs in Ghazieh

Of the 20 bilingual signs in the area, 15% had horizontal arrangement, 50% had vertical arrangement and 35% had central arrangement. The data can be summarized in Table 8, which is arranged by category and in descending order within each category. The dominance of those languages can be summarized in Table 9.



Figure 44. Equal dominance on shop signs

Table 8. Language arrangement on bilingual signs in Ghazieh

Horizontal: English left, Arabic right	15%
Horizontal: Arabic left	0%
Horizontal: French left, Arabic right	0%
Vertical: English top	30%
Vertical: Arabic top	20%
Vertical: French top	0%
Central: English	20%
Central: Arabic	10%
Central: French	5%

Table 9. Language dominance on bilingual signs in Ghazieh

English Dominance	45%
Equal Dominance	30%
Arabic Dominance	20%

An interesting phenomenon to note is the use of the Indo-Arabic numerals (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.) that we use in the Arab world in 35% of the monolingual Arabic signs. This observation highlights the significant influence of globalization and the increasing interconnectedness of different cultures. Additionally, the use of these numerals in monolingual Arabic signs may also suggest their widespread familiarity and acceptance among the local population.



Figure 45. Indian numerals on monolingual Arabic shop signs in Ghazieh

Table 10 Indian numerals and Latin logos visible in monolingual Arabic signs in Ghazieh

Indian numerals in monolingual Arabic signs	35%
Latin logos in monolingual Arabic signs	10%

2. *Language visibility & arrangement of shop signs in residential Ghazieh area*

Data of the overall language visibility inside the residential part of Ghazieh is summarized in Table 11, which shows the overall percentage of monolingual and bilingual signs in the town. Of the total of 59 signs photographed inside the town, the majority of the signs (51%) were written exclusively in English and 34% were written exclusively in Arabic. Of the total, 10% were written using both Arabic and English. 2% in English and French, and 3% in French exclusively. The high usage of the English language on signs within the town may signify an inclination towards Western cultural values among its residents. Moreover, this trend may reflect the perceptions of the people in the town on what the dominant culture is, with English being employed as a symbol of modernity and development. Alternatively, the use of English may simply be for commercial reasons in recognition of the global prominence of the English language in domains such as business.

Table 11. Distribution of languages of shop signs in residential part of Ghazieh

Monolingual English	51%
Monolingual Arabic	34%
Bilingual Arabic & English	10%
Monolingual French	3%
Bilingual English & French	2%
Bilingual French & Arabic	0%

Table 12. Language order on bilingual shop signs in residential part of Ghazieh

English Dominance	57%
Equal Dominance	14%
Arabic Dominance	14%
French Dominance	14%

Of the bilingual signs, the majority (57%) had English play the role of the dominant language in terms of placement and order within the shop signs. It was quite rare to see the use of French on its own on a shop sign inside the town of Ghazieh; however, the shop in Figure 46 uses French exclusively with additional information on the storefront using Arabic exclusively. However, for the purpose of this study, secondary text on storefronts was not included in the analysis of the study. It is noteworthy to point out that the utilization of French by the shop owner could perhaps indicate their perception of the language as having a higher status or greater economic and social significance in the wider society.



Figure 46. Monolingual French shop sign in Ghazieh with Arabic on storefront

3. Language visibility & arrangement of shop signs on seaside road in Ghazieh

Table 13 presents a summary of the language visibility data collected from 44 shop signs situated along the seaside business road in Ghazieh. The analysis reveals that a majority of the signs (66%) were monolingual Arabic, indicating the predominant use of the Arabic language in this area. In contrast, the prevalence of monolingual English signs on the seaside road (5%) is considerably lower than those situated within the

residential part of the town (51%). The seaside road is commonly referred to as the industrial hub of Ghazieh and comprises of longstanding businesses that have been in operation for a long period of time. This perhaps contributes to the prominence of Arabic signs along this commercial stretch as compared to the residential area of the town, where bilingual signs featuring English are more common. This suggests that the language visibility on signs is influenced by various contextual factors, such as the commercial landscape, the target audience, and the historical roots of the area. A more comprehensive analysis that takes these variables into consideration could offer a more nuanced understanding of the linguistic choices in Ghazieh.

Table 13. Distribution of languages of shop signs on seaside business road in Ghazieh

Monolingual Arabic	66%
Bilingual Arabic & English	30%
Monolingual English	5%
Bilingual English & French	0%
Monolingual French	0%
Bilingual French & Arabic	0%



Figure 47. Monolingual Arabic shop signs in Ghazieh



Figure 48. Monolingual Arabic shop signs in Ghazieh

Of the 44 shop signs photographed in the area, 30% utilized both Arabic and English. The analysis of bilingual signs indicated that English dominance and equal dominance were equally prevalent in the area, accounting for 38% each, as depicted in Table 14. This suggests that there may be rising competition between Arabic and English on shop signs located on the seaside business road. One plausible explanation for this trend is the replacement of older businesses with newer ones, possibly owned and operated by younger generations who seek to project a modern and cosmopolitan image of their brand. This shift in the linguistic landscape in Ghazieh could perhaps be attributed to a changing demographic or economic factors, which may have led to the emergence of a new generation of business owners with different linguistic and cultural preferences.

Table 14. Language order on bilingual signs on seaside business road in Ghazieh

English Dominance	38%
Equal Dominance	38%
Arabic Dominance	23%
French Dominance	0%

The following are some examples of shop signs situated along the seaside road, which appear to belong to relatively new businesses that exhibit a predominant use of the English language. This trend could be indicative of an inclination towards globalization, as noted by Gorter (2006).



Figure 49. English dominating sign on seaside road in Ghazieh



Figure 50. English dominating sign on seaside road in Ghazieh



Figure 51. English dominating sign on seaside road in Ghazieh

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I proceed to examine the ways in which different languages dominate or co-exist with Arabic in the LL of Ras Beirut, Ashrafieh, and Ghazieh. I attempt to understand and explain the visibility of those languages in the three respective areas and outline the factors that may have led to the use of certain languages over others in the LL of Lebanon.

The prominence of monolingual English signs in all three areas studied is clear. In Ras Beirut and Ashrafieh, monolingual English signs outnumbered all other categories of language use in the areas. The predominance of monolingual English signs in Ras Beirut is suggestive of the role the foundation of an American missionary institution, namely AUB, has played in the LL of the area. The presence of various English language educational institutions in Ras Beirut such as the International College, American Community School, Evangelical School, and Lebanese American University have transformed the neighborhood into what is the closest concept of a 'University Town.' The Western notion is solidified even more by the presence of fast-food chains, including Dunkin Donuts, KFC, McDonald's, Domino's, and others, prominently displayed on shop signs along Bliss Street. The predominance of monolingual English signs in Ashrafieh was particularly interesting to see considering the historical link between Ashrafieh, Christians, and the French language and Muslims and the English language. Monolingual English signs were over triple in number than monolingual French signs photographed in Ashrafieh (see Figures 52 and 53 below).



Figure 52. Monolingual English shop sign in Ashrafieh



Figure 53. Monolingual English shop sign in Ashrafieh

Globalization and the spread of the English language in domains such as business and science have perhaps played a role in its spread. The commodification of certain languages for business purposes is not a new feature of LLs today. English has become a commodified language, often utilized by business owners to portray themselves as modern and in tune with global trends. The rise of English in many domains across the world including commerce, the internet, and the business world, has allowed for its continuous rise in Lebanon as a whole, and that includes Ashrafieh. The prominence and rise of the English language is also visible in Ghazieh (see Figures 54 and 55 below).



Figure 54. Monolingual English shop sign in Ghazieh



Figure 55. Monolingual English shop sign in Ghazieh

In Ghazieh, though monolingual Arabic signs (48%) surpassed monolingual English signs, the number of monolingual English signs seems to be on the rise in the area with 31% currently using English exclusively on shop signs. New shop signs in Ghazieh, particularly on the seaside road where many shops have been operating for years, are utilizing the English language exclusively for both informational and symbolic purposes (see Figure 56 and 57). This may suggest that the newer generation assigns a higher symbolic value to the English language than Arabic or it could simply be a reflection of the impact of the educational system, where English is commonly used as a medium of instruction. Such exposure to English in the classroom from a very

early age may have influenced the younger generation's language preferences, making them more comfortable with using English in their daily lives. This trend may also be related to the perception that the English language is linked to globalization, which prompts businesses to use it on their shop signs to either appeal to a cosmopolitan, youthful, and contemporary audience or to demonstrate their modernity, credibility, and youthful spirit to target a specific audience. Older shop signs in the area, some of which have faded in color, are written exclusively in Arabic (see Figures 58 and 59). Many of the shops on the seaside road have been in existence for at least a decade, according to residents of the town whom I spoke with. This further substantiates that the Arabic language holds a greater symbolic significance among the older generation as it is the only language they were comfortable using in their daily lives and on their shop signs. A significant proportion of the older generation did not have access to educational resources that would familiarize them with foreign languages such as English. Furthermore, during that time, English was not the language of business as it is today.



Figure 56. Monolingual English sign on seaside road in Ghazieh



Figure 57. Monolingual English sign on seaside road in Ghazieh



Figure 58. Monolingual Arabic sign on seaside road in Ghazieh



Figure 59. Monolingual Arabic sign on seaside road in Ghazieh

Aside from Ghazieh, the exclusive use of the Arabic language signs was quite minimal in the two other areas examined (8% in Ras Beirut and 5% in Ashrafieh). The higher percentage of Arabic in Ras Beirut when compared to Ashrafieh may perhaps be linked to the historical connection between Arabic and Muslims, as the language was first introduced to Lebanon during the spread of Islam in the 7th century. The reason for Ras Beirut's association with Muslims, and thus with Arabic, can be traced back to the civil war when Beirut was divided into two parts, with Christians clustering in the east and Muslims in the west. During different periods, religion played a crucial role in determining people's language preferences. Arabic and English were associated with Muslims, while French was associated with Christians. Various religious groups started establishing educational systems in which different languages of instruction, such as English or French, were employed to attract an audience of the same religious faith. With time, language stopped being as indicative of one's religion, particularly after the infiltration of the English language into the Lebanese educational system. This was especially evident when English was taught as a third language in French systems and as a second language in public schools.

Aside from religion, different sociolinguistic factors could have affected language use in Ras Beirut, Ashrafieh, and Ghazieh. These include factors like education, socioeconomic status, the rise of multilingualism, cultural attitudes, and geographic location. Education plays a vital role in language acquisition and use and the availability of foreign language education in both schools and universities can influence the proficiency and preference of such languages among students. Socioeconomic status also determines what kind of education certain individuals have access to. Individuals who come from higher income families are more likely to use foreign languages due to

their easy access to that language at a very young age in schools, whereas those with lower income may have limited access to high quality foreign language education and resources.

The utilization of foreign languages in certain areas may have been influenced by factors such as tourism and international business. Ashrafieh and Ras Beirut, which are both located in the capital city of Beirut, have been popular tourist destinations and business centers, with offices and shops being established in these areas over time. Therefore, the greater occurrence of foreign language usage in these areas, in comparison to Ghazieh, is not surprising. In some cases, foreign languages were used solely for symbolic purposes. For instance, in Ashrafieh, there were two Italian signs, despite the shops not aiming to appeal to Italian tourists or communicate their offerings in the Italian language (refer to Figures 60 and 61). They utilized the Italian language to perhaps showcase their authenticity as genuine Italian restaurants and to portray their cultural openness. By using a foreign language, they sought to create an ambience of cosmopolitanism and sophistication, and to differentiate themselves from other restaurants in the area.



Figure 60. Italian sign in Ashrafieh



Figure 61. Italian sign in Ashrafieh

Similarly, within the context of Ras Beirut a small percentage (4%) of shop signs incorporated foreign languages, such as Italian and Portuguese, solely in emblematic capacities. As illustrated in Figure 62, the primary shop name, La Forchetta, derives from the Italian word for "fork." However, for those unfamiliar with the Italian language, the name does not provide any substantive information. Instead, it functions to pique the curiosity of passers-by. Nevertheless, the accompanying smaller text, "a taste of Italy," provides individuals with the necessary details about the place's offerings. Similarly, a Portuguese restaurant situated on Bliss Street employs the Portuguese language only in emblematic capacities and complements its sign with the word "Portuguese" on the margin to provide potential customers with relevant information, as depicted in Figure 63.



Figure 62. Italian sign on Bliss Street



Figure 63. Portuguese sign on Bliss Street

The symbolic function of language is also evident through the prevalence of specific languages over others in the main spatial frame of shop signs. Among the captured images of shop signs, a proportion of bilingual signs was observed in each of the three areas, namely Ashrafieh (19%), Ras Beirut (25%), and Ghazieh (19%). In Ashrafieh, bilingual shop signs integrated a blend of Arabic and English, Arabic and French, or English and French languages. Similarly, in Ras Beirut, bilingual shop signs incorporated a mix of Arabic and English, Arabic and French, or English and French. In contrast, bilingual shop signs in Ghazieh featured a combination of Arabic and English or English and French only. Notably, the use of Arabic and French together was absent in the captured images of shop signs in Ghazieh. This may perhaps be due to the lack of historical connection between the French language and the local residents. Furthermore, given that French is not a significant language for commerce in the area, business owners in Ghazieh are less likely to employ it in their "presentation of self" to appeal to a broader customer base and increase market visibility. Bilingual shop signs with equal dominance were the overwhelming majority in Ashrafieh (63%). As demonstrated in

Figures 64 and 65, the simultaneous use of two languages was primarily for informational purposes rather than emblematic ones. It was particularly interesting to see English dominating 21% of the bilingual signs in the area, with French only dominating 17% of the bilingual signs. It is also interesting to note that of those bilingual signs, 9% were in Arabic and English, 5% in English and French and 5% in French and Arabic.

The dominance of English over French on these signs, as well as the inclusion of Arabic alongside English in a region with a strong historical association with the French language, provide insights into the symbolic function of language in commercial settings. These observations may have implications for businesses operating in similar linguistic contexts, especially those seeking to maximize visibility and appeal to a specific customer segment.



Figure 64. Equal dominance on bilingual sign in Ashrafieh



Figure 65. Equal dominance on bilingual sign in Ashrafieh

In Ras Beirut, English dominated 36% of the bilingual shop signs, with another 36% having equal dominance in the spatial frame of the sign. It is noteworthy that the majority of these bilingual signs were concentrated on Makhoul and Souraty streets rather than on Bliss Street. This observation suggests that businesses located on Bliss Street intentionally target the American University of Beirut's student population by using English language on their signs. By doing so, these businesses aim to position themselves as youth-oriented, contemporary, and international, resonating with the student demographic's values and lifestyle. The prominence of English dominating bilingual signs on the inner streets of Ras Beirut suggests the same. Shop owners want to present themselves as modern, want to gain visibility in the market, stand out among competitors, and resonate with passers-by in the area. To do that, they decide to have the English language dominate the spatial frame of the sign. In Figure 66, the travel agency only used Arabic to translate the name of the agency and to provide a phone number in Arabic as well. This selective use of language may be intended to attract an older audience who are booking tickets for their children and may feel more comfortable communicating in Arabic.



Figure 66. English dominance on bilingual sign in Ras Beirut

In Figure 67, the brand name appears in English and occupies the majority of the spatial frame of the shop sign; however, here the use of Arabic serves an

informational role, telling consumers the services being provided. This observation suggests that businesses in this area recognize the value of using multiple languages to cater to a diverse consumer base while also prioritizing the use of the dominant language to capture the attention of passers-by.



Figure 67. English dominance on bilingual sign in Ras Beirut

The overwhelming majority of bilingual shop signs in Ghazieh had English dominating the spatial frame of the shop sign (45%). As shown in Figures 68, 69, and 70, the use of English in these shop signs is primarily emblematic, intended to capture the attention of passers-by, while the informational content is conveyed in Arabic, the mother-tongue of the local consumer base. This demonstrates a balance between preserving cultural identity and globalization, which is becoming increasingly important in today's interconnected world.



Figure 68. English dominating bilingual sign in Ghazieh



Figure 69. English dominating bilingual sign in Ghazieh



Figure 70. English dominating bilingual sign in Ghazieh

The dominance of English on bilingual signs in Ghazieh, especially in the context of business owners vying for visibility among private sector owners, can potentially be explained by Ben Rafael's principle of structuration and the notion of presentation of self. Business owners can use LL items, such as a shop sign, to compete with others and appeal to passers-by by utilizing a language that carries a greater symbolic value or status within that particular audience segment and society in general. The principle of “good reasons” can also help explain the language choices as business owners may simply be conforming to mainstream values and beliefs that associate the English language with modernity, globalization, and credibility. Private sector shop signs are typically owned by independent individuals who have the freedom to make decisions regarding their businesses and the language used in their signage and other marketing materials, particularly due to the absence of laws in this area.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which Arabic, the native language, and English and French, the two prominent foreign languages in Lebanon, languages other than Arabic are utilized in the linguistic landscape (LL) of three areas in Lebanon, namely Ashrafieh, Ras Beirut, and Ghazieh. The study aimed to explore the factors that have led to the use of such languages and to examine the functions of the language choices on main shop signs in the selected areas. The study accounted for the language used on signs, their order and arrangement, and spatial dominance. It also considered sociolinguistic factors that may have influenced written language choices in present-day Lebanon. The analysis of main shop signs in all three areas indicated that the English language is on the rise in the country and plays both a symbolic and informational role. The significant presence of Arabic in Ghazieh suggests that city life has led to an increase in foreign language use, but towns are catching up to the trend as businesses aim to fit in this globalized and interconnected world. Therefore, the results of this study and the subsequent discussion show that the English language enjoys higher visibility than French and Arabic in the city areas and is a commodified language that businesses prefer to use to attract a certain segment of the audience. The growing use of English in the town of Ghazieh, especially in the residential zone where new businesses have emerged, is also notable. The use of English by commercial establishments in both urban and rural settings reflects Lebanese society's increasing global orientation, in tune with other places around the world. The spread of English at such a fast rate is influenced by various factors, including the rise of international trade

and business, the spread of technology and social media, and the growing mobility of people. It is a dynamic process that continues to shape the linguistic diversity and complexity of contemporary urban and rural localities.

A. Limitations and future research

The present study's findings were restricted to primary text on storefronts and did not encompass secondary text, such as menus, posters, and opening hours. The inclusion of such information may have provided valuable insights or significantly altered the results. Moreover, the study had a limited scope as it only focused on specific streets within the selected areas. As urban landscapes are rapidly changing, particularly in areas like Ras Beirut where the demographic composition has shifted from foreign students and academics to Arab nationals from countries like Iraq and Syria, a more comprehensive investigation is required to determine how this shift has impacted the linguistic landscape of the area. In fact, it is too early to determine the new trends in shop type and shop signage as changes are going on at present at a relatively fast pace in response to the new demographic facts.

In addition, the study did not consider the effect of color on shop signs and its potential psychological impact on passersby. A further limitation of this study is the lack of consideration given to the attitudes and perceptions of the local community towards different languages in present-day Lebanon. Future research could investigate the role of language attitudes in shaping the linguistic landscape. Finally, this study only focused on three areas in Lebanon, and the results may not be generalizable to other regions within the country or to other countries in the Middle East with different sociolinguistic contexts.

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