

Translingual Practices in the Linguistic Landscape in the Western Region of Kazakhstan

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Abstract—In spite of the sharp rise of research interest in linguistic landscapes worldwide, little attention has been given to the multilingual urban discourse of Kazakhstan. Being first in the investigation into the multilingual practices characteristic of the linguistic landscape in the western region of Kazakhstan, our study adds to the number of linguistic landscape analyses through a translanguaging lens. This paper explores translingual practices on local "bottom-up" commercial public signs by the example of four major cities in the region: Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau and Uralsk. The study uses a mixed method research design combining qualitative and quantitative analysis of multilingual urban texts accompanied by semi-structured ethnographic interviews with owners of commercial establishments. In our analysis, we specify various dynamic and creative forms of mixing the state Kazakh, interethnic Russian, international English and/or other local languages such as Uzbek and Arabic. We demonstrate how these languages are involved in the creation of symbolic meanings and attraction of potential consumers and contribute to the construction of the urban space of the western region of Kazakhstan. We provide illustrations of the ever-growing presence of English in multilingual written urban texts of the region as a symbol of modernity, high quality, innovation, technical progress and prestige. We also show the indexical potential of the Kazakh and Russian languages as markers of local affiliation and tradition, and the Uzbek and Arabic languages as symbols of the Turkic and Islamic cultures.

Index Terms—linguistic landscape, urban linguistics, translanguaging, commercial public sign, Kazakhstan

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, urban spaces often become the object of linguistic analysis as they are explained to provide a sociolinguistic context for the understanding of the dynamics of language use (Al-Naimat & Saidat, 2019). Linguistic landscapes are shown to reflect the language situation of a place as the realization of the official language policy (Alomoush, 2023; Ngampramuan, 2022), reveal the value and symbolic significance of languages employed in state and commercial public signs (Saduov et al., 2022), reflect the strategies used to preserve local languages and introduce local cultures on a global scale (Artawa et al., 2023), and contribute to identity construction (Im, 2023; Leimgruber & Fernández-Mallat, 2021). Although research interest in linguistic landscapes has witnessed a sharp rise in recent years, few studies have dealt with linguistic landscapes through a translanguaging lens. In their analysis of the linguistic landscape in Greece, Gogonas and Maligkoudi (2019) demonstrate how peoples' creativity and abilities to navigate between languages and language varieties allow for the articulation of views and critical attitude to the country's political, social and economic situation. Gorter et al. (2021) shed light on tensions arising from the interaction of local and global languages in one

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location. In their analysis of the linguistic landscape in Zambia, Costley et al. (2022) discuss the changing status of local African languages in a post-colonial context.

Moreover, despite a large number of investigations into linguistic landscapes around the world, the linguistic landscape of Kazakhstan has not received enough attention from sociolinguists. To the best of our knowledge, only two studies of the language landscape of the capital of Kazakhstan (Astana or Nur-Sultan¹) are known at the moment (Moore, 2014; Juan & Mukhamedzhanova, 2022). The first study, conducted in 2013, showed a significant discrepancy between the official language policy and actual practice. Moore (2014) demonstrated the symbolic role of the Kazakh language, which reflected the "desired" goals of the language policy of the state, while the Russian language reflected the real social and communicative practice of the population. The second, more recent study was devoted to the role of the Russian language by comparing its visibility on official and unofficial public signs. Juan and Mukhamedzhanova (2022) demonstrated that the Russian language has a high vitality and performs communicative and social functions in Kazakhstan, however, these functions differ from those performed by the state language (Kazakh). Compared to the state language, the communicative function of Russian is much stronger, and the social function is noticeably weaker. The authors concluded that Russian serves as the main communicative means in interethnic, interregional and international communication and at the same time represents communicative, economic and cultural values, serving to maintain political stability and national unity.

Due to the different power and representation of the Kazakh and Russian languages in different parts of Kazakhstan, the linguistic landscapes of cities from different regions are of great research interest. Our study is devoted to the linguistic landscape of the western region of Kazakhstan, which is important in terms of the functioning of multilingualism. On the one hand, the region borders on the Russian Federation in the north and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the south, which determines the active use of Russian as the language of international communication in the post-Soviet area. On the other hand, the region is the largest oil and gas producer in Kazakhstan, hence the English language acts as a global lingua franca in establishing and maintaining business relations (Kurmanova et al., 2023). Apart from the state language (Kazakh) and two international languages (English and Russian), the language situation of the western region of Kazakhstan encompasses languages of ethnic minorities or local languages such as Uzbek, Turkish and Arabic. The purpose of this paper is to explore translanguaging practices on local commercial public signs of the western region of Kazakhstan by the example of four major cities of the region - Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau and Uralsk. Being first in the investigation of translanguaging in the linguistic landscape of Kazakhstan, our research adds to the number of linguistic landscape studies based on a translanguaging perspective. In our analysis, we will show how Kazakh, English, Russian and other local languages are creatively mixed to build the urban space of the region and are involved in the construction of symbolic meanings and attraction of potential consumers.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Functions of Linguistic Landscape

The description of linguistic landscapes is a relatively new way of studying languages and language situations in the context of globalization, when the number of bilingual and multilingual regions in the world is constantly rising. Landry and Bourhis (1997) were first to suggest a definition of linguistic landscape as "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs and public signs on government buildings <...> of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (p. 25). Modern scientists expand this definition to include such elements as electronic signs and interactive information screens as part of the linguistic landscape of a public place (Gorter, 2013). Thus, the modern understanding of the linguistic landscape includes any kind of text in the urban space (Scherbakov & Proshina, 2023). The purpose of linguistic landscape research is to study the relationship between language policy and practice in the use of written language in the urban space. Features of linguistic landscape testify to the degree and forms of linguistic integration and mutual functioning of the components of the socio-communicative system.

Considerable attention in the study of linguistic landscapes is given to the investigation into their functions in urban spaces. The primary functions of linguistic landscapes are informative and symbolic (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The informative function is that the linguistic landscape provides information about the language situation of a given place, for example, which languages are used in this place, which of them is (or are) dominant, to what extent the local population speaks each of the languages, etc. An example of the informative function is the analysis of the linguistic landscape in Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Thailand (Ngampraman, 2022), which shows the relationship between the increase in the number of Chinese tourists in Thailand and the choice of languages on signs at the airport. Under the symbolic function is meant the symbolic significance of the language (or its variety), i.e. its value and status compared to other languages that are used in a given society. The symbolic function may have a wider meaning, for example, when the use of the Latin alphabet is aimed not at ensuring the understanding of names by native Anglophone speakers, but at emphasizing social prestige, since the names written in Latin are associated with foreign companies and standards (Aristova, 2016). Similar associations with the English language are also noted by other researchers. Thus, the

¹ Astana was the name of the capital until 2019 and has been since 2022. Nur-Sultan was the name of the capital between 2019 and 2022.

role of the English language in linguistic landscapes is often described as that of a symbolic resource and a marker of modernization, internationality, globalization, and social prestige (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010; Rivlina, 2017; Juan & Lifan, 2023).

In addition to expressing symbolic and cultural meanings, researchers also identify other functions of linguistic landscapes. For example, as a result of the analysis of the linguistic landscape in the capital of the African state of Cameroon, Yaoundé Pütz (2020) concludes that, in an ethnically heterogeneous and linguistically hybrid society, the languages employed on various kinds of inscriptions not only perform traditionally allocated information and symbolic functions but can also have social and political significance. In addition, some researchers highlight the decorative and attractive function of the linguistic landscape (Shcherbakov & Proshina, 2023), which is associated with the understanding of a foreign language as an element of increasing prestige and matching fashion trends. For example, according to the results of the study by Ong et al. (2013), language choice may depend on how a sign in a foreign language will look like, what associations it will evoke in potential consumers, and how these associations are able to attract visitors. One of the means of attracting potential consumers is language play, which is especially evident in the digraphy in inscriptions in urban public places (Rivlina, 2017).

B. Language Situation in the Western Region of Kazakhstan

The language situation in Kazakhstan is characterized by linguistic diversity, primarily due to the unique diversity of the ethnic composition of the population. According to the official 2009 census (Smailov, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d), there are 1,760,232 people in the western region of Kazakhstan who belong to more than 80 nationalities. In this territory, the most numerous nationalities are Kazakhs (1,402,039) and Russians (262,347). Other nationalities represented in the western region of Kazakhstan include Ukrainians, Tatars, Uzbeks, Georgians, Azerbaijanis, Lithuanians, Moldovans, Latvians, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Armenians, Turkmens, Estonians, Abkhazians, Bashkirs, Buryats, Nagais, Karakaplaks, Mari, Ossetians, Tuvans, Chechens, Chuvashs, Sakhas (Yakuts), Adyghes, Altaians, Arabs, Bulgarians, Dungsans, Koreans, Germans, Poles, etc. Being a unique feature of the mentality and interests of each ethnic community, multi-ethnicity creates a specific socio-cultural context for studying the language situation of the western region of Kazakhstan. The quantitative information about the main nationalities of the region based on the official 2009 census is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
THE POPULATION OF THE WESTERN REGION OF KAZAKHSTAN IN TERMS OF NATIONALITY

Nationality	Number	Percent
Kazakhs	1,402,039	79,65%
Russians	262,347	14,90%
Ukrainians	35,669	2,03%
Tatars	18,900	1,07%
Uzbeks	3,079	0,17%
Others	38,198	2,18%

The language situation in the western region of Kazakhstan, as in the whole of Kazakhstan, can be characterized as exoglossic (representing a set of languages), unbalanced (in which the components are distributed by spheres of communication and social groups), and four-component (which is characterized by the functioning of the languages of ethnic groups as local languages, Russian as a regional language, Kazakh as a macro-mediator, and English as a professional language) (Schweitzer & Nikolsky, 1978). Local languages (Azerbaijani, Tajik, Tatar, Turkish, Uzbek, etc.) are used mainly in oral informal communication, in limited communication areas only within ethnic groups. The two dominant languages (Kazakh, the state language of Kazakhstan, and Russian) are demographically and communicatively different: the Kazakh language has a demographic power due to the large number of native speakers and speakers of this language, while the Russian language is inferior in terms of its demographic power. However, in terms of its communicative power and in relation to the total number of actively served spheres of life of the population, the Russian language still remains a communicatively powerful language (Zharkynbekova & Chernyavskaya, 2022).

An outstanding feature of the language policy in Kazakhstan is the state's support for a multilingual regime conducive to economic planning. The language policy in Kazakhstan strongly supports diversity in society by promoting individual multilingualism (Syzykbayeva, 2016). The residents of Kazakhstan are multilingual and include Kazakh, Russian, English and other local languages in their everyday life. For example, as a result of the study of the language situation in Kazakhstan, such forms of bilingualism and trilingualism were identified as Kazakh - Russian, Russian - Kazakh, Russian - English, Kazakh - English, Russian - English - Japanese/French/Turkish, Uzbek - Kazakh - Russian, Kazakh - Russian - English - German/Chinese/Turkish/Uzbek/Korean, Kazakh - Russian - Uzbek - English, Russian - Uzbek - German - English, etc. (Shunkeyeva et al., 2020). The functioning of two or more languages in the context of the modern Kazakhstani sociolinguistic space allows us to speak about the uniqueness of the situation associated with a purposeful official language policy that promotes the idea of multilingualism of the residents of Kazakhstan as one of the most important conditions for socio-economic modernization. Moreover, an important role in the language policy is given to English as a lingua franca, which is most suitable for development in the country (Terlikbayeva & Menlibekova, 2021). The process of integration into the world community, access to modern technologies, the need to implement the results and achievements of world science and education in the sustainable

development of the country today require mastering the English language and raising its proficiency level. Thus, in modern literature it is customary to describe the language policy of Kazakhstan in accordance with the focus on the development and support of the "trinity" of the Kazakh, Russian and English languages (Delovarova & Gaipov, 2019).

In accordance with the policy of "trinity of languages" in the context of our study of the written texts of the urban space, it was important for us to understand how well the residents of the western region of Kazakhstan can understand the written speech in these three languages. In the official population census of 2009 (Smailov, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d), we found the information we were interested in. Figure 1 shows how many residents of the western region of Kazakhstan, in their opinion, are fluent in reading in the Kazakh, Russian and English languages.

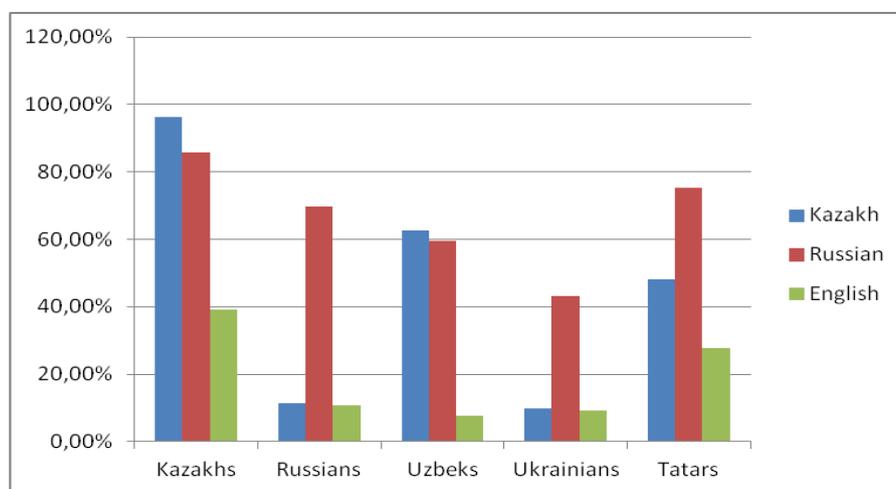


Figure 1. The Level of Reading Proficiency in the Kazakh, Russian and English Languages

As illustrated in Figure 1, the majority of the residents of the western region of Kazakhstan as a whole (mainly Kazakhs) demonstrate a fairly high level of understanding written texts in Russian; a high level of understanding written texts in Kazakh is typical mainly for speakers of Turkic languages, including Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tatars, etc. On the other hand, the results of the population census indicate that not all residents of the western region of Kazakhstan are fluent in English, just as a small number of speakers of Slavic languages (for example, Russian and Ukrainian) note a high level of reading skills in both Kazakh and English. Recently, as a result of the state's consistent targeted language policy to strengthen and spread the Kazakh language, researchers have noted the ever-increasing role of the Kazakh language, the expansion of its use and the growing tendency to study Kazakh as a non-native language (Zharkynbekova & Chernyavskaya, 2022). On the other hand, some researchers emphasize that English is still inaccessible to the majority of the population, and only a relatively small part of the wealthy middle class has the opportunity to gain greater access to English-language resources (Ahn & Smagulova, 2022).

C. Analysis of Linguistic Landscape Through a Translanguaging Lens

Translanguaging is defined as an approach to the examination of the behavior of multilingual social actors as a single linguistic repertoire that contains features (resources) from several languages (García & Li, 2014). It is used to describe the dynamic and creative uses of multilingual (translingual) resources in social and cognitive spaces (Li, 2018). In the context of globalization, multilingual speakers or writers employ their language repertoire not as a sum of discrete and disconnected entities, but as an interrelated and unitary communication system, which is characterized by the absence of clear boundaries between the contacting languages, forming a linguistic continuum, or language contact zones, characterized not so much by hybridity as by linguistic uncertainty, fuzziness, fluidity (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Li, 2014). Translanguaging allows multilingual speakers and writers to select and combine meaningful elements (resources) from their semiotic repertoire, despite the social and political boundaries between languages (Otheguy et al., 2018). Thus, the translingual paradigm significantly expands the possibilities and provides a helpful tool for studying and understanding multilingual practices, from the point of view of creative speech generation (Gritsenko & Aleshinskaya, 2015). In regards to linguistic landscape, translanguaging has been used to understand how languages and various semiotics interact in public spatial domains, and how the creativity and fluidity of resources discursively contribute to the meaning of the physical space (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Pennycook, 2017). Within the translanguaging paradigm, Pennycook (2017) views space "as part of an interactive whole that includes people, objects and space" (p. 278).

There have been several attempts to classify the ways how multilingual information is arranged on signs. Reh (2004) differentiates between four types: duplicative (when texts are identical in all languages), fragmentary (when only part of the text in one language is translated into another), overlapping (when texts have both a common part and a part containing different information), and complementary (when texts in two languages convey different information). When describing translanguaging in linguistic landscapes, Cenoz and Gorter (2015) reduce the taxonomy to two types of language combinations in multilingual signs: the "duplicating - fragmentary" type shows a separation of languages

(when the same text or some of its parts are presented in two or more languages), while the "complementary" type shows different forms of mixing languages (when different parts of the text are presented in different languages). Another taxonomy of translanguaging practices has been offered by Alomoush and Al-Naimat (2020), which is closely connected to the previous typology. In application to their research data, the scholars identify community translanguaging and impressionistic translanguaging. The former type can be associated with fragmentary multilingualism, which reveals the ethno-multilingual and multicultural repertoire of the visual space; the latter can be associated with complementary multilingualism, which reveals innovative uses of languages. In this study, we focus on the complementary type that presupposes translanguaging practices, or impressionistic translanguaging, as suggested by Alomoush and Al-Naimat (2020). Our analysis of the linguistic landscape of the western region of Kazakhstan provides insight into various forms of translanguaging practices within the complementary type.

III. DATA AND ANALYSIS

Our study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). It started with collecting and analyzing quantitative data and then was followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. In the first stage, we collected a "visual inventory" (Gorter et al., 2021) of commercial public signs in four major cities of the western region of Kazakhstan: Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau and Uralsk. In these cities, we used our mobile phones to take photos of signs on such frequently visited public establishments as cafes/restaurants, shops, pharmacies, dental clinics, and beauty salons. All of these public signs are commercial and informal, and they are installed by individuals and private businesses, i.e. "bottom-up" signs (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). Unlike "top-down" signs, which are set by the state authorities and reflect the language policy in the country or region, "bottom-up" signs reflect language practice. For the purposes of this paper, we limited the photo documentation to "bottom-up" signs containing two or more languages, i.e. multilingual signs. In total, our research sample consisted of 433 photographs.

The analysis of the information function of the signs consisted in identifying all languages and their combinations used in commercial public signs. All the signs were categorized for linguistic codes by two researchers, who coded all the photographs independently of each other. In cases of different opinions, they agreed on a common code. The symbolic functions performed by the use of languages in signs were explored by analyzing the language choices and the order in which languages are visually presented. In our analysis of the translanguaging practices used in multilingual signs, we followed Cenoz and Gorter (2015) to divide signs into those containing duplicating - fragmentary and complementary multilingual practices. The absolute majority of instances in our sample were based on complementary practices, which provided interesting examples of translanguaging practices. Taking into consideration the linguistic forms of such multilingual combinations, we specified the types of translanguaging complementary practices that are peculiar to our sample. In our analysis, we paid attention to how languages function in multilingual messages, what meanings are expressed by combinations of different languages, and what roles are performed by languages in these combinations.

In the second stage, we collected and analyzed 35 semi-structured interviews with owners of commercial establishments who created signs. The interviews were recorded after obtaining permission from the interviewees. Depending on the respondents' choice, 18 interviews were conducted in Kazakh, and 12 were conducted in Russian. The average length of an interview was 10-15 minutes, and the total length of the recorded data was over 6 hours. The interviews focused on the languages used in the name of the establishments, the reasons for choosing these languages, and the respondents' language proficiencies. The interviews were meant to shed light on the meanings behind the mixing of languages and the status of words or phrases in signs containing several languages. The interviews enabled us to explain the use of elements linked to linguistic repertoires and translanguaging practices (Pennycook, 2017).

IV. RESULTS

The analysis of language combinations in multilingual commercial public signs allowed us to determine the visibility of the state language (Kazakh), two international languages (English and Russian) and some local languages in the linguistic landscape of the western region of Kazakhstan. As the results show, the most frequently used language is English. English words or elements were found in almost all (95,8%) multilingual signs in our sample. Kazakh and Russian are rarely mixed, their combinations occur only in 15 instances (3,5%) of the sample. Still, the visibility of the Kazakh and Russian languages in multilingual signs is rather high: 56,6% and 43,4%, respectively. In general, the Kazakh, English and Russian languages are distributed between all types of commercial establishments. We also found single instances of using local languages such as Uzbek and Arabic in the signs of cafes and restaurants. The list of combinations of languages related to different types of commercial establishments used on commercial public signs in the four cities in the western region of Kazakhstan is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
LANGUAGE COMBINATIONS USED IN MULTILINGUAL COMMERCIAL PUBLIC SIGNS

Languages	Cafes/Restaurants	Shops	Pharmacies	Dental clinics	Beauty salons	Total
Eng+Kaz	48	69	30	32	41	220
Eng+Rus	58	24	20	36	40	178
Kaz+Rus	2	2	2	9	0	15
Kaz+Eng+Rus	3	1	1	4	1	19
Eng+Uz	1	0	0	0	0	1
Arab+Eng	4	0	0	0	0	4
Arab+Rus	3	0	0	0	0	3
Arab+Eng+Rus	1	0	0	0	0	1
Arab + Eng + Uz + Rus	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	121	95	53	82	82	433

Regarding the way multilingual information is arranged on the signs in our sample, we identified signs containing duplicating - fragmentary multilingual practices and those containing complementary multilingual practices (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015). Duplicating - fragmentary multilingualism is partially presented in signs when the information (or part of information) is repeated in two languages, for example: *шауһараз* /shashtaraz/ 'hairdressing salon'. An illustrative example of this type of multilingualism is the sign of the cafe *Ай Луна* (Figure 2) combining the Kazakh word *ай* /ai/ and the Russian word *луна* /luna/ both meaning 'moon'. Not only the word 'moon' is duplicated on this sign. To the left of the Kazakh *ай* /ai/ 'moon' is the Russian word *кафе* /kafe/ 'cafe', and to the right of the Russian word *луна* /luna/ 'moon' is the Kazakh word *кафеси* /kafesi/ 'cafe'. When asked about the meaning of the bilingual sign, the owner of the cafe, a Kazakh by origin, explained that because the cafe is located in Kazakhstan, in the city of Uralsk, initially the first part of the name, *Ai*, is the Kazakh word, and *Luna* is the Russian translation. According to the respondent, the two languages in the name are given in order to cater to interethnic relations peculiar to the western region of Kazakhstan. Besides, the bilingual name sounds beautiful in terms of phonetics.



Figure 2. An Example of Duplicating - Fragmentary Multilingualism

Complementary multilingualism is the most common type of multilingual practices on signs in the four cities of interest in the western region of Kazakhstan. This type of multilingualism can be illustrated by the name of the cafe *Kish Mish*, which combines Arabic, English, Uzbek and Russian languages (Figure 3). The owner of the cafe is Kazakh by origin and lives in Aktobe region, which borders Uzbekistan. According to his answers in the interview, the name of the cafe comes from his favorite type of seedless grape *kish-mish*, which means raisins in the Uzbek language. He chose this name because it sounds interesting and beautiful in Uzbek. At the same time, he is fluent in the Uzbek language and maintains a close connection with the Uzbek culture: the menu of the cafe contains mainly authentic Uzbek dishes, which are made by chefs from Uzbekistan. The Arabic expression *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* /La ilaha il Allah/ 'There is not god but God', which is fundamental in Islam, was written from the Quran, since the owner himself is a Muslim. Through this expression the owner informs customers that this cafe serves halal food. The English language (more precisely, the Latin script) is used as an international code that allows representatives of different countries and cultures to comprehend the meaning of the words written in Arabic and Uzbek on the sign. The word *чайхана* /chaikhana/ 'teahouse' is often used in the Uzbek language to name a specific type of a cafe, but it is also common in other Turkic languages. Here it is written in Russian, since there are a lot of Russian-speaking residents in Aktobe.



Figure 3. An Example of Complementary Multilingualism

Complementary multilingualism turned out to be the most numerous type of multilingualism in our sample. As a result of the qualitative analysis, we identified several subtypes of complementary multilingualism used in the linguistic landscape of the western region of Kazakhstan: derivative hybridization, graphic hybridization, transliteration, linguistic hybridization and hybrid punning. In derivative hybridization, word-formation connections are updated in the name of the establishment and the expressive effect of contrasting components from different languages is used. The technique of derivative hybridization is characterized by an emotionally expressive combination of a root morpheme of one language and a derivational morpheme of another language. Thus, the name of the children's clothing store *Балапанчик* /balapanchik/ combines the Kazakh stem *балапан* /balapan/ 'chicken' and the Russian diminutive suffix *-чик* /-chik/ (Figure 4). The owner of this store, Kazakh by birth, is the mother of four children. According to her, she opened this store while on maternity leave. And the name of the store comes from the way she affectionately calls her children the word *balapanchik*. The respondent does not associate this name with two different languages; in this word they exist together, forming an inseparable whole, which contains a certain emotional connotation. It is interesting that the store's sign, in addition to the Kazakh (*Балалар әлемі* /balalar alemi/ 'children's world') and Russian languages (*Сумка в роддом* /sumka v roddom/ 'maternity hospital bag'), also displays English (*balapanchik_aktobe*), redirecting visitors to the store's Instagram page.



Figure 4. An Example of Derivative Hybridization

Graphic hybridization is a graphic combination of lowercase and uppercase letters and/or alternation of the Latin or Cyrillic scripts. This subtype of complementary multilingualism, on the one hand, attracts the attention of the addressee, and on the other, brings additional meaning by mixing two words, taking into account their stylistic and linguopragmatic potential. Thus, explaining the meaning of the combination of languages in the name on the sign of the nail salon *НоГти ПиЛки* /NoGti PiLki/ 'nails and nailfiles' (Figure 5), its owner, a native Kazakh, pointed out a possible ambiguous interpretation of the use of the Latin letter *L* in the Russian word: it can be either an English letter or a Kazakh letter in the Latin script. The combination of the capital letter *Г* in the Cyrillic script and the capital letter *L* in the Latin script produces a certain visual image that attracts potential customers, creating a feeling of coherence of the written words.



Figure 5. An Example of Graphic Hybridization

The next subtype of complementary multilingualism is very frequent in our sample and presents a complete switch from the Cyrillic script to the English-oriented Latin script (e.g., cafe *Rahat* from *раxат* /rakhat/ 'pleasure' in Kazakh,

restaurant *Chernika* from *черника* /chernika/ 'blueberry' in Russian, beauty salon *Marafet* from *марафет* /marafet/ 'spit and polish' in Russian, shoe store *OBUVNOI RAI* from *обувной рай* /obuvnoi rai/ 'shoe heaven' in Russian) or from the Latin script to the Cyrillic script (e.g., store *Сити* /siti/ from *city* in English, beauty salon *Селебрити* /selebriti/ from *celebrity* in English, pharmacy *Нью Фарм* /nyu farm/ from *new pharm* in English, dental clinic *Мистер Дент* /mister dent/ from *Mister Dent* in English) via transliteration. In these examples, when completely switching to another script using transliteration, we observe a switch from one writing system to another. This form of translanguaging practices is based on the integration of linguistic resources and English-national digraphy (Rivlina, 2017). Commercial public signs containing words written in the Latin script are found most frequently in our sample, for example: cafe *Testo* (from *тесто* /testo/ 'dough' in Russian), cafe *Trapeza* (from *трапеца* /trapeza/ 'meal' in Russian), restaurant *Zamzam* (from *ززم* /zamzam/ 'zamzam, a sacred well' in Arabic), beauty salon *SEREBRO* (from *серебро* /serebro/ 'silver' in Russian), beauty salon *Blesk* (from *блеск* /blesk/ 'sparkle, gloss' in Russian), beauty salon *Krasivo* (from *красиво* /krasivo/ 'beautiful' in Russian), etc. As some respondents note, names that are written using the Latin (English-oriented) script, or that copy the English phonetic form in writing, look more prestigious and also evoke associations with high quality, professionalism and technology.

Linguistic hybridization is illustrated by words and phrases in our sample that combine words or their parts in different languages. For example, English is mixed with Kazakh in the names of the cafes *My Tandir* and *Bauyrdaq Qazaq Fastfood*, beauty salon *NUR SKIN* (*nur* in Kazakh means 'light'), dental clinics *DOS SMILE* (*dos* in Kazakh means 'friend') and *Шуна DENT* (*шуна* /shipa/ in Kazakh means 'cure'); English and Uzbek are mixed in the name of the restaurant *The Bakhcha*, which serves Uzbek food (*bakhcha* in Uzbek means 'garden'); English and Russian are mixed in the names of the children's clothing stores *Chado's* (*chado* is 'kid' in Russian) and *Baby Rai* (*rai* is 'heaven' in Russian), cafes *Coffee Rai Black* and *The Doner на углях* (*на углях* /na uglyakh/ in Russian means 'on coals'); Kazakh and Russian are mixed in the names of the dental clinics *Нұр Стом* (*нұр* /nur/ is 'light' in Kazakh, and *стом* /stom/ is a shortened version of the word *стоматология* /stomatologiya/ 'stomatology' in Russian), *Демеу-Стом* (*демеу* /demeu/ in Kazakh means 'support'), *Берекет Стом* (*берекет* in Kazakh means 'blessing').

Of utmost interest in our sample are signs mixing two languages (or scripts) for language play, particularly hybrid punning, which introduce additional meanings by singling out homonymous components. As examples, we will consider the names of the beauty salon *ЖасStar* and the barbershop *ZaMan*. The owner of beauty salon *ЖасStar* (Figure 6), Kazakh by origin, explained that he used Kazakh (*жас* /zhas/ in Kazakh means 'young') and English (*star*). Although his knowledge of English is only fragmentary, he used it on the sign, as he was initially oriented towards foreign customers. The owner also added that he is satisfied with the result, because this salon is often visited by Chinese and English clients. Regarding the combination of the Kazakh and English languages, he clarified that for him this name sounds like the Kazakh word *жастар* /zhastar/ 'the youth, young people', and the key idea of the name is modernity and connection with youth. In fact, he hires only young men and women who often have no experience, and the clients of this salon are mostly young people.



Figure 6. An Example of Hybrid Punning: ZhasStar

The name of the men's hairdressing salon *ZaMan* comprises three languages: English, Kazakh and Russian (Fig. 7). On the one hand, in the Kazakh language there is the word *zaman*, which means 'time, epoch, era'. On the other hand, the name of the barbershop can be interpreted as a combination of the Russian preposition *за* /za/ 'for' and the English word *man*. The owner of this establishment, a native Kazakh, initially wanted to name it *Man*, but the combination of three languages seemed more creative to him as it assumed two meanings based on homonymy: *zaman* as 'era' in Kazakh and *za man* as 'for man' in the mixture of Russian and English. In his choice of the name, the owner initially focused on the English language, since this establishment is a barbershop and specializes in men's haircuts. It is interesting to note that the owner speaks English only fragmentarily, and did not learn it purposefully. According to the respondent, the combination of English, Russian and Kazakh makes the name of the barbershop more attractive to multilingual addresses, emphasizing both their global and local affiliation.



Figure 7. An Example of Hybrid Punning: ZaMan

V. DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the linguistic landscape of the western region of Kazakhstan exhibits particular features. First of all, to create and understand multilingual messages in the urban space of interest it is not necessary to be fluent in all the languages used. For the most part, it is not the full forms of English, Russian, Kazakh, Uzbek and Arabic that interact in this urban space, but their individual linguistic forms. Accordingly, to successfully understand the multilingual messages of the urban landscape, residents of the cities of the western region of Kazakhstan mostly need a limited, fragmented knowledge of languages (e.g., English, Arabic or Uzbek), which Blommaert (2010) calls "truncated" knowledge (pp. 8-9). In this regard, the linguistic landscape of the region under consideration is characterized by truncated multilingualism.

In the context of translingual practices, of particular interest are the functional features of the local languages and Global English in the linguistic landscape in the western region of Kazakhstan. The results of the study show that Kazakh, Russian, English, Uzbek and Arabic play a significant role in the creation of modern commercial public signs. In the urban landscape of the cities of the western region of Kazakhstan, they perform not only an informative but also a symbolic function. The symbolic use of the English language leads to the fact that messages with English-language components have positively marked connotations of modernity, high quality, innovation, technical progress, prestige, etc. (Gritsenko & Aleshinskaya, 2023). In addition, English, especially in combination with other local languages, is used to attract attention by increasing the memorability of signs and to increase the attractiveness of the message (Scherbakov & Proshina, 2023). Being the main languages functioning in the western region of Kazakhstan, Kazakh and Russian are used in the multilingual urban discourse to express local affiliation and tradition, while Uzbek and Arabic words mostly refer to the Turkic and Islamic cultures. Despite the fact that English, Uzbek or Arabic are not used as an intranational means of communication in the region, and people who do not speak these languages may not understand the actual meaning of texts in these languages, the socio-psychological meanings arising as a result of the additional functions appear to be sufficient for the production and perception of multilingual urban discourse (Rivlina, 2017).

We would also like to share some observations regarding types of translingual practices, which are revealed through the subtypes of complementary multilingualism identified in this study, such as derivative hybridization. In our corpus, the most common pattern of derivative hybridization is hybrid words combining Kazakh roots and Russian affixes. This pattern has been previously described by other researchers as most characteristic of bilingual practices in everyday use in Kazakhstan (Zharkynbekova & Chernyavskaya, 2022). Unlike previous observations in everyday communication between young multilingual speakers in the western region of Kazakhstan (Kurmanova et al., 2023), in our research sample the English language is not witnessed to be used as the basis for further derivation using Kazakh or Russian affixes. On the contrary, English mainly enters the multilingual urban repertoire through such translingual practices as transliteration and linguistic hybridization, especially hybrid punning.

Examples of transliteration of Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek and Arabic languages using the Latin script deserve special attention. These cases are referred to by Proshina and Ustinova (2021) as "pseudo-English in Roman characters" (p. 43). The peculiarity of this translingual practice is that when switching to the English-oriented Latin script through transliteration, there is not necessarily a switch from the local language (Kazakh, Russian, Uzbek or Arabic) to English. According to the researchers, in such examples we observe an incomplete existence of two writing systems, when members of the linguistic community speak a Latinized variant of the Russian or Kazakh language, but at the same time cannot produce detailed texts in this variant. The same can be said about cases where English words are written using the Cyrillic script.

Hybrid puns can be correlated with the concept of such a bilingual strategy as "code ambiguation" as described by Moody and Matsumoto (2003) referring to the deliberate creation of units with an uncertain linguistic status, blurring the boundaries between contacting languages. Thus, in the name of the barbershop *ZaMan*, the graphic manipulation emphasizes the homography of the Kazakh root component *-man* and the English lexeme *man*, due to which an additional positively marked meaning is created. Such a pun is defined by Rivlina (2017) as a "translingual pun" belonging to the type of "translingual play on words", when it is impossible to determine whether the given part of the lexeme belongs to one or another language. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the name of the beauty salon

ZhasStar, where it is not obvious which language - English or Kazakh - the component *star* can be attributed to. Consequently, such examples illustrate the deliberate playful use of integrated language resources (Canagarajah, 2013) as a manifestation of translingual creativity. Androutsopoulos (2015) specifies the translingual activity in similar instances of written speech as "trans-scripting".

VI. CONCLUSION

This article examined the specific features of language interaction in the linguistic landscape of four large cities in the western region of Kazakhstan. As a result of the study, it was shown that the main languages functioning in the urban space of the region are the state Kazakh, interethnic Russian and international English languages. Moreover, these languages interact with other local languages, such as Uzbek and Arabic, to create symbolic and cultural meanings. The mixed method analysis enabled the identification of dynamic and creative forms of hybridization of urban texts in multilingual urban discourse, which contribute to the creation of new meanings and serve as a means of attracting the addressee's attention. In relation to written texts of the linguistic landscape, such creativity is manifested in the deliberate, most often humorous, alternation of different alphabets (Latin and Cyrillic), addition of emotionally charged affixes of another language to the Kazakh stem, transliteration of Kazakh or Russian names, as well as in English - Russian and English - Kazakh puns, when additional meanings are introduced through the identification of homonymous components. Despite the fact that English is not yet an intranational means of communication in the western region of Kazakhstan and its knowledge is often fragmented (or truncated), its ubiquitous and ever-increasing presence in the linguistic landscape of the region leads to the fact that it is no longer perceived exclusively as a foreign language but becomes part of everyday communication in the urban space.

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