

A Model for Analyzing the Linguistic Landscape of Shop Signs in Kirkuk, Iraq

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Abstract: This study explores the linguistic landscape of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq. An eclectic model, combining frameworks established by Scollon & Scollon (2003) and Reh (2004), is employed to analyse a sample of (115) shop signs. This model offers a comprehensive approach by capturing both linguistic (code preference) and visual aspects (sign characteristics) of the signs.

The research investigates the interplay between language, cultural identity, and commercial practicality in attracting customers. The analysis considers the dominant languages used, multilingual combinations, and visual elements of the signs. Additionally, potential factors influencing language choices, such as the surrounding demographics and the types of businesses on the street, are explored.

The analysis of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq, reveals a fascinating linguistic landscape shaped by a unique interplay of languages and communication strategies. Here is a summary of the essential findings and areas for further exploration:

Monolingual Landscape:

Dominant Languages: A significant majority (68.7%) of shop signs are monolingual, with Arabic (54.4%) and English (45.6%) nearly equally represented also, the absence of Kurdish and Turkish monolingual signs.

Multilingual Presence:

Catering to a Diverse Clientele: Despite the monolingual majority, a noteworthy 31.3% of signs utilise multiple languages. This indicates a segment of shop owners recognising the value of catering to a broader customer base or promoting inclusivity.

Multilingual Communication Strategies:

I. Duplicating for Clarity: Duplicating signs (44.4%) are the most popular style for multilingual communication, ensuring each language is presented clearly and separately.

II. Fragmentary Signs: Fragmentary signs (36.1%) are also prevalent, suggesting space constraints or a focus on specific elements in different languages.

Language Preferences in Multilingual Signs:

I. Arabic-English Dominance: A substantial majority (88.9%) of multilingual signs combine Arabic and English, reinforcing the trend observed in monolingual signs. This suggests a potential focus on catering to both Arabic and English-speaking customers.

II. Limited Use of Other Languages: Kurdish and Turkish appear minimally (around 8%) in multilingual combinations, aligning with the overall data.

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the role language plays in shaping Kirkuk's commercial identity and the diverse communication strategies employed by businesses on Al-Muhafadha Street.

Keywords: Shop signs, linguistic landscape, Kirkuk, Al-Muhafadha Street, Iraq, multilingualism, code choice, commercial communication, Scollon & Scollon, Reh model.

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1. Introduction

The exploration of linguistic landscapes, the visible manifestation of languages in public spaces, has garnered increased attention in recent years.

Researchers set out to look at the linguistic landscape when they investigated the complexities of multilingualism as reflected in street signs, billboards, and other public inscriptions. Understanding how languages interact, coexist, or compete in these environments contributes not only to linguistic theory but also holds implications for broader sociocultural dynamics.

2. Linguistic Landscape: A General Perspective

The "linguistic landscape" term was first coined by Landry and Bourhis (1997, p. 23) to denote the "visibility and salience of languages in a given public space." In other words, linguistic landscapes are the ways in which languages are used and displayed in public places, such as on street signs, shop signs, and out-of-home advertisements, e.g. billboards.

Gorter (2006, pp. 1-6) argues that linguistic landscapes can deliver valuable understandings of the linguistic diversity of a particular area, as well as the social and political dynamics that shape it. For instance, the presence of many languages on street signs in a city can be seen as a sign of linguistic diversity and inclusion. In contrast, the absence of specific languages can be seen as a sign of marginalisation or discrimination.

Linguistic landscapes can also be used to promote language awareness and understanding. For example, a school might display signs in multiple languages to welcome students from different backgrounds and to promote multilingualism. Alternatively, a city might install bilingual street signs to help tourists and newcomers find their way around (Rafael et al., 2006, pp. 299-317).

The study of linguistic landscapes is a relatively new field of research, but it has been overgrown in recent years. Scollon and Scollon (2003, p. 242).

This is due in part to the increasing globalisation and urbanisation of the world, which has led to greater linguistic diversity in many public spaces.

Rafael et al. (2006, pp. 299–317) suggest that LL studies can be used to examine social and linguistic phenomena, such as:

1. The relative prominence of different languages in a given space.
2. language use, social factors, and relationships such as power, prestige, and identity.
3. The impact of globalisation and migration on language use.
4. Language as a tool for urban planning.

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Gorter & Durk (2006, pp. 315–337) claim that a study of the LL of a multilingual city might reveal that the dominant language is primarily used in public spaces such as government buildings and transportation hubs, while minority languages are more visible in ethnic enclaves and religious institutions. This information could be used to inform urban planning decisions aimed at promoting linguistic diversity and inclusion.

In essence, the LL is constantly present in our surroundings, yet often goes unnoticed because people are generally unaware of the languages displayed on the shop signs. Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in LL, as evidenced by various intriguing studies, like the examination of the Cods on shop fronts in the Old City of Jerusalem (Spolsky – Cooper, 1991), in Israel (Rafael et al., 2004), and the exploration of bilingual signs in Tokyo (Backhaus, 2005).

Various academics have distinctly defined the concept of Linguistic Landscape (LL). Understanding the development of LL requires examining the array of definitions and methodologies. Initially, LL was

introduced in the 1970s in Belgium to mark the linguistic boundaries between the French-speaking Flanders and the Dutch-speaking Wallonia. In Quebec, Canada, language territories were similarly marked by regulating languages on public signage (Backhaus, 2005, pp. 175-176).

Landry and Bourhis (1997) propose two interrelated definitions of LL: 1) LL is the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs within a specific territory, and 2) LL is the aggregate of languages displayed on public road signs, billboards, street and place names, shop signs, and government building signs, which together form the LL of a territory or urban area.

Beyond the definitions, Landry and Bourhis (1997, pp. 23-49) emphasise that LL serves informational and symbolic roles. The informational role reflects the sociolinguistic structure of a region and the status of language groups. In contrast, the symbolic role indicates the perceived strength and presence of a language group within the social and linguistic landscape. Scholars interpret the term LL differently.

Dailey et al. (2005) suggest that LL includes more than just billboards; it encompasses a broader spectrum, including home advertisements, neighbourhood languages, television content, and educational language.

Rafael et al. (2006, p. 14) define LL as the presence of signage and notices both outside and inside public and private entities within a specific area, a definition that extends to indoor signage, differing from Landry and Bourhis (1997).

Gorter (2006, p. 1) argues that LL is not only about the direct observation of languages on signs but also their broader representation, which relates to identity, cultural globalisation, the dominance of English, and the revival of minority languages.

Satinská (2013) views LL as the public display of language through official and commercial signs, noting that English signage often represents global influence and prestige.

Scollon & Scollon (2003) contribute to LL by investigating geosemiotics, which studies the meaning of language and signs in relation to their physical location, indicating that the language on a sign can reflect both the community it is used in and broader sociocultural implications. For instance, an English sign might denote an English-speaking community or a foreign influence. Another pivotal influence is the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) on the grammar of visual design. This work provides a foundation for analysing visual communication, highlighting various visual elements.

As for semiotic studies on LL, Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) and Holsanova et al. (2006), Kress et al. (2006) discuss composition, comprising Information value, which relates to the placement of elements within the triptych– left and right, top and bottom (from general to specific), central and marginal (based on pragmatic distinctions between given and new, ideal and real, central and ancillary).

1. Salience, determined through visual cues.
2. Framing, indicating the presence or absence of framing devices that suggest elements of the image belong together in some way.

Backhaus (2007) stands out for offering the first comprehensive monograph dedicated entirely to LL. He also provides a general framework that distinguishes between the source or origin of a sign, the reader of a sign, and the building and transportation hubs, while minority languages are more visible in ethnic enclaves and religious institutions. This information could be used to inform urban planning decisions aimed at promoting linguistic diversity and inclusion.

In essence, the LL is constantly present in our surroundings, yet often goes unnoticed because people are generally unaware of the languages displayed on the shop signs. Over the past decade, there has been a growing interest in LL, as evidenced by various intriguing studies, like the examination of the Cods on shop fronts in the Old City of Jerusalem (Spolsky – Cooper, 1991), in Israel (Rafael et al., 2004), and the exploration of bilingual signs in Tokyo (Backhaus, 2005).

The notion of LL has been well-defined differently by varied scholars. To comprehend LL evolution, it is crucial to consider different definitions and approaches. The initial LL concept emerged in the late 1970s in Belgium, primarily to demarcate the linguistic limits between the French-speaking Flanders and the Flemish-speaking Wallonia. Similarly, in the Canadian province of Quebec, linguistic territories were delineated through language regulation on public signs (Backhaus, 2005, pp. 175-176).

Regarding LL definitions, Landry and Bourhis (1997) offer two complementary definitions: 1) "Linguistic landscape refers to the visibility and prominence of languages on public and commercial signs in a particular territory or region," and 2) "The language displayed on public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings collectively constitute the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban area."

Looking further than the definitions, Landry and Bourhis (1997, pp. 23-49) highlight that LL can aid two functions: an *informational* and a *symbolic* one. The informational function involves the display of various languages on signs, providing information about the sociolinguistic composition of a region and the relative power and status of specific language groups. Public signs and the languages they use act as symbols. The existence or absence of a particular language on these signs can influence how vital, valuable, vital, or alive a language group feels within a social and linguistic context. It is worth noting that the scope of the term LL can vary among researchers.

As for Dailey et al. (2005), LL encompasses that while billboards are a crucial element, the LL encompasses a much more comprehensive range of things. It includes things like advertisements we see at home, the languages spoken in our neighbourhoods, what we hear on TV, and even the language used by teachers in schools.

Rafael et al. (2006, p. 14) outline linguistic landscape (LL) as the presence of signs or announcements, whether situated outside or within public institutions or private businesses in a specific geographic area. This definition includes signs within buildings, in contrast to the perspective of Landry and Bourhis (1997).

Gorter (2006, p. 1) contends that LL encompasses not only the literal study of languages as they appear on signs but also the representation of languages. This representation aspect can be linked to matters of identity, cultural globalisation, the increasing influence of English, and the revitalisation of minority languages.

Satinská (2013) denotes that LL is the visual manifestation of language in the public sphere, shaped by official and commercial signage. She also emphasises that the presence of English on signs symbolises the globalisation of public space and carries connotations of prestige.

Scollon & Scollon (2003) make a significant contribution to the LL field by exploring geosemiotics, examining how language and signs derive meaning in relation to their physical placement in the world. They assert that the languages on a sign can index both the community in which they are used (geopolitical location) and sociocultural associations. For example, an English sign may indicate an English-speaking community but also signify a foreign influence.

Backhaus (2007) is recognised for presenting the inaugural extensive monograph focused solely on LL. Additionally, he establishes a foundational framework that categorises the elements of LL, including the origin of a sign, the individual interpreting the sign, and the sign's placement.

3. The Formation of a Linguistic Environment

The field of Linguistic Landscape (LL) has seen a notable increase in scholarly attention, as demonstrated by a wealth of research and publications. Itagi and Singh (2002, p. 255) distinguish between the noun "LL" and the gerund "LL." Backhaus (2007, p. 10) specifies that "LL" involves the strategic planning and actions related to language on signs, while "LL" represents the outcomes of these actions.

Rafael et al. (2006, pp.7–30) discuss the diverse actors who shape LL through their decisions and

policies, encompassing a range of entities from public institutions to individuals across various social contexts.

Edelman and Gorter (2010, pp. 96–108) categorise LL actors into five groups:

- I. Businesses that install signs contribute linguistic elements to LL.
- II. Individuals involved in sign design, production, and sales.
- III. Private individuals who display signs for events, typically using posters.
- IV. Authorities who influence LL through regulations.
- V. Observers such as pedestrians and drivers who engage with signs.

Ben-Rafael (2006) differentiates between the top-down and bottom-up aspects of LL, where the former includes authority-directed elements that often mirror language policy and practices, sometimes regulated by law.

Malinowski (2009, as cited in Gorter et al., 2012) explores the influence of various authorities and individuals on the top-down LL.

Cenoz & Gorter (2006, pp. 31–51) define a sign as any visible marker, counting each as a single unit, while Backhaus (2007, pp. 324–339) focuses on multilingual signs in Tokyo, defining a sign as any written text within a specific space. Both exclude transient signs like bus ads or T-shirt text. Seba (2010, pp. 59–76) argues that fixed signage should be considered as part of a broader category that includes mobile texts.

Rafael (2009, pp. 47–48) proposes four principles of LL structuration:

1. "Presentation of self," where actors use linguistic choices on signs to express identities, suggesting that prestigious languages will be featured in LL.
2. "Good reasons," hypothesising that language with positive associations are used in LL to align with audience values and make signs appealing.
3. "Power relations," indicating that dominant groups may influence language use, leading to their languages being more prevalent in LL.
4. "Collective identity," where actors express their identities and affiliations, especially in multicultural societies, suggesting that minority languages will appear in LL.

The study of LL has evolved, with authors redefining concepts and adding insights into societal multilingualism, building on Landry and Bourhis' (1997, pp. 23–49) approach.

Gorter (2013, p. 191) examines various aspects of LL, including language choices, hierarchies, and literacy.

The 2015 launch of "Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal" highlights the field's commitment to understanding the complexities of languages in public spaces.

LL research emphasises the importance of multilingualism and its ties to globalisation, mainly through the presence of English in LL, and explores "glocalisation" (Gorter, 2006, pp.67-80).

Blommaert (2013, p.144) contributes to LL studies by advocating for a geosemiotic and ethnographic approach to understanding the socio-cultural meanings of language material, treating signs as multimodal rather than purely linguistic.

Blommaert introduces "scale" as a metaphor for the movement of people and messages through coded spaces, emphasising the importance of "semiotic mobility" in understanding globalisation as a sociolinguistic phenomenon.

LL is analysed as both a geographical and social space, with "territorialised language" providing local

meanings and "deterritorialised language" organising trans-local trajectories (Blommaert, 2010, p. 213), influenced by discussions on linguistic imperialism and rights.

3.1. Types of Linguistic Landscapes

Landry and Bourhis (1997, pp. 23–49) identify several types of linguistic landscapes, which are discussed in more detail below:

A- Public Signs:

Qiannan (2012, p. 168) mentions that public signs are the text language for people in public places" is rephrased as "Public signs, defined by Qiannan (2012) as the text language used in public spaces. "There are several same expressions, including sign language, logo, sign, slogan, and so on" is rephrased as "encompass various forms such as sign, language, logos, symbols, and slogans. In addition, He (2019, p. 286) states that public signs, which means written language to be seen publicly in public places, are the most common practical language in human life" is rephrased as "He (ibid) further emphasises their pervasiveness and practicality in everyday life, considering them a prevalent form of written language displayed publicly. They are special writing styles that are open to and facing the public to achieve certain communicative goals" is rephrased as "These unique writing styles, designed to engage the public and achieve specific communicative goals, are characterised by their openness and accessibility.

Furthermore, Ding (2006, as cited in Ko (2010, p. 112), says that public sign refers to the type of language that shows what the public needs to know in public places, including signs, directions, road signs, slogans, public notices and warnings" is rephrased as "Ding (2006), cited in Ko (2010), categorised public signs as a type of language that informs the public about essential information in public spaces, including signs, directions, road signs, slogans, public notices, and warnings. Moreover, Luo and Li (2006), as cited in Ko (2010, p. 112), mention that the type of language displayed in public places is called public sign. It serves special communication functions and provides information and instructions. That kind of language includes road signs, advertisements, product brochures, tourism guides, propaganda materials and public notices" is rephrased as "Luo and Li (2006), as cited in Ko (2010), concurs with this definition, emphasising the distinct communication functions served by public signs. This category of language encompasses road signs, advertisements, product brochures, tourism guides, propaganda materials, and public notices, providing valuable information and instructions to the public.

B- Commercial Shop Signs

Retail signage serves as a multilingual public display, with the language selection reflecting the nation of its location. These signs may feature one, two, or several languages and are commonly observed by passersby, whether on foot or in vehicles. Positioned at the storefront, these signs not only mark the shop's presence but also play a crucial role in drawing in clientele. Oktaviani (2019, p. 10) notes that the names on these commercial signs are strategically designed to entice prospective customers.

Signs function as communicative tools, providing essential information that aids individuals in decision-making processes. According to Sebeok (2001, p. 11), signs fulfil multiple roles in our lives: they help us recognise recurring patterns, serve as precursors to action, and exemplify particular types of occurrences.

4. Types of Linguistic Landscape of Shop Signs

According to Scollon and Scollon (2003, pp.116-128), There are many different types of linguistic landscapes of shop signs. Some of the most common types include:

1. Monolingual

Shop signs that use only one language. This is most common in countries where there is a single dominant language, but it can also be found in multilingual countries where shop owners choose to use only one language on their signs.

2. Bilingual

Shop signs that use two languages. This is common in multilingual countries, where shop owners want to reach a wider audience. Bilingual signs can be used to indicate the languages that are spoken in the shop or to translate the shop name and product information into another language.

3. Multilingual

Shop signs that use three or more languages. This is less common than monolingual or bilingual signs, but it can be found in very multilingual countries or areas with large immigrant populations. Multilingual signs can be used to indicate the languages that are spoken in the shop, to translate the shop name and product information into multiple languages, or to create a sense of welcome and inclusion for people from different backgrounds.

5. Multilingual writing approach

Reh (2004, pp. 1-41) develops a framework for analysing and classifying the multilingual texts that adorn urban environments. This framework is built on three aspects of multilingual inscriptions: a) the dynamics of sign placement, b) the perceptibility of multiple languages, and c) the structuring of information within the signs.

The third aspect is particularly significant for this study as it assists in evaluating multilingual signage. It focuses on the organisation of content in multilingual texts, distinguishing four main patterns: a) duplicating, b) fragmentary, c) overlapping, and d) complementary.

Duplicating multilingual texts display identical content in several languages, indicative of "societal multilingualism" as described by Reh (2004, p. 8)—where various languages coexist within a community. This arises either due to technical communication needs, where not everyone can be addressed in a single language, or affective reasons, such as targeting specific groups in commerce or tourism.

Fragmentary multilingualism presents a complete text in one language with translations of select segments into another.

Overlapping multilingual texts offer different additional details in each language used. Although Reh (2004) differentiates between fragmentary and overlapping texts, Backhaus (2007) considers them similar, terming them mixed signs.

Complementary multilingualism occurs when distinct segments of information are conveyed in different languages, assuming readers are proficient in all languages to grasp the entire message. Reh observes that in Lira (Uganda), English-Low inscriptions often exhibit complementary and overlapping multilingualism rather than duplicating or fragmentary forms.

Reh (2004, p. 38) suggests that examining the types of multilingual texts and their communicative roles can reveal insights into a community's social structure, the status of its segments, and prevailing cultural norms. Duplicating multilingualism corresponds with direct and liberal translation methods. Fragmentary or overlapping multilingualism aligns with partial translation, while the absence of translation points to complementary information. Reh (2004) also differentiates between visible multilingualism, where various languages are apparent on a single sign, and covert multilingualism, which is not immediately observable.

Reh's (2004) classification of language and information combinations in sign texts has been instrumental in further LL research by scholars such as Alomoush (2015), Backhaus (2007), Edelman (2010), and Wielfaet (2009).

6. Methodology

Introductory remarks:

The present study introduces Kirkuk City's ethnolinguistic profile and the location from which the data was selected. It also focuses on the model of analysis in addition to the variables of the study according to which the sample will be analysed.

7. The model:

The current study will employ an eclectic model for analysing Shop Signs in Kirkuk, Iraq, following Scollon & Scollon (2003) and Reh (2003):

This model integrates frameworks on code preference and sign characteristics to analyse shop signs in Kirkuk, Iraq.

7.1. Data Analysis Levels:

1. Sign Level:

A- Code Preference (Scollon & Scollon, 2003):

1. Analyzes the dominant language(s) on each sign: Arabic, English, Kurdish, Turkish.
2. Identifies any mixing or code-switching patterns.

B- Sign Characteristics (Reh, 2003):

Categories signs based on:

1. Duplication: The same message is sent in multiple languages.
2. Fragmentary: Incomplete messages or reliance on visual cues.
3. Overlapping: Multiple messages layered or competing.
4. Complementary: Different languages convey different information.

2. City Level:

1. Analyze the overall linguistic makeup of Kirkuk's shop signs.
2. Considers the sociolinguistic (ethnolinguistic) context and historical factors influencing language choices.

Theoretical Integration:

1. Scollon & Scollon (2003): Their framework on code preference helps understand the power dynamics and social meanings associated with language choices on shop signs.
2. Reh (2003): His study of sign characteristics adds a layer of analysis, considering the visual and communicative functionalities of different sign designs.

Benefits:

1. Comprehensive analysis: Captures both linguistic and visual aspects of shop signs.
2. Multi-level approach: Examines individual signs, shop types, and the city-wide linguistic landscape.
3. Theoretical depth: Integrates established frameworks on code preference and sign characteristics.

Considerations

1. Data collection methods: Ensure representative sampling of shops across three main streets in Kirkuk as well as different areas and types.
2. Ethical considerations: Respect the privacy and sensitivities of shop owners and local communities.

This eclectic modal provides a flexible and comprehensive framework for analysing the linguistic landscape of shop signs in Kirkuk, Iraq. By combining insights from Scollon & Scollon (2003) and Reh (2004), you can gain a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and communicative functions of language in this diverse city.

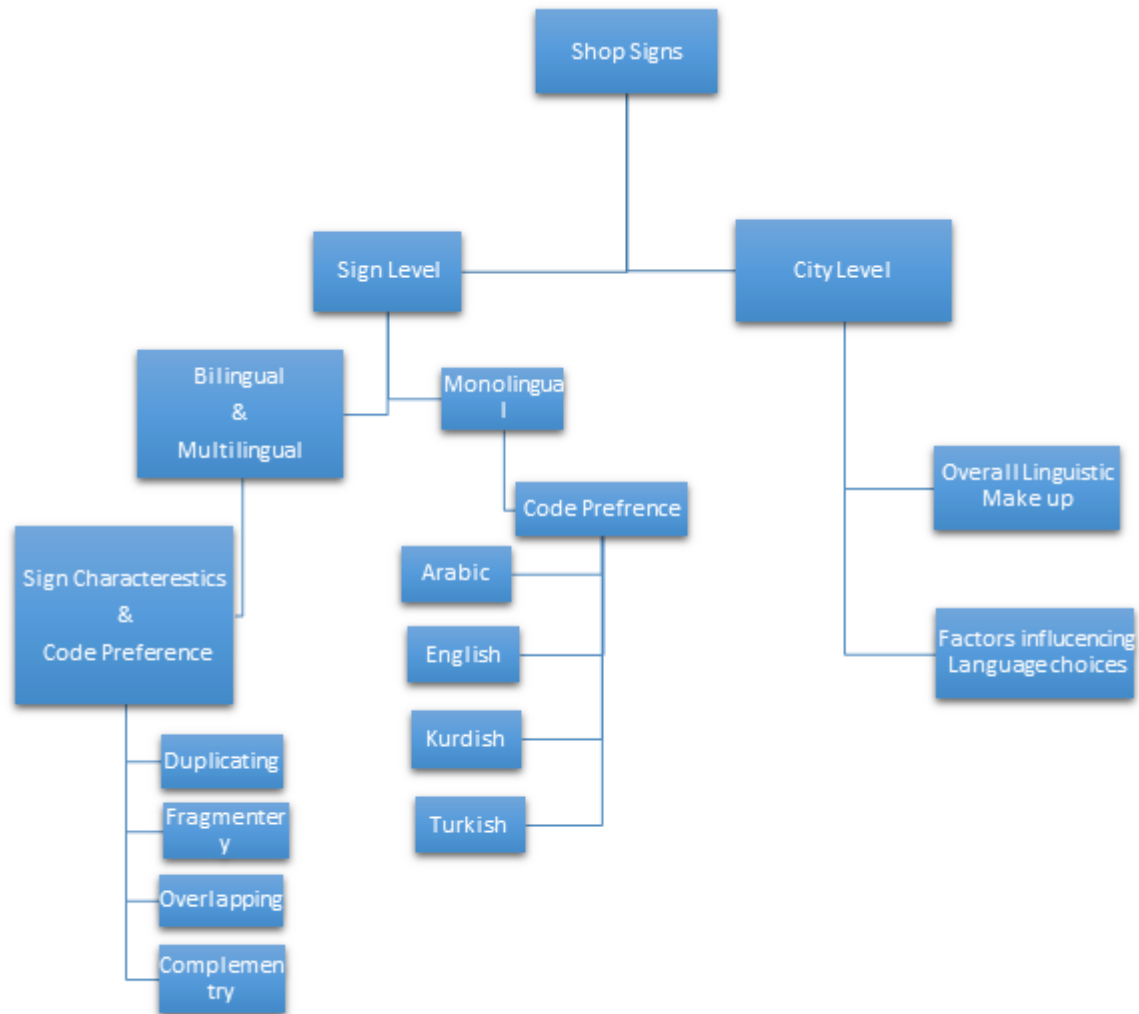


Figure (1) The Model of The Analysis

7.3. The Sample

Kirkuk, Iraq, boasts a vibrant tapestry of cultures reflected in its diverse linguistic landscape. This study delves into the fascinating world of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street, a prominent commercial artery in the city. By analysing data from 115 shop signs, we gain valuable insights into shop signs' Characteristics, Code preferences, and the unique identity of this particular street.

The shop signs of AL-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq (refer to Appendix 1-5 for more details)

AL-Muhafadha Street		
Shop Sign Type	Number	Percentage
Monolingual	79	68.695%
Multilingual	36	31.304%
Total	115	99.999%

Table (8) AL-Muhafadha Street Total Shop Signs Distribution

The data provided in Table (8) reveals exciting insights into the language used on shop signs specifically located on Al-Muhafadha Street. Here is a breakdown of the key points and some areas for further exploration:

Monolingual Majority: A significant majority (68.6%) of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street are monolingual. This suggests that a single language, likely based on the study's previous findings, might be sufficient for communication with a large portion of the customer base on this particular street.

Multilingual Presence: Despite the monolingual dominance, a noteworthy minority (31.3%) of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street are multilingual. This indicates that some shop owners recognise the value of catering to a more diverse clientele or promoting inclusivity.

Monolingual Shop Signs		
Code Preference	Number	Percentage
Arabic	43	54.430%
English	36	45.569%
Kurdish	0	0%
Turkish	0	0%
Total	79	99.999%

Table (9) AL-Muhafadha Street Monolingual Code Preference

Table (9) provides a fascinating look at the language preferences for monolingual shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq, with a sample of 79 signs. Here is a breakdown of the key points and some intriguing observations:

Near Equal Split Between Arabic and English: An almost equal number of monolingual signs use Arabic (54.43%) and English (45.57%). This is a significant difference compared to the dominance of Arabic observed on Baghdad Street. It suggests a more balanced linguistic landscape on Al-Muhafadha Street.

Absence of Kurdish and Turkish: Similar to the findings on Baghdad Street, there is a complete absence of Kurdish and Turkish monolingual signs.

Bilingual & Multilingual Shop Signs		
Sign Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Complementary	4	11.111%
Duplicating	16	44.444%
Fragmentary	13	36.111%
Overlapping	3	8.333%
Total	36	99.999%

Table (10) AL-muhafadha Multilingual Shop Signs Characteristics

Table (10) offers insights into the stylistic choices employed for bilingual and multilingual shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq, based on a sample of 36 signs. Here is a breakdown of the findings and some interesting observations:

Duplicating Most Popular: Similar to the overall trend, duplicating signs (44.44%) are the most frequent style, ensuring clarity and a separate presentation of each language.

Fragmentary Signs Common: Fragmentary signs (36.11%) are pretty prevalent on Al-Muhafadha Street, potentially reflecting a space constraint or a desire to focus on specific elements in different languages.

Complementary and Overlapping Less Common: Complementary signs (11.11%) and overlapping signs (8.33%) are used less frequently on this street compared to the overall data.

Bilingual & Multilingual Shop Signs Code Preference		
Code Preference	Number	Percentage
Arabic – English	32	88.888%
Arabic – Turkish	2	5.555%
English – Arabic- Turkish	1	2.777%
English – Kurdish – Arabic	1	2.777%
Total	36	99.999%

Table (11) AL-Muhafadha Steet Multilingual Shop Signs Code Preference

The data in the table shows (11) insights into the language combinations most frequently used on bilingual and multilingual shop signs, specifically on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq, based on a sample of 36 signs. Here is a breakdown of the key points and some interesting observations:

Strong Arabic-English Dominance: A dominant majority (88.89%) of bilingual and multilingual signs on Al-Muhafadha Street combine Arabic and English. This reinforces the trend you observed earlier, where Arabic and English monolingual signs were nearly equal.

Limited Use of Other Languages: Similar to the overall data, Kurdish and Turkish appear minimally in these combinations. There are only a few instances of signs using Turkish (5.56%) and Kurdish (2.78%) alongside Arabic and English.

8. Results

This study of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq, reveals a fascinating interplay between language and commerce. Here are the key findings:

- **Monolingual Signs:** A significant majority (68.7%) of shop signs are monolingual. This suggests that a single language effectively reaches a large portion of the clientele.
- **Language Preferences:** Interestingly, Arabic and English monolingual signs are nearly equal (54% Arabic, 46% English). This differs from the dominance of Arabic observed elsewhere in Kirkuk.
- **Multilingual Presence:** While monolingual signs prevail, a noteworthy minority (31.3%) are multilingual, indicating some shop owners cater to a more diverse customer base.
- **Multilingual Characteristics:** Duplicating signs (presenting each language separately) are the most common (44.4%), followed by fragmentary signs (focusing on specific elements in different languages). Complementary and overlapping styles are less frequent.
- **Multilingual Code Preference:** Arabic-English combinations dominate multilingual signs (88.9%). Kurdish and Turkish are rarely used, mirroring the findings for monolingual signs.

9. Discussion

These results paint a picture of Al-Muhafadha Street with a unique linguistic landscape:

- **Balanced Bilingualism:** The near-equal presence of Arabic and English monolingual signs suggests a more balanced bilingual environment compared to other areas in Kirkuk.
- **Strategic Multilingualism:** The use of multilingual signs demonstrates that some shop owners recognise the value of catering to a diverse clientele or promoting inclusivity.
- **Limited Use of Minority Languages:** The complete absence of Kurdish and Turkish monolingual signs and their minimal presence in multilingual signs warrants further investigation. Sociohistorical factors influencing language use in public spaces could be explored.

10. Conclusions

The analysis of shop signs on Al-Muhafadha Street in Kirkuk, Iraq, reveals a fascinating linguistic landscape shaped by a unique interplay of languages and communication strategies. Here is a summary of

the essential findings and areas for further exploration:

Monolingual Landscape:

Dominant Languages: A significant majority (68.7%) of shop signs are monolingual, with Arabic (54.4%) and English (45.6%) nearly equally represented also, the absence of Kurdish and Turkish monolingual signs.

Multilingual Presence:

Catering to a Diverse Clientele: Despite the monolingual majority, a noteworthy 31.3% of signs utilise multiple languages. This indicates a segment of shop owners recognising the value of catering to a broader customer base or promoting inclusivity.

Multilingual Communication Strategies:

1. **Duplicating for Clarity:** Duplicating signs (44.4%) are the most popular style for multilingual communication, ensuring each language is presented clearly and separately.
2. **Fragmentary Signs:** Fragmentary signs (36.1%) are also prevalent, suggesting space constraints or a focus on specific elements in different languages.

Language Preferences in Multilingual Signs:

1. **Arabic-English Dominance:** A substantial majority (88.9%) of multilingual signs combine Arabic and English, reinforcing the trend observed in monolingual signs. This suggests a potential focus on catering to both Arabic and English-speaking customers.
2. **Limited Use of Other Languages:** Kurdish and Turkish appear minimally (around 8%) in multilingual combinations, aligning with the overall data.

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