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## **15. Linguistic Landscape and Language Diversity in Strasbourg: The « *Quartier Gare* »**

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### **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to propose a first empirical study of the Linguistic Landscape of the city of the French city of Strasbourg. We have chosen to explore the notion of multilingualism in this specific urban space using two approaches: 1) *Linguistic Landscape* (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) and 2) *Urban Sociolinguistics* (Calvet, 1994; Bulot & Messaoudi, 2003). We know that the linguistic diversity in cities is forever changing, and the city of Strasbourg, although officially monolingual, is no exception and cannot be impervious to the process of language contact. Indeed, as in most cities in the world, different linguistic varieties, either endogenous or exogenous, coexist in this given space. In the present study, we attempt to explore this aspect of multilingualism as it manifests itself through examples of “urban writing”, and to analyse the relationships of power both at the social and symbolic level between the different languages displayed. Like other researchers before us (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009: 3) we assume that language in the environment is not arbitrary and random; “rather there is a goal to understand the system, the messages it delivers or could deliver, about societies, people, the economy, policy, class, identities, multilingualism, multimodalities, forms of representation and additional phenomena”.

In our attempt to analyse what written signs might say about Strasbourg, we were first faced with the problem of sampling (Gorter, 2006) and decided to limit our research to the analysis of one component of the Linguistic Landscape (LL), i.e.; commercial signs on shop fronts in one specific area known as “*Quartier Gare*”. This *quartier*<sup>1</sup> presents interesting particularities for our study: it is an old area, with a multiethnic population of mixed socio-economic status; according to the census figures of 1999 (INSEE), among the 12000 inhabitants, almost 1700 are foreigners (13,5%). The *quartier* includes many small shops run by people belonging to immigrant communities as well as small businesses linked to the railway station (hotels, restaurants, cafés and employment agencies). Many commuters and tourists pass through this area everyday to reach the city centre.

As part of a corpus of bottom up signs, these commercial signs will be envisaged as examples of individual discourses both from the point of view of their production and perception, and as such meeting particular objectives within a specific space. Thus we will question the different ways in which these examples of urban writing reveal and express various forms of linguistic and cultural diversity, and whether their production and display can be envisaged as individual strategies of demarcation, identification and appropriation of the space concerned.

## **Theoretical Perspective**

### *The Specificity of Urban Contexts*

When studying examples of urban writing such as commercial shop front signs, it is essential to take into account the specificity of the context in which they are displayed because it is the context which gives rise to their production and their perception. This is the reason why some researchers insist on the importance and particularity of the

urban context in its relationship to the social dimension. For example Sautot & Lucci (2001: 29) remind us that, “alongside with the present expansion of urban spaces, contemporary urban centres are seeing the growing emergence of numerous written signs [...] produced in order to be read by one person or many people”<sup>ii</sup>.

Therefore, because of the specificity of the urban context and notwithstanding all the possible definitions given to the notion of “city”, we believe it is still necessary to start from one minimal definition. Our approach is twofold: firstly it stresses the complexity and heterogeneity inherent in urban spaces and secondly, the double dimension of cities. If we take into account the distinction Lefebvre (1968: 92) made between “habitat“ and “to inhabit” (in the sense of “to live in”), the city can only be studied as an entity referring to two kinds of reality: “on the one hand, a city is static, somewhat constrained, at least circumscribed for a certain period within material limits; on the other hand, a city is dynamic, composed of its inhabitants and of groups which relate to one another” (Stébé & Marchal, 2007: 9). Such a definition, even if minimal, stresses the social dimension, “as far as it [the city] always produces and/or imposes some forms of identity in the same way as it creates necessary differentiations” (Bulot & Dubois, 2005: 3). This said, its inhabitants, administrators and other agents are aware that they belong to “an entity which is uniform although complex, but which can be circumscribed” (Bulot, 1999: 21). This is the reason why urban identities or more precisely the means, strategies and motivations to express such identities or to display them through written signs, can be defined “in relation to a quasi dialectical process between conjunction (the relationship to the community) and disjunction (the relationship to otherness)” (Bulot, 1999: 21).

*From Urban Sociolinguistics to the Study of LL*

Since the beginning of the 1990's, some researchers in France have been developing a new domain of research close to the sociolinguistics of discourse, which is referred to as "Urban Sociolinguistics". For them, the city is more than a place of study it is a complex, heterogeneous, and social entity which demands to be problematised as such. We owe the first publications in this area to Calvet (1990, 1994) who studied multilingualism mainly in African cities, and later on to Bulot (1999, 2001, 2003) who theorised this kind of research further when he studied the two French cities of Rennes and Rouen. Urban sociolinguists analyse the linguistic practices of speakers in cities, the way they use their languages, and how the languages in question are distributed in the urban space as well as how they construct and define borders within the city. In a somewhat similar approach, a recent study by Barni (2008) looked at the way migrant group languages in Italy enter into the Italian LL and the effect they have on this linguistic space; she explains: "The relationship with the physical territory is thus not only one of support or surroundings, a simple panorama in which the immigrant languages can be seen, but is itself a factor in the construction of the significance of these languages".

Because this domain of research insists on taking into account the complexity of the urban context we would argue it is relevant for our study in Strasbourg. Therefore we do not envisage the city solely as a space where languages are spoken, but also as a space where languages are displayed or more specifically written for a potential reader. As explained by Backhaus (2007), this implies a double dimension of production (LL by whom) and of reception (LL for whom), which means that urban signs are to be considered as discourses marked by practices, which in return mark these discourses as well. However at this stage of our research we propose to focus

mainly on the dimension of production and we can only suggest a first interpretation of a few signs from the reception point of view.

In order to analyse the diversity and heterogeneity of Strasbourg through the numerous examples of urban writings it offers, we also chose to investigate our context from the point of view of LL research and, like many other researchers, to start our analysis with Landry and Bourhis' s definition (1997: 25): “The landscape of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the LL of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration”.

From the first studies (Rosenbaum *et al.*, 1977) until the more recent ones (Gorter, 2006; Backhaus, 2007; Shohamy & Gorter, 2009) a specific attention has been paid to officially multilingual cities and regions and to the potential linguistic conflict linked to asymmetrical language varieties (e.g. Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht, 2006). Alongside these studies, others tend to look at officially monolingual cities such as Tokyo (Backhaus, 2007), Bangkok (Huebner, 2006), Basel (Lüdi, 2007), etc. We hope to contribute to this body of research with the present study on the French city of Strasbourg.

It is interesting to note that the research carried out in the domain of LL has not had much of an echo with scholars in France, even if studies on the way linguistic signs mark the public space are not totally absent. As mentioned above, Calvet (1990, 1994) studied what he calls “*the graphic environment*” of cities like Paris and Dakar, and more recently (2003) in Alexandria. Then Lucci *et al.* (1998) studied the city of Grenoble, Lajarge & Moïse (2005) studied Montpellier and Gonac'h (2007) focused on how the street names in the town of Vitrolles in the South of France were changed

after the National Front won the municipality (see also Blackwood in this volume for LL research on regional minority languages in France).

### **Methodological Considerations and Data Collection**

The city of Strasbourg is situated in the North East of France, on the left bank of the river Rhine. The main administrative bodies of the Alsace region are based there. Strasbourg is a border city with Germany, it has been the seat of the Council of Europe since 1949, of the European Parliament since 1992 (with Brussels) and it holds the title of Capital of Europe. With a population of 272,500 in 2005 it is placed 7<sup>th</sup> in population size in France. Its surface covers 78km<sup>2</sup>. Although officially monolingual the Strasbourg urban space is the site of much language diversity and contact between endogenous linguistic varieties (French, Alsatian, and to a lesser extent German) and exogenous languages (languages of immigrant communities, English, etc.).

According to the last census carried out by the national census bureau (INSEE, 2001), the city consists of 12.9% immigrants; this figure is much higher than the national figure which amounts to 5.6%, and the regional percentage of 7.2%. These immigrants originate primarily from North Africa (25%), Turkey (13%) and Germany (10%). As opposed to the 1960's when Italians immigrants were the most numerous, today few migrants come from countries such as Spain, Italy, Portugal and Algeria. Since 2000, most migrants in Alsace come from Turkey, Morocco and Germany.

As a micro context of cultural, social and linguistic mixing the *Quartier Gare* lends itself particularly well to an analysis of linguistic diversity and of the possible spatial

delimitations, appropriation and construction linked to the production and display of urban written signs.

Based on Gorter's (2006) distinction between top down and bottom up signs, we chose to restrict our analysis to one component of the LL of Strasbourg, i.e. commercial or shop front signs. As opposed to top down signs which are the product of powerful institutions, we would like to argue that shop front signs as instances of individual discourses can help us to understand the individual strategies of social actors, in our case shop owners. Indeed, apart from very ordinary shops and services, written signs often give material clues to some expressions of identity, either local or global. To quote Guillorel (1999: 71): "by naming a particular place or space, one makes it one's own and consequently one creates a territory".

Moreover Gorter (2006: 8) insists on the double dimension of these signs, which can both have informative and symbolic value. Indeed, one of the specificities of shop front signs is to constantly mix references to the products and/or services offered with some information about the identity of the author or owner, whether real or imagined (Malinowski, 2009). This is the reason why Lucci (1998: 169) considers shop front signs as paradoxical instances of writing: "Any author, when s/he writes, must at the same time give information and introduce him/herself, thus identifying messages are interdependent to referential messages". This ambivalent or paradoxical dimension of shop front signs has remained the focus of our attention for the analysis of the *Quartier Gare* in Strasbourg, because we believe it can provide us with some clues on how to study the way this urban area is marked.

The corpus of our study comprises an exhaustive collection of photographs of "signs", which can be read from the street. It includes the "signs" of the shop fronts in the 21 streets of the *Quartier Gare* as well as the area in front of the station and the corpus

comprises a total of 272 photographs. In some cases we have taken several photographs of the “signs” on the same commercial unit, which means that for our analysis these photographs had to be categorised in “units of analysis”. We did exclude some principles of categorisation based on the work of Backhaus (2007), and chose to follow the methodological approach used by Cenoz & Gorter (2006: 71) who explained that for their study: “It was decided that in the case of shops and other businesses each establishment but not each sign was the unit of analysis, that is, it was considered 'one single sign' for the analysis”. Following this principle, we ended up with a corpus of 170 “signs” on which we propose to base our analysis.

### **Analysis of the Shop Front “Signs” in the “Quartier Gare”**

In order to illustrate the linguistic diversity which is displayed on shop front signs in the *Quartier Gare* we approached the LL from the point of view of the various languages present. We considered both mono- and multilingual signs and apart from French, which unsurprisingly is clearly dominant, we found instances of the following languages: Alsatian, German, English, Arabic, Mandarin, Thai and Turkish. Rather than adopting a detailed quantitative approach (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006) we focussed our analysis on more qualitative issues such as strategies of demarcation, identification and appropriation of space by the written sign.

#### *A Clear Dominance of the French Language as an Expression of a Local and Global Identity*

It is not surprising to discover that the dominant language is French, which can be read on 87% (148 signs) of both mono- and multilingual signs. We see the dominance of French as a distinct expression of identification since, as explained above, shop front signs are a type of discourse, which holds specific referential values (Lajarge &

Moise, 2005). Some of the shop front signs in our corpus clearly show through their denomination that their ‘authors’ (Malinowski, 2009) chose to refer to the local area. For example one sign, *Bazar de la Gare (sic)*, refers explicitly to the station area. Other marking strategies were used in shop signs where a clear reference was made to the street or area where it was located. We found eight examples illustrating this strategy: *Délice de la laiterie* (referring to the former milk factory), *Grill national* (referring to the boulevard i.e.; *Faubourg national*), *Pharmacie Sainte Aurélie* (referring to the nearby square and Church), *Optique du Faubourg* (referring again to the name of the boulevard), *Pressing Saint Jean* (referring to the local church), *Épicerie de la Bibliothèque* (grocery shop situated in front of the city library) *Restaurant Bar le 9* (situated at number 9 in the *rue de la Course*), *Brasserie La Course* (in the street of the same name *rue de la Course*), and *À la ville d’Andlau* (situated in a street called *rue d’Andlau*). This type of local and spatial identification of shop front signs can also express a regional or national reference, but always in terms of more or less proximity: for example *Hôtel du Rhin* refers to the Rhine River, *Hôtel des Vosges* refers to the Vosges Mountains nearby and *Garage du Midi* to the South of France.

It is interesting to notice that the French language is also used to express a reference to global spaces and more widely to cultural identity. For example, five signs refer to geographical items such as cities, countries and continents and clearly define the cosmopolitan identity of the *Quartier Gare*: *Restaurant L’Anatolie*, *Restaurant Le gourmet d’Afrique*, *Bollywood Bazar (sic)*, *Délices d’Asie*, *Bosphore*, *La boutique antillaise*, *Restaurant Ô Liban*, *Hôtel Bruxelles*, *Restaurant Le Cappadoce*. Many cultural and symbolic references can also be found as in *Restaurant Gandhi*, *Pizzeria Le Vésuve*, *Le sable d’or [the Golden Sand]*, *Bar Perestroïka*.

### *The Power of a Proper Noun*

In order to identify and to distinguish themselves from other businesses in the area and for the purpose of marking their territory, some shop owners/authors resort to using either their family name or their first name. We consider this type of strategy as a direct expression of identity, whether real or imagined. The first objective of a proper noun is to identify a person, to distinguish him or her, to create a feeling of uniqueness and specificity. Lajarge & Moïse (2005: 109) remind us that a proper noun with no special signification begs the question of who we are. This strategy of identification can be found in ten signs in our corpus, all of them monolingual: *Annie coiffure*, *Boucherie Scherrer*, *Laura cosmétique*, *Raphaël coiffeur*, *Serrurerie centrale Scherer*, *Pâtissier-chocolatier Heiligenstein*, *Boulangerie-pâtisserie Jean-Philippe*, *Jade esthétique*, *Restaurant chez Michel*, *Restaurant au Hohwald/Chez Martine et Patrick*. We noticed that all the shops concerned here are small local businesses and we believe that the dominant display of first names suggest more proximity and a potential complicity. In this case it would be interesting to carry out further research linking the production and the reception of such signs and to investigate whether the affective dimension expressed does play a part in the reception of such signs. More specifically, a linguistic approach would question the syntax of the sign whether the Christian name is placed first or second and how the order of the elements in the sign could reveal a preference for the identity of the owner/author or for the nature of the shop.

*Puns, the Apostrophe, Shortening of Words and Elision: Towards a Personal Appropriation of Language*

Because shop front signs use specific syntactic structures in order to be different from one another they offer examples of further linguistic strategies such as puns, creative use of the apostrophe, or the shortening of words. These strategies are somewhat similar to those used in advertising and “then the shop front sign becomes unique; it attracts the eye through the display of its uniqueness and thus its identity” (Sautot & Lucci, 2001: 30).

Although it is not very present in our corpus, language puns (Pires, 2001) are particularly interesting to analyse. We found only five examples of word play in monolingual signs and in signs with structures where borrowings from other languages, mostly English, appear. Examples of language puns in monolingual signs need to be explained: *Infinitif Coiffure* (Hairdresser’s, the pun is in the word *infinitive* and its ending in *tif* which means *hair* in French slang); *Bar atteint* is a very nice example of linguistic creativity (*atteint* means *reached* and the two words pronounced together mean to chat, to sweet talk, to spoof); *Raj Mahal* (an Indian restaurant, the pun being on *Raj* and its pronunciation in French meaning *rage*) *Disque tu veux* (a record shop, a phonetic pun using the word *disque* and meaning “say what you want”). Apostrophes, shortening of words and elisions can also be found in seven signs: *Italmod* (tailor), *Chez P’tit Gros* (restaurant), *Salon Coiff’tous* (hairdresser’s), *Styl’Coiff* (idem), *Le p’tit break* (fastfood), *L’actif’s bar* (bar), *Troc’afé* (bar).

*Insert pictures 1a, 1b, 1c here*

The specificity of these word plays and puns is that they give rise to different meanings which are ambiguous and where the different interpretations are produced not only at the linguistic but also at the semiological level. Such puns can also be interpreted as examples of performativity: the authors of messages makes their signs singular through the appropriation of language, in order to inscribe their own

singularity in the urban space and in this way contribute to its structure. Moreover, we agree with Harris (1993) who explains that shop front signs should be envisaged at the intersection between the author's production (LL by whom) and the competences of the readers (LL for whom).

### *The Place of the Regional Language*

The regional language in Alsace is very commonly referred to as “the dialect” or Alsatian. Nowadays, the different language varieties spoken in Strasbourg and in Alsace are envisaged along a linguistic continuum that spreads from standard French to standard German (Bothorel-Witz, 1997). We need to stress here that we are referring to examples of written signs in Alsatian as specifically different from standard German. In the same way as Lüdi (2007: 7) in Switzerland, studying the Basel LL said “Swiss German in Basel is not only spoken but written as well”, we felt we could not analyse the LL of Strasbourg without taking into account the regional language, despite those who argue that Alsatian is not a written language (Huck, Bothorel-Witz & Geiger-Jaillet, 2008: 50). Therefore, as part of our study of an area where different languages are present, we believe the regional language should not be considered separately from other languages.

We found five examples of signs where Alsatian was displayed: “*A la ville d’Andlau Bierstub*” (meaning restaurant), “*S’Duwacklaedel*” (meaning tobacco shop), “*Le Schnokeloch*” (Brewery), “*Winstub Wynmuck*” (restaurant and brewery), “*S’Zwilling Stuebel*” (restaurant). As a first remark, we note that the use of Alsatian in shop front signs is directly linked with the kind of service offered since four out of the five signs refer to restaurants and more specifically to restaurants serving Alsatian specialities.

The strategies underlying these signs are obviously linked to identity in the way the language is used, and in one case where it states explicitly a linguistic competence: for example one sign reads “*Mir rede Elsassisch*” meaning “*We speak Alsatian*”).

*Insert pictures 2a here*

Even if the present study only takes into account shop front signs as examples of bottom up signs, it is important to explain that next to the French language, Alsatian is the only regional language present on top down signs, as in street names for example in our area of study. Such signs are always bilingual and French always figures on the top part. As Blanchet (2005) explains, this is not a unique case since from the 1990’s there has been a marked increase in road signs in regional languages in Provence, the Basque Country, Corsica and Brittany (see also Blackwood, 2008). Thus, it would be interesting to investigate further written signs in Alsatian, and to compare and confront the different strategies used to produce and to interpret these messages, both at the institutional and the individual level.

*The German Language in Urban Signs*

Although Strasbourg is situated directly on the border with Germany and for obvious historical reasons German has long been part of the social life of Alsace, the presence of this language in our corpus was very limited, quantitatively and functionally. This argues for a further study of the LL in Strasbourg, which would include a larger area of the city than in the present study.

German could be found in four signs in our corpus and we noted that these signs were all multilingual: *Snack **Imbiss** Nemrut* (fast-food restaurant), *Brasserie Snack MOKA **Imbiss** Rapid* (brewery), *Le Muguet II **Imbiss-Snack*** (fast-food restaurant) and *Allmilmö **die phantastische Küche*** (a shop selling kitchens). Apart from the last

example, the presence of German on restaurant signs can be explained by the strategy of “LL for whom”, meaning that it is intended for German tourists, all the more so since these three signs can be found in the same street, which goes from the station to the historic city centre. Therefore we would like to argue that such a strategy has nothing to do with the authors of the signs (“LL by whom”) wanting to mark or identify the given space, but rather simply by wanting to give some information to German speaking foreigners visiting the city.

### *The English Language*

It is no surprise to find that English is very present, at least quantitatively in the LL of the shop front signs in Strasbourg. Indeed, after French, English is the second most present language. In other words Strasbourg is no different from other cities such as Basel studied by Lüdi (2007), and many others. Even if the place and role of English has not been approached in the same manner in various studies, it is important to stress that the quantitative dominance of English in Strasbourg is not an isolated case.

We counted 26 signs where English was visible; among them only three were monolingual. Within our corpus English does not seem to be used primarily for information purpose, it is easy to understand and used more with a connotative function. As Piller (2003: 174) writes: “The audience can recognise that the message is in English and this activates values such as international orientation, future orientation, success, sophistication or fun”. Indeed we know that English brings up images of modernity and a sense of being fashionable therefore it is not surprising to find it in shops selling clothes or mobile phones as well as in bars. Five signs referred to clothes: *Sportwear Kayshop, Feeling, General Store, Urban street* etc.), eight signs to restaurants/bars: *Dream’s, Oriental Lounge, Jo and Jimmy’s club*, and two signs to

shops selling phones or offering photocopies and new technological appliances: (*Call @ phone, Top print, etc.*).

### *The Languages of Immigration*

#### Languages from Asia and Arabic

Languages from Asia, i.e. Mandarin and Thai and Arabic are present on six multilingual signs and more precisely on five restaurants and one Asian supermarket. Arabic is present on three signs (two grocery stores and a phone shop). In such cases, Lucci & Millet (1998) make a distinction between a knowledgeable and a non-knowledgeable public and such a distinction can help to understand the strategies used to mark, identify and appropriate one's space. For the non-knowledgeable public who do not have the necessary linguistic competence to decode the message, the presence of languages from Asia or of Arabic holds a more decorative function, since the main name of the shop does appear in another language; however, the use of these languages can also be deictic and simply meant to incite customers. Therefore it is not the content of the message, which is important but rather its presence which brings to mind distant lands and a certain exoticism, all the more since it is always made explicit by meta discursive language, for example: *Traiteur chinois, Spécialités thaïlandaises, Téléboutique, Boucherie Traiteur Alimentation*, etc. But when these messages are meant for a knowledgeable public, meaning people who know the language concerned, the strategy is to make the link to the community visible through the shop front sign or one of its components.

*Insert picture 3a here*

#### The Case of Turkish or the Power of the Family Name

As we explained above, proper names and more specifically family names are used first and foremost to identify and distinguish one person from another. Whether the family name corresponds or not to the real identity of the shop owner, because they appear “*to conform to a set of representations, connotations and associations which are shared by a social group*” (Lucci 1998: 172), they are noteworthy examples of marking and appropriating a given space. This is how the presence of the Turkish community could be identified through eleven signs in our corpus, not through the display of a message in the Turkish language, but indeed through the use of the family name and its intended impact on the LL. This is particularly relevant to our study because it could be one of the specificities of the *Quartier Gare* since this expression of identity through the display of Turkish names seems to be clearly assumed, whereas in other areas in Strasbourg it is not rare for Turkish shop owners to hide under less stigmatised identities such as a Greek one for example.

*Insert picture 4a here*

## **Conclusion**

It is difficult at this stage of our research to propose some clear concluding remarks. What we attempted to do in this study was to approach an example of urban multilingualism in one area in the city of Strasbourg, through instances of written language displayed on shop fronts. We decided to limit our study to one given area and to commercial shop front signs purposely. We tried to describe the LL of the *Quartier Gare* in as far as it could reveal the linguistic diversity of one part of the city and what it could signify for its inhabitants. We consider the specific area we chose as part of a complex and heterogeneous urban space where linguistic and cultural diversity could be displayed even in an officially monolingual context. Not only did we find a number of linguistic varieties displayed but our corpus also contained a

substantial number of multilingual signs, illustrating the growing underlying linguistic diversity of the city as well as different modalities of contact

Even if our study argues for shop front signs to be envisaged as a form of individual discourse produced by an "author", in our case a shop owner, and received by a reader, we are aware of Malinowski's (2009: 123) point that "[...] any readings of territorial or other far-reaching symbolic intent from code choice and positioning on signs may result as much from the *agency of landscape* as they do from the intent of any individual or group of people".

As we hope to have shown, the production and display of such messages are in no way trivial or insignificant. On the contrary, they are used to mark a given space even if only symbolically, to make oneself out as different from others or to express one's identity in various ways and through different processes.

Obviously, our approach would need to be more comprehensive and should be followed by a comparative study looking at both institutional and non-institutional signs, as well as at both the production and reception of these various types of written signs without forgetting that they can include physical objects giving rise to multiple readings and interpretations. We should also undertake a study of the LL in other parts of Strasbourg and compare our data with that gathered in the *Quartier Gare*, this in order to uncover the varying degree of visibility of languages in the city as whole. In the French context, a study of the LL in Strasbourg could bring a new understanding of the dynamic structure of this urban space - languages being part of this structure – and ultimately help us to go beyond the borders of these political, geographical and partly social entities referred to as *quartiers*. We would also need to further analyse the presence or absence, the concentration or dispersal of languages

across the city, on the basis of urban writings as concrete manifestations of asymmetrical language contacts.

Finally, because the presence of languages cannot be separated from the context of their display, we feel it is necessary to approach the LL from the viewpoint of its impact on the urban space while recognising that the urban space also constructs the LL, at least in parts. This is the reason why we chose to cross our approach of the LL with some of the theories of Urban Sociolinguistics.

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<sup>i</sup> The notion of “*quartier*” in French is difficult to translate into English. It refers to a specific area within a city, clearly delimited by certain streets, for example the Latin Quarter in Paris. The city of Strasbourg is officially divided in 14 “*quartiers*” for administrative management.

<sup>ii</sup> Our translation of: “Les centres urbains contemporains se caractérisent par l’émergence - qui va croissant avec l’extension urbaine contemporaine - de nombreux écrits [...] conçus pour être lus par une ou plusieurs personnes, dans un contexte urbain.”

All further quotes from French or Swiss German authors are also translated by us.