

## A Sociolinguistic analysis of landscape in the University of Ibadan

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### Abstract

This study of human communication has witnessed several approaches and it is recently witnessing the emergence of sociolinguistic landscape. Sign posts constitute the data for this study. Fifteen (15) signage were selected for analysis. The signposts were randomly selected across different places in the University of Ibadan community. These sign posts, which were of written and pictorial media, included both mobile and stationary signs. The study adopted Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication for the data analysis. Specifically, the data were analysed within the context of the SPEAKING grid. It is revealed in the study that social variables such as occupation, age group and gender are predominantly factors that influence sociolinguistic landscape. Beyond this, purpose of the sign also influences the emplacement of sign posts, especially in terms of key and instrumentalities. Given the fact that all the signs reflect the English language, this study claims that the sociolinguistic landscape does not only reflect the reality of the language use but also manifests the probable sociolinguistic variables that influence the intention of the sign-producers and the consumption of the signs by the sign-consumers. In the emplacement of signs, social (sub) groups are created. This reveals that social stratification is not only reflected in verbal means of communication; it is transferred into written medium and visual media.

**Keywords:** *Linguistic landscape, sign producers, sign consumers, emplacement, context*

### Introduction

Language is a systematic means of communication by the use of sounds or conventional symbols. It is the expression of human communication through which knowledge, beliefs, and behaviour can be experienced, explained and shared with one another. Sociolinguistic landscape also known as linguistic landscape (LL) is a sociolinguistic concept that shows the relationship between sign producers and sign consumers. Sociolinguistics explains the connection and relationship between language and society, language and its users as reflected in such major domains as language planning and policy, language choice, language maintenance and shift, and language variation (from the ends of both uses and users). It also presents meaning as co-constructed and contextual; a context that determines how meaning is made (intended and interpreted). However, "linguistic landscape research makes relevant such factors as occasion, setting, purpose, participants, participants' relationships, interactional goals, power dynamics in interaction, and background. These factors, which are usually interacting and interpenetrating, are all relevant, to a more or less extent, in its research". (Adetunji, 2013:43). Literally, 'landscape' refers to everything that is present and can be seen in a particular area but the concept of linguistic landscape has now been used to mean the "description and analysis of the language situation in a certain country" The availability of digital cameras and globalisation has now increased the interest of researches in the area. (Gorter, 2006)

Linguistic landscape can be traced to Landry and Bourhis (1997) when they distinguished between written language and language use as signs in public places. Studies on linguistic landscape have been published prior this time but was not given the term. The journal *World Englishes* published papers as a "Symposium on World Englishes and Linguistic Landscape: Five perspectives" (2012). There is also a series of academic conferences on the study of linguistic landscape. They define linguistic landscape as:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings; combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration. (1997: 25)

This definition makes it clear that linguistic landscape refers to language on signs in public space, that is, how language is used as signs in public areas to mean something. Going by this definition, language is not only seen as text alone but encompasses signs and visual images. They emphasized that the "linguistic landscape is a visible marker of territory, that is, it both reflects and reinforces prevailing linguistic practices in a given place". (Backhaus, 2007)

According to Reh (2004: 18):

The study of language on signs enables conclusions to be drawn regarding, among other factors, the social layering of the community, the relative status of the various societal segments, and the dominant cultural ideals.

However, Landry and Bourhis first used the term to refer to languages used in public signs. They defined it as "the visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region".

They also note that “it is proposed that the linguistic landscape may serve important information and symbolic functions as a marker of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting the territory”.

Itagi and Singh (2002) see linguistic landscape as a language use in its written form (visible language) in the public sphere. They modified Landry and Bourhis' definition to include items such as newspaper, greeting cards and other print media as part of linguistic landscape. This is to say that signage used on these items could mean more than the written text. This study therefore is an examination of the sociolinguistic landscape of signposts in the University of Ibadan campus with a view to discovering the sociocultural factors that influence sociolinguistic landscape in terms of its production and consumption within the University of Ibadan campus.

## Literature review

### Conceptual exploration of sociolinguistic landscape

Language cannot be mentioned without reference to the society. This is because it does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it is deeply rooted in a society. In the same vein, a society without a language would be impossible. Members of a society need language to coexist and relate with one another. One can therefore assert that language and society have a symbiotic relationship and depends on each other, that is, they depend on each other. This relationship is what makes scholars investigate and examine the codes of communication used and how members of society use these codes. To the sociolinguists, language is a variable phenomenon arising from its use in the society, thus aims to study differences in language in relation to differences in social groups. In essence, sociolinguistics sets out to determine how social institution affects language and how the varied uses of language affect social groups. This led to the distinction between sociology of language and sociolinguistics by Akindele and Adegbite (2005) as thus: “sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society while the sociology of language is primarily concerned with the study of society and how the society uses language”. They further assert that there is an overlap between the two. It is glaring at this point that society is a very important issue.

Shohamy and Waksman (2009) view sociolinguistic landscape as “public sign, seen, heard, spoken, thought (texts in physical and virtual environment). They expand the definition of the concept to include the text presented and displayed in the public space. This does not restrict the analysis of sociolinguistic landscape to only linguistic units but also considers any word that can be found in any public place.

Bolton (2012) as quoted by Akindele (2013:45) locates Landry and Bourhis' definition within "the material form of language in public display and public places." He states that it is the display of language in public spaces. Also, following Landry and Bourhis, Backhaus (2007:25) states that:

Every urban environment is a myriad of written messages on public display: office and shop signs, billboards and neon advertisements, traffic signs, topographic information and area maps, emergency guidance and political poster campaigns, stone inscriptions, and enigmatic graffiti discourse. These messages bring together a variety of languages and scripts, the total of which constitutes the *linguistic landscape* of a place

This definition however widens the scope of Landry and Bourhis' concept of sociolinguistic landscape; it pinned and limits their conceptualisation of the location of the concept to urban settings which means that they opine that sociolinguistic landscape can only be done in urban setting. Spolsky (2007) claims that the focus of sociolinguistic landscape research is "the choice of language in public signs in urban space," and noted that the term "cityscape" would thus be preferable to "landscape".

Sociolinguistic landscape (SL) has been seen in two major ways. It refers to the setting or environment of language use or the presence and use of language(s) in a geographical area (Bobda, 2007). It is always related to concepts such as linguistic market, sociolinguistics, languages use, diversity of languages or the linguistic situation of a particular area. (Gorter, 2006). In another sense, it means signs and linguistic objects that are visible in the public sphere (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara and Trumper-Hetch 2006; Landry & Bourhis, 1997). With this, an emphasis is placed on written language in a specified area.

The term sociolinguistic landscape consists of two words; landscape which refers to the land area or a piece of land in a particular territory that can be seen at a glance and sociolinguistics, which refers to the relation between language and society. Sociolinguistic landscape will then refer to the entire languages spoken in a particular territory, (Gorter, 2006) and how these languages are reflected on signs. Relevant to sociolinguistic landscape is the signage of a particular territory studied which means that all the written-down or written texts that can be seen constitute the linguistic evidence, which is the subject or focus of its analysis.

The concept has also been used to include product packaging, naming, branding and print material, etc. (De Klerk and Wiley, 2010). They observed that signs can be found in the way products are branded and can also pass a message across. Shohamy and Waksman (2009) on their own expand the definition of the concept by saying that “the most unique feature of SL is that it refers to text presented and displayed in the public space”. This is also supported by Pavlenko (2010) who states that sociolinguistic landscape research investigates “public uses of written languages”.

Researchers have revealed that there are three indicators to sociolinguistic landscaping which are: Location- Sociolinguistic landscape is always a deliberate act. Therefore it must be a place that is accessible to the public otherwise, it is not a sign. They must have access to it to be considered as material for sociolinguistic landscape.

**Medium-** The sign must communicate in a language, which may be written or visual and could be multimodal. If it is written, it is done as a monolingual (if it contains only one language), bilingual (if it is done in two languages, which may either be in translation or transliteration) or multilingual (more than two languages). The code must be in a particular language if it is a text.

**Carrier-** This refers to the surface on which the sign is put (single or dual surfaced). Two signs may have the same carrier. It may be mobile or stationary. Automobiles are mobile carriers. Emplacement is the condition for any meaning in sign.

### **Communicative functions of sociolinguistic landscape**

Landry and Bourhis (1997) identified two major functions of sociolinguistic landscape signs and they are: informative and symbolic function. Finzel (2012) referred to these functions as the symbolic and indexical functions. The informative function also known as the indexical function of sociolinguistic landscape provides information about the linguistic situation of the society, that is, language characteristics and language boundaries of a given language community. Thus, SL provides valuable information about the sociolinguistic composition of the language group(s) in a territory, that is, how language(s) in the territory are related to the society and how language varies according to different social groups. It is also used to supply or pass on information or ideas to participants, respond or react to it. For example in advertisement, it helps both private and public organisations to make known to the public their products and services. This is what Spolsky (2009) refers to as the indexical function, which is a reference to the languages that are actually spoken in a particular territory.

The symbolic function on the other hand helps to revealing the status or salience of languages (in relation to one another) within a given language community. It helps to determine power relation between languages. Linguistic landscape conveys meta-linguistic information so it indicates the linguistic power of sociolinguistic communities thereby determining the role each language performs in the society. For example, if a signage is written in the English language before other indigenous languages, it indicates that the society is a multilingual one and the English language is possibly rated above the indigenous languages in the society or showing the language as a unifying language.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research design**

The aim of this study is to investigate the sociocultural influence of languages on interpreting meaning(s) in sociolinguistic landscape. Thus, it is a descriptive survey. This research adopts both quantitative and qualitative method of analysis. This is suitable for our analysis because the study is an ethnographic study and allows the study to be explored by describing, analysing and interpreting how language is used in marking sociolinguistic landscape. The quantitative shows the counting and classification of the signs while the qualitative describes the sociolinguistic aspect of it.

#### **Data Collection**

This study focuses on the sociolinguistic landscape of an educational institution, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria and the language choice used in passing messages across through these signage which is paramount in creating landscape. The University of Ibadan as an institution of learning in Ibadan, Oyo State is located in the South western region of Nigeria is known to be a multilingual speech community where students from different backgrounds and ethnicity come together to learn and interact with one another. Sign posts constitute the data for this study. The sign posts include both mobile and stationary ones. The

photographs of these sign posts were taken with the aid of mobile camera. These sign posts were found in the University of Ibadan community.

### **Study population**

Fifteen (15) signage were selected and analysed using Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication as the main analytical framework. The collection of these signage cut across different places in the University of Ibadan such as Faculties of Arts, Education, Agriculture, halls of residence and the campus school gate. Also, the signage revolves different areas of endeavour such as business, advertisement, road map, and information among others.

### **Method of data analysis**

The data collected were observed and analysed from a sociolinguistic perspective; in order to understand how language and environment contribute to the social and cultural milieu of the University of Ibadan. The signs were of written and pictorial media, that is, they consist of words that show the description, direction or information of products or places. Attention was paid to the linguistic features of the signs, which reveal either relevant indexical or symbolic sign-consumer-oriented meaning. A sign is counted as one if it belongs to one carrier, that is, the object to which a sign is attached, which could be a door, a shop window, a building, and so on (Backhaus, 2007) while some signs may be a variant of the other but done on a carrier. Also, a sign is counted as belonging to one language either as occupying the whole carrier or as sharing the carrier with another language or other languages and are classified as either top down or bottom up. In analysing the data, frequency counts were used and the results of the findings were based on the alternatives, which attracted the highest percentage of the variables.

### **Theoretical framework**

The analytic approaches used as one can observe from the review have made the researcher to adopt Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication. These are the theoretical backings on which our study rests. Dell Hymes' (1972) Ethnography of communication is "concerned not simply with language structure but with language use, with rules of speaking...the ways in which speakers associate particular models of speaking, topics, or message forms, with particular setting and activities" (Coulthard, 1977). It focuses on the speech community and the way communication is patterned and organised within the unit. The theory came as a result of Chomsky's proposition of linguistic competence, that is, knowledge of systematic potential and grammaticality of sentences) with appropriateness, occurrence and feasibility. Dell Hymes' Ethnography of Communication states that in order to learn a language, one must not only learn the vocabulary and grammar of the language but the context in which the language is used as well; this accounts for acceptability rather than grammaticality. Ethnography of communication says language is an anthropological concern associated with a cultural affair. Hymes' Ethnography of communication accounts for participants during discourse, channels for transmitting messages, the codes for transmitting the messages, setting of the conversation, genres, topics, comments generated from discourse, the events, and characters. Ethnography of communication was propounded by Dell Hymes as a model for describing systematic link between language form and context within specific communicative events. This is due to the fact that the theory places emphasis on the sociocultural context of speech.

Hymes devised the acronym SPEAKING as a model to help the researcher in analysing how the sociolinguistic features help both the sign producers and sign consumers; to pass messages across and to get the intended message. This framework finds its relevance in this study in the fact that linguistic landscape is socioculturally created and interpreted just as the framework was designed to interpret language use within a given sociocultural context.

The ethnography of communication aims to do two things; first, it seeks to explore communicative behaviour in specific contexts and it describes how communication takes place in a given cultural setting and then attempts to understand how this operates in certain ways.

### **The speaking grid**

S- *Setting and Scene*- The setting refers to the physical, temporal circumstance and place and time of conversation while the scene refers to the cultural norms of the environment.

P- *Participant*. This refers to the people involved in the communication or conversation.

E- *Ends* refer to the expected outcome or personal goals of the communication, that is, the purpose of the communication.

A - *Acts sequence*. This is the message form and content of the communication.

K –Key refers to the tone, manner in which a message is passed across to other participants. The message could be serious, humorous, precise, sarcastic, indirect and so on.

I- *Instrumentality* deals with the medium and channel for passing the message across which, could be written or spoken.

N –*Norms* refers to the specific behaviour associated with communication and how these behaviours are viewed.

G -*Genre* refers to the specific type of events and utterances, such as lectures, poems, proverbs, prayers, riddles etc.

### Data presentation and analysis

Since sociolinguistic landscape focuses on signs as text and visual graphics created to display information to a particular audience, this is manifested in the form of finding information in places such as streets or outside buildings, walls, boards, street signs; they vary in form and size depending on location, intent and category. The sign must have a carrier where it is placed, this could be stationary or mobile, single or dual surfaced. In this study, most signs are stationary while only few are mobile because the readers in the community walk round to where the signs are emplaced while the mobile ones consist of cabs and buses which bear the location of where they convey passengers, names of different fellowships on campus, and different faculties and departments on campus. As it is the tradition of the states in the country that do have specific colours for identification, the University of Ibadan is an exception. The cabs there do not have specific colours but only put on their cab the location where they go as seen in figures 14 and 15

Table 1

*Distribution and sorting of signs*

Type of sign	Number	Percentage
Top-down	8	53.4%
Bottom-up	7	46.6%
Total	15	100%

Table 2

Category	Type of sign	Sub-type	Domain of sign
Top-down	Non commercial	School management	Advertisement, Admonition, Direction, Warning, Education, Events, Tourism, Safety and regulatory
		Faculties	
		Department	
	Commercial		Water, Hotel, Printing, ICT

Table 3

Category	Type of sign	Sub-type	Domain of sign
Bottom-down	Non- commercial	Organisations	Advertisement, Admonition, Direction, Warning, Location, Events, Occupation, Project, politics
		Religious bodies	
		Individuals and private ownerships	
	Commercial	Shops, Halls, Bill boards	Advertisement, Name of product and services

While some signs are used to make public announcements, some are used as warning or as regulation for students' behaviour (e.g. Figure 3). Also, some of the signs are used for symbolisation purpose; others are used to perform both informational and symbolic functions. For example, the top-down, commemorative engraved sign in Figure 20 is used to identify the location and to symbolise the commissioning of a new hall at the said location.

Identification of sign-producers with their signs sometimes add value to the sign's meaning component in the production of top-down signs but most of these signs have been observed to lack definite author which, makes it difficult for their readers to pin-point, identify or classify those signs to where they belong. Examples of such signs are Figure 3 on which the sign-producer (the University of Ibadan is in collaboration with the Gospel students' fellowship).

### Top-down signs

The top-down signs belong to the government or official (and its agencies) signs. The flow is usually upward to the masses. Kallen (2009) opines that “different situations determine the distribution depending on the speakers’ intention”. In this study, the top-down signs perform the informational function where they are used to name a building or institution as belonging to government or as being under government management. It is observed from the data that most top-down signs only state the name and location giving basic information.

While some signs are used to make public announcements, some are used as warning or as regulation for students’ behaviour (e.g. Figure 3). Also, some of the signs are used for symbolisation purpose; others are used to perform both informational and symbolic functions. For example, the top-down, commemorative engraved sign in Figure 20 is used to identify the location and symbolise the commissioning of a new hall at the said location.



Figure 1 Top-down warning sign (admonitory)



Figure 2 Top-down warning sign (admonitory)

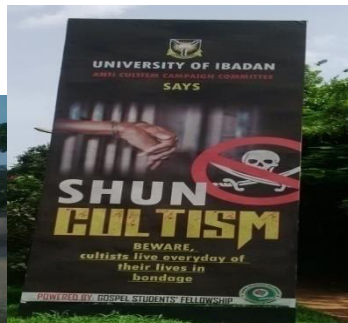


Figure 3 Top-down admonitory sign (admonitory)

Figures 1, 2 and 3 are placed around the Faculty of Arts, Microfinance and school gate of the University respectively. Though placed at different strategic places, they all perform similar functions. Figures 1 and 2 have only linguistic contents, and are made by one producer while figure 3 contains both linguistic and paralinguistic content which is dual produced. The image there gives a clearer picture of the content as it depicts the message being passed across. The contents bearing the name and intent of the producer concerns all categories of people in the University community. They all perform an admonitory function as well as warning to the readers.



Figure 4: Top-down warning sign



Figure 5 Top-down directive signs (two signs on a single carrier)

This sign contains purely linguistic forms placed on a main roadside serving as a warning to the consumers.

It is observed that most of these signs lack any form of self identification, that is, the producers of many of the signs could not be ascertained but the specific locations where the signs are emplaced such as the entrance of a clinic, dam site, The University’s conference centre respectively, make it easy for readers to intuitively retrieve and locate their (the producers’) identities such as figures 4 and 5

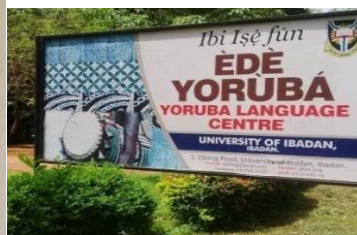


**Figure 6 Top-down admonitory sign (dual producer)**

This post is emplaced at a strategic place within the University as people from all spheres of the university have reasons to ply the road daily. The contents are such that concerns all categories of people in the University community. Both the linguistic and non-linguistic media on it point to its purpose inscribed as “U.I. creating a gender friendly space for all”. Apart from its sensitization and information functions, part of the content of the signpost also performs inviting and communicative function. This function is embedded in the inclusion of the email address; this will aid interpersonal communication between the producer and the prospective participants among the consumers.



**Figure 7 Top-down sign, dual purpose.**



**Figure 8 Top-down bilingual sign**

Figure 8 combines both English and Yoruba languages, the main function of the signage is to communicate in the Yoruba language but for the purpose of the participants and the community (being students and academic environment), the sign is translated so that it may communicate effectively. It also combines both text and image providing the address and other social information about the producer. Thus, the image corroborates the information as it depicts tradition.

### **Bottom-up signs**

Bottom-up signs are signs produced by private organisations. Individuals are classified according to the domain in which they are produced and may contain more information than the top-down signs because their producers may have the need to state more information than in the top-down signs. The commercial sign is placed with the primary intention of seeking some form of economic advantage or the availability of a product or service which can only be got by the sign-consumer who is willing to part with some means of exchange while the non-commercial sign is meant to serve other functions such as directing, informing, describing and so on. The sign then bears the name of the business, its type and location, the products or services available or rendered or both as the case may be and are emplaced close to the location for the sake of identification.



Figure 9 Bottom –up regulatory health sign

The sign is a monophonic sign containing only one language and the texts, comprised of directive speech acts, are used to ask the reader to take an action. It is placed with the intention of activating the intended populations (students). It is placed in front of hall of residence where it is intended to communicate to the hostel students. The place is considered a strategic one as the contents are such that concerns all categories of people in the University community. Both the linguistic and non-linguistic content communicates. The image points to the fact that though the location is a female hostel, both sexes can engage in the act and cannot be done by females only.



Figure 10 bottom-up admonitory and locative sign

This signpost combines both written and visual mode of communication. The text with the image does not convey the same message and requires some level of social intimation or else it does not communicate effectively. The text serves as an admonition while the image serves as identification of location.



Figure 11 Bottom-up commercial sign on stationary but mobile carrier



Figure 12 Bottom-up commercial sign on stationary but mobile carrier

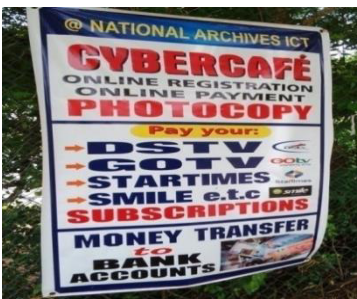
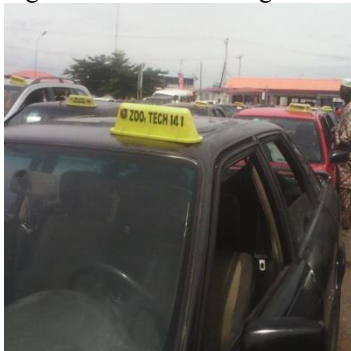


Figure 13 Bottom-up commercial signs (indicating only the name and the type of services rendered)

Figures 11, 12 and 13 are samples of private signage placed to give information about product and services. They are monographic signs that perform the identification function of languages used. The



two signage contain both written and visual forms to communicate to their readers. The images show that the technologies can either be purchased or repaired. This is to show the ends to which the signage are produced. Figures 14 and 15 are signs on mobile carriers. They reflect mobility



**Figure 14** Bottom-up commercial sign on mobile carrier



**Figure 15** Bottom-up commercial sign on mobile carrier

### **Discussion**

In analysing the data, the signs are divided into top-down (commercial and non-commercial) and bottom-up (commercial and non-commercial). For top-down non-commercial, the act sequence is dominantly, simple text having a formal tone, that is, the key and written mediums are deployed. The implication being that the consumers are largely literates who have certain behavior expected from them by the community. These features also characterize the signage with specified producer and those that have anonymous producers. However, certain sub-groups seem to have been created through the sociolinguistic landscape. These are the group of the motorists; observing the anonymous signage that are likely to be created for the motorists, one would realise that they are created for safety precaution and deal more with signs and less text. This is because the visual will easily catch the attention of the reader (presumably driving) and they don't need to read long sentences because they are safety signs. The images can easily communicate to them. Differently, when the signage has dual producer (produced by more than one author), the act sequence appears to be more complex; combining both text and visuals. For example: figures 3 and 6.

For bottom-up, the signs have a complex act for both formal and informal. There are certain bottom-up commercial signs that are expected to be complex since all bottom-up signs have complex acts but are not; these are signs meant for the motorists. The assumption is that the cab drivers need lesser concentration on a sign before understanding the message being passed across. In essence, the group created with this is that of the motorists which is similar in both categorisation of signs. Figure 9 created a gender-oriented group as the sign is emplaced in front of Idia and Queens' hall which are both female hostels. This suggests to readers that the signs are created for the female gender as they are the ones that do fall victim of sexual immorality. Thus, the sign is to inform them to take precautions and also activate a familiar sociocultural belief of the society's gender relations which specify that female counterparts are the ones to discipline themselves.

### **Sociolinguistic implication of the signs**

The data are presented as act sequence above while the analysis and typology are given after which other ethnographic features of SPEAKING follow. The preceding data analysis shows the physical setting or actual places where the signs are emplaced which is actually outside and considered as a deliberate act. The implication is that for effective sociolinguistic landscaping, the signs must be accessible publicly. Helot and Barni (2014:12) see this "abundance of signs in urban environments as 'visual pollution' and the display of languages on the signs as demonstrating the interconnectedness of different societal levels"

The signs are labeled as top-down (commercial and non-commercial) and bottom-up (commercial and non-commercial). All the photographs were taken in the University of Ibadan campus. The setting of all the signs was the main roads of the campus

For participants, they are categorised as occurring among the sign initiator, sign-owners, sign maker, the reader and government, (Spolsky, 2009). The participants include the authors that create them who are most likely to be the owner of the business being advertised or not in the case of a public organisation. They can then either be private (bottom-up), government (top-down), NGO's (could be top-down or bottom-up).

The interaction between authors and readers is a crucial issue for sociolinguistic landscaping because the intention of the producers must align with the interpretation of the readers. The other participants consist of the readers who are always referred to as the consumers. The bottom-up signs in the data have 53.4% while the top-down signs have 46.6% all of which are written in English language except for only one sign which is done in both languages for the purpose its emplacement. The implication is that the University community is considered an English community where everybody is expected to be able to speak and understand the English language. In very rare occasions, the sign is done in other languages; and when they do, they are either translated or transliterated.

The ends or goals of the business signs are twofold. One is to promote and sell products while the other is to provide the readers with information of the products and services. This may be through providing location of the business' contacts information. All signs have intended purpose for producing them, which is mainly to advertise, admonish, warn, regulate behaviours, describe products and services, direct, inform, convey rules and regulations, indicate and so on. The main purpose of sign is to communicate and convey information such that the receiver or reader may make cognitive decisions based on the information provided.

Act sequence on signs refers to the arrangement of texts, presence and absence of graphics and any other contextual information in order to obtain meaning from the sign. The letters on some of the warning signs such as figure 1 and 2 are written in bright colours, which make them visible. In case of bottom-up commercial signs, the phone numbers are given less prominence as compared to the name of the business and description of the services.

The key is diverse depending on the setting and scene of use; while some have serious tone such as one which attracts consequence or not just like figures 4 and 5 respectively, others may have light tone. The key is usually dictated or influenced by other aspects of communication such as setting and participants and in this study, it is determined by who produced the sign, whom the sign is addressed to and where the sign is emplaced.

The instrumentalities refer to choice of channel and forms of speech. The signs combine both written and visual mode in passing the messages across and use one code dominantly (the English language). While some signage make use of text dominantly, some combine both.

The norm in the speaking grid is the only feature that is subtle in the analysis of the signage as the general norms are shared by members of the University community. They are people that are believed to be able to read and write; and would understand the messages being passed across. The signs are appropriately used and interpreted in the context of use by the participants. This means that the participants are to some extent speakers and users of the English language even though the community is a second language community of the language. All the data belong to the genre of commercial and non-commercial messages.

## **Conclusion**

The University community is not marked by any ethnic group but with different people of varied backgrounds and ethnicity. English thus becomes the language of sociolinguistic landscaping of the community. As evident in the chapter two, English has become the world language and it plays a major role in sociolinguistic landscape as it helps in communicating messages to sign- readers in the community. By showcasing the predominant use of the English language, the study has displayed and reflected how attitudes towards language and how language itself can have a dominating effect on some people by others.

Although both stationary and mobile carriers bear the signs in the data, the stationary signs outnumbered the mobile ones. This is due to the fact the producers believed in the mobility of the sign readers and since the community is an academic one, most mobile carriers (buses and cabs) only bear the names of various fellowships on campus while the cabs only bear the location where they are conveying the passengers to as seen in figures 14 and 15. Also, they are of both written and visual mediums as they contain texts and images. Attention was paid to their linguistic features and when the signs are anonymous (not specified to have a producer), they are often classified as top-down because it has been observed that most bottom-up sign producers would want to identify themselves with their signs.

Signs are categorised based on the function they performed. They may be informative (conveying information about products and services and such facilities include maps, directories or instructional signs), directive (showing the location of where the services may be rendered), identifying (indicating services such as rest room signs, safety and regulatory signs) and warning (traffic signs, exit signs and so on).

The features of sociolinguistic landscape include basically the top-down and bottom-up which indicate different realities depending on their functions, languages contained, and code preferences. Top-

down signs are used mainly for orientating the sign consumers as people needing specific information about places, events. On the other hand, bottom-up signs are used both for informing sign-consumers about particular activities, places, availability of a product or service. The English language then becomes the preferred language in both top-down and bottom-up signs, occurring on 14 out of the 15 signs studied. As both signs reflect the use of the English language, they confirm the official-language status of English in Nigeria and in the University community, such that they show no single monolingual or monophonic Yorùbá sign, despite the predominant Yorùbá-speaking context of Ìbàdàn.

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