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Notes on Linguistic Landscape: A Look at Several U.S. Cities

Silvia Betti

Topic: Linguistic landscape of U.S. cities

Abstract: This report presents some samples of the linguistic landscape of several U.S. cities based on an analysis of photographs of official and private texts in public spaces.

Keywords: linguistic landscape, signage, bilingualism, cities, Spanish, English

OBSERVATORIO de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos

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Cervantes Institute at FAS - Harvard University

1. Introduction

Landscapes, as they are commonly understood, have always represented something beautiful that we can "embrace" with our gaze, something unique that is characteristic of natural, artistic, or architectural beauty. But for the past several years, "landscape" has often appeared alongside qualifying adjectives that clarify the term and assign it to other fields, such as, in this case, language.

The goal of this study is to examine the urban landscape that reflects a very significant demographic reality in the U.S.: the presence of Latinos,[1] the country's largest "minority" population.[2] This study will analyze written texts posted in public places where everyone can see them: these cities' "linguistic landscapes" (hereinafter LL). As Barcia and Ramallo note:

> Present-day urban spaces, characterized by a social, cultural, identity, and linguistic hyper-diversity (Vertovec 2007), are a fascinating subject for investigation. Languages, codes, and cultures exist side by side in territories that were essentially monolingual only a few decades earlier (2015: 133).

When you walk down the streets of U.S. cities such as Miami, New York, San Francisco, San Antonio, or Los Angeles, to name just a few, it is normal to see signs, posters, and billboards in Spanish, in both Spanish and English, or in an amalgamation of the two. Miami is especially noteworthy as a city that is 64%

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[1] In this text, the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are treated as synonyms, even though they are not.
[2] Of course, in reality, these distinct national groups differ in their history, culture, class, etc.

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Latino and where it is not uncommon to see stores with a sign on the door that says, “We speak English.”

It is also interesting to study the presence of Spanish in the U.S. through the urban landscape, which is visible to everyone but only rarely captures our attention, since we are often too distracted to notice the linguistic richness that surrounds us. The passer-by, who is, in a sense, the involuntary and passive receiver of these urban texts, is not particularly inclined to semantic analysis (Vigara Tauste and Reyes Sánchez 1996), and does not typically reflect on “the whispers, murmurs, and cries of the city,” to invoke the suggestive title of the book by Ricardo Morant-Marco and Arantxa Martín López (2017).

The urban linguistic landscape (LL) demonstrates how public spaces are symbolically constructed through language and how this construction largely depends on the inclusion or exclusion of the languages spoken in certain territories, and those languages’ relationship with public spaces (Ben-Rafael *et al*. 2006; Shohamy and Gorter 2009). These texts also have an informative function: they communicate that an individual has arrived in an area where members of a certain ethnolinguistic community can find information and services in their mother tongue, which implies the possibility of communicating and accessing services in their own language when they are in another country or linguistic area (Bourhis 1992). For example, in our case, Spanish in a country where the principal language is English.

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2. Origins of This Study

But how can a researcher analyze this unique landscape? By what means is this achievable? The answer that initially seems like the most obvious and the easiest, the one that everyone can guess, is photography. Collecting a series of photographs may seem simple at first, but in some cases, there was no shortage of difficulties. For example, in July 2013, at the Greyhound station in San Antonio, Texas (see Image 1)[3], I was angrily informed by a police officer that photography was prohibited after taking several photographs. Image 1, taken at that station, demonstrates the use of both languages, but with a notably literal Spanish translation with Anglicized syntax. It uses an infinitive ("Por favor, esperar [...]," instead of "Espere"), "para," a preposition that is calqued from English ("Wait here for," "Esperar aquí para"), and a word order that calques English by placing the adjective before the noun ("el próximo disponible agente" instead of "el próximo agente disponible").

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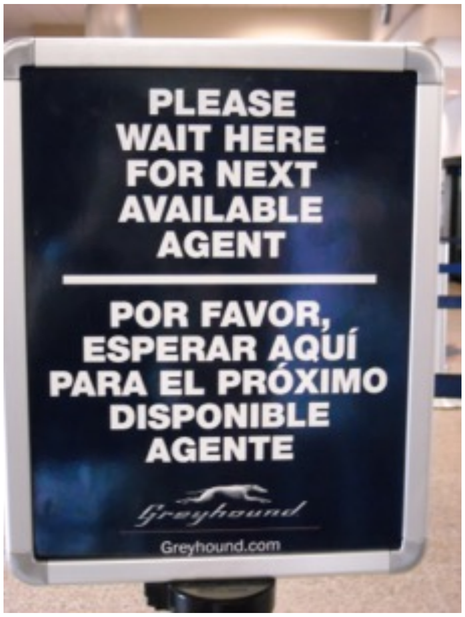
[3] All of the photographs in this study were taken by the author or are drawn from the private collection of Prof. Gerardo Piña-Rosales (this will be indicated in the photograph's title). I am deeply indebted to Prof. Piña-Rosales for allowing me to use his valuable and rich collection.

Image 1 San Antonio (Texas), July 2013. Bus station: Greyhound Station at 500 N St. Mary's St.


PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR NEXT AVAILABLE AGENT
POR FAVOR, ESPERAR AQUÍ PARA EL PRÓXIMO DISPONIBLE AGENTE
Greyhound
Greyhound.com

Other challenges, as pointed out by Gorter (2006: 2-3), include the researcher's inability to know with full confidence whether she has enough photographs to constitute a representative corpus. Therefore, neither the selection I present here nor my comments make any attempt at being exhaustive or universal. Instead, my aim is to present an *in fieri* study, an approach to the topic, and a series of personal impressions that will pave the way for other avenues of research.[4]

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[4] Research on linguistic landscape is expanding and studies are numerous in many countries, from which I will only mention as a representative selection, Gorter regarding the current status of the anglophone linguistic landscape; Castillo y Sáez y Pons Rodríguez, regarding Spanish-speaking linguistic landscape; Franco Rodríguez, on U.S. linguistic landscape and, recently, the list of papers included on *Lingue e Linguaggi* 25, on migration linguistic landscapes and, among them, the Italian one.

3. Preliminary Reflections

“Historic” Mexican-American inhabitants and the continual arrival of Hispanic immigrants have modified, to a greater or lesser extent, some parts of U.S. cities. In general, these modifications are effected in certain urban areas with immigrant communities.

When language is the most evident dimension of ethnic identity, the LL becomes the most “observable and immediate index of the relative power and status of the linguistic communities inhabiting a given territory” (Landry and Bourhis 1997: 29). The use of Spanish signs and texts in public spaces in many U.S. cities responds more to the need for effective communication, given the large number of Hispanics living in the country, than to an element of power or status, as Landry and Bourhis suggest. In a certain sense, it lends visibility to the communities that have always been present in parts of the U.S. who wish to assert their presence and identity, which are simultaneously mobile and contextual, and which, consequently, are continually recreating themselves in the territory.

In some parts of this vast territory, the widespread use of Spanish highlights the language’s ethnolinguistic vitality. The use of Spanish in the ads and signs collected here reflects the existence of a linguistic demand for representation of specific groups in the analyzed surroundings: Mexicans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanic populations.

This study will also bear in mind the words of Franco Rodríguez (2008: 5), who noted:

> The complexity involved in demarcating one instance of writing and its medium from other instances and their media in the linguistic landscape makes the concept of “sign,” as an object of study, difficult to manage. Therefore, this project prefers the term “text,” understood as all forms of writing displayed in public whose content is associated with the businesses, institutions, or individuals who posted them.

4. Analyzed Material

This study analyzes several photographs, all taken by the author in different U.S. cities. These images feature texts on public transit (buses), train and bus stations, schools, signs in public and private establishments, and, in two cases, non-permanent elements (a “wet floor” sign and temporary installations at the Harvard University Day of the Dead celebration). Photographs of non-static texts, such as bumper stickers and t-shirts, were not included, as they can change very quickly; nor were product tags considered.

Ads or signs are traditionally divided into two categories: *private* and *official/public* (Leclerc 1989, cited in Landry and Bourhis 1997). The former encompasses commercial notices in store and bank windows, as well as ads found on public transportation and in private vehicles (Landry and Bourhis 1997: 26); the latter, known as *governmental* signs, are the texts posted by national, regional, or municipal governments on the street to name roads, places, or government buildings, such as ministries, universities, schools, hospitals, town halls, subways stations, and public parks (Landry and Bourhis 1997: 26).

The private and governmental material analyzed here consists of photographs of texts in Spanish, in Spanish and English, or in a combination of both languages. Due to space limitations, this paper will only discuss a few representative examples.

These photos were collected over the course of five years, from 2013 until 2018, in San Antonio (Texas, July 2013), Washington, DC (June 2014), Denver (Colorado, July 2015), Cambridge (Massachusetts, October 2015), Miami (Florida, March and July 2016), Chicago (Illinois, July 2017), and in New York City and surrounding areas (March 2015, June 2016, February 2017, April 2018).

No specific criteria were applied for the selection of photographs from streets, schools, public transit or other establishments presented here; these images are merely a representative sample.

This analysis is only intended to be a "glance" at the LL in certain areas of some U.S. cities. In some cases, gathering this collection of photographs has posed challenges, such as those described above, and other difficulties owing to the movable nature of some texts in the LL; it goes without saying that the city changes every day, and the messages that appear in a given area are often not permanent.

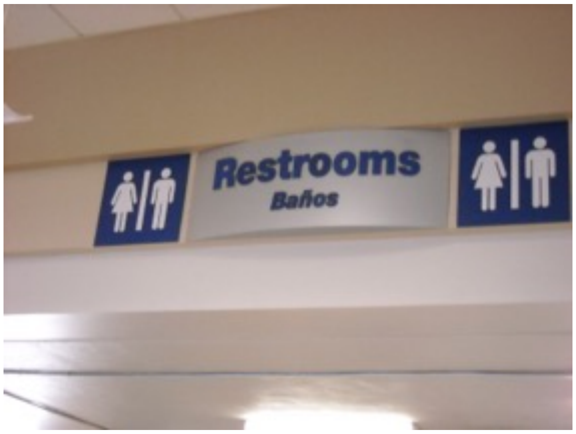
We will attempt to decode the texts found in public spaces; that is, texts that reflect the presence of Spanish in the U.S. and that raise the possibility of making visible the population that has always been present in certain parts of the country, as well as immigrant populations, given that, as Castillo and Sáez note (2013: 14): "[...] the LL is a symptom of a language's vitality, or of the ethnolinguistic vitality of a community in a given territory."

Finally, a distinction is made between official texts posted by institutions, associations, etc., and private texts, because one would expect official texts to contain formal writing (in terms of grammar, spelling, and word choice) and eschew amalgamations. However, many instances demonstrate that this criterion is disregarded, as we will see in the commentary below.

5. The Linguistic Landscape

Image 2, like Image 1, was taken at the San Antonio (Texas) Greyhound Station. The written and visual language appear alongside one another. In fact, multimodality is typical of the LL.

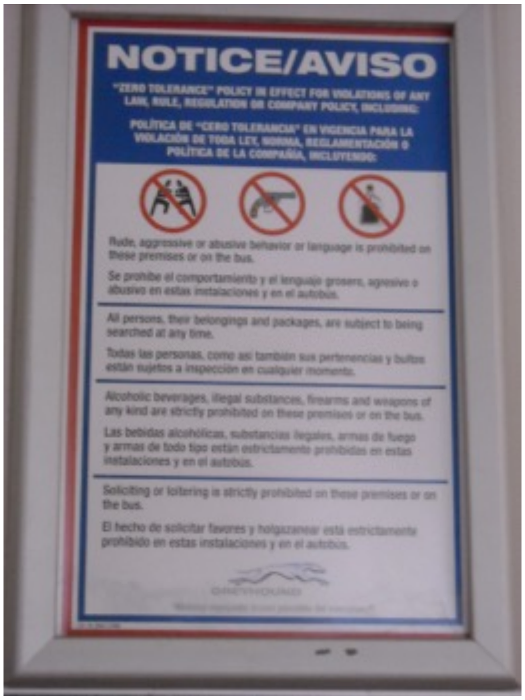
Image 2. San Antonio (Texas), July 2013. Bus station: Greyhound Station at 500 N St. Mary's St.



The informational text consists not just of a blue written element on a white background, but also of symbols used in non-verbal communication; that is, stylized figures of a woman and a man (this time in white on a blue background, in contrast with the written element), separated by a vertical bar—to indicate two separate places—and repeated on both sides of the text. The English information is presented in larger text, highlighting that it is the country's principal language; the Spanish text is smaller and written in italics. The Spanish translation may be superfluous in this case, since the image conveys the meaning. However, we believe that the inclusion of Spanish demonstrates consideration of San Antonio's Hispanic population, which reached 950,000 in 2017, according to U.S. Census data. Furthermore, the written medium and its design influence the way in which individuals interact.

In this regard, Huebner (2006) highlights that determining the prominence of one language in a text can be problematic, as the placement of the text and the size of the source can be counterbalanced by other characteristics, such as color, images, and the amount of text. Studies indicate that, consciously or unconsciously, the choice and placement of languages in individual texts generate meaning.

Image 3. “Zero tolerance” bilingual notice. San Antonio (Texas), July 2013. Bus station: Greyhound Station at 500 N St. Mary's St.



NOTICE/AVISO

"ZERO TOLERANCE" POLICY IN EFFECT FOR VIOLATIONS OF ANY LAW, RULE, REGULATION OR COMPANY POLICY, INCLUDING:

POLÍTICA DE "CERO TOLERANCIA" EN VIGENCIA PARA LA VIOLACIÓN DE TODA LEY, NORMA, REGLAMENTACIÓN O POLÍTICA DE LA COMPAÑÍA, INCLUYENDO:

Rude, aggressive or abusive behavior or language is prohibited on these premises or on the bus.

Se prohíbe el comportamiento y el lenguaje grosero, agresivo o abusivo en estas instalaciones y en el autobús.

All persons, their belongings and packages, are subject to being searched at any time.

Todas las personas, como así también sus pertenencias y bultos están sujetos a inspección en cualquier momento.

Alcoholic beverages, ilegal substances, firearms and weapons of any kind are strictly prohibited on these premises or on the bus.

Las bebidas alcohólicas, substancias ilegales, armas de fuego y armas de todo tipo están estrictamente prohibidas en estas instalaciones y en el autobús.

Soliciting or loitering is strictly prohibited on these premises or on the bus.

El hecho de solicitar favores y holgazanear está estrictamente prohibido en estas instalaciones y en el autobús.

GREYHOUND

The notice in Image 3—the “Zero tolerance” policy posted at the same Greyhound station—is bilingual in addition to signaling the concept of prohibition by combining a geometric shape and the color red, which encircle a symbol or pictograph that, in this case, indicates dangerous, banned behaviors. Thus, this series of important recommendations is accessible in the two main languages used on a daily basis in San Antonio, a place that some newspaper headlines have dubbed the Latino city *par excellence*.[5] The text includes several English calques, beginning with the title: “Cero tolerancia” instead of “Tolerancia cero,” and “abusive language” translated as “lenguaje abusivo” (a term that is also used in some Latin American countries). The preposition “para” is used instead of “por,” and the gerund “incluyendo” calques English syntax.

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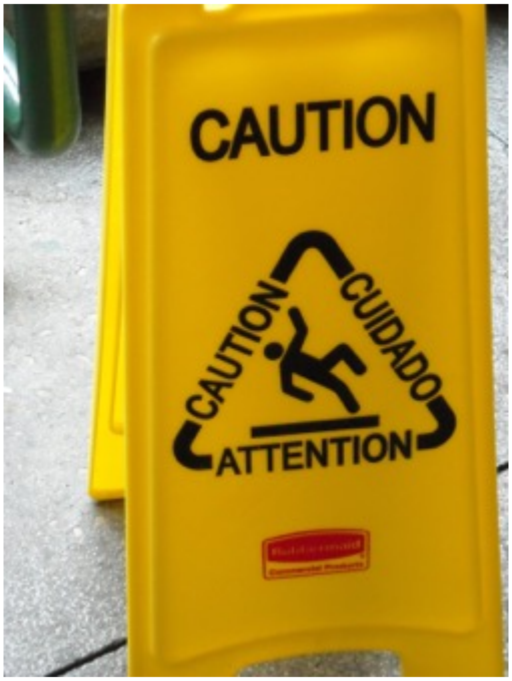
[5] See, for example, the headline “San Antonio, una ciudad latina por excelencia.” San Antonio, Texas. *PRNewswire,* February 17, 2011. Available at: https://bit.ly/2HYZ6xS [Accessed 5/29/2018].

Interestingly, the English “Soliciting or loitering [...]” is rendered as “El hecho de solicitar favores y holgazanear [...].” The translation of the English “soliciting” as “solicitar favores” is ambiguous, as it is unclear if the Spanish refers to offering sexual favors (i.e. engaging in prostitution). Furthermore, the English disjunctive conjunction “or” is translated to the Spanish coordinating conjunction “y,” adding an element rather than opposing it.

Image 4. San Antonio (Texas), July 2013. Bus station: Greyhound Station at 500 N St. Mary's St.



The text in Image 4 (a “wet floor” warning) merits discussion even though it is a temporary notice, as such warnings are often posted in public spaces. The text against a yellow background (typical of warning sings) surrounds a stylized drawing of a figure slipping on the floor. In English, there is linguistic reinforcement, as the English exhortation to be careful appears twice: “Caution,” then “Attention,” whereas the Spanish “Cuidado” appears only once.[6]

Image 5.1. Interior of bus in Denver (Colorado), July 2015.

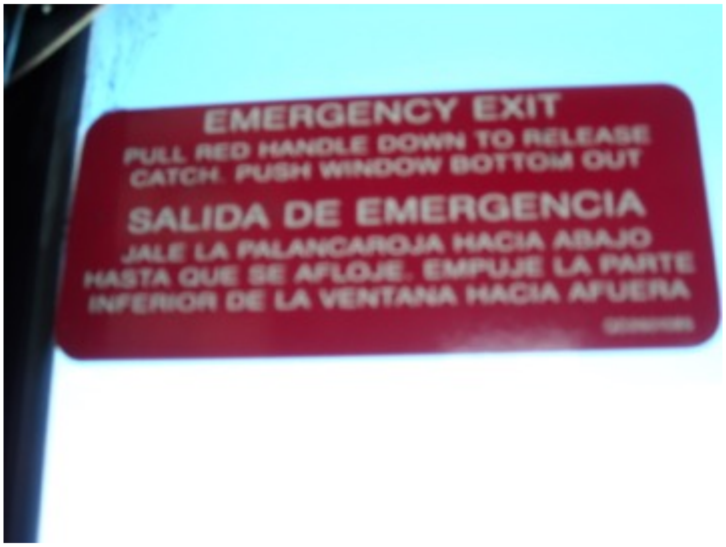

EMERGENCY EXIT
PULL RED HANDLE DOWN TO RELEASE
CATCH. PUSH WINDOW BOTTOM OUT
SALIDA DE EMERGENCIA
JALE LA PALANCAROJA HACIA ABAJO
HASTA QUE SE AFLOJE. EMPUJE LA PARTE
INFERIOR DE LA VENTANA HACIA AFUERA

Image 5.1 features a text posted on public transit in Denver (Colorado). The warning (white on a red background, typical for emergency mechanisms) is on a city bus. The Spanish text is longer: “Salida de emergencia. Jale la palancaroja hacia abajo hasta que se afloje. Empuje la parte inferior de la ventana hacia fuera.” The English reads, “Emergency exit. Pull red handle down to release catch. Push window bottom out.” Both are written in upper case to attract users’ attention. Note that, in a possible typographic anomaly, “palancaroja” is written as a single word instead of as “palanca roja.” The use of a form of “jalar” (or “halar”) is often used in American Spanish to mean *to pull*, given that “tirar,” in addition to being ambiguous, can also have undesired connotations.

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[6] *Attention* refers to mental focus, whereas que *caution* is a precept or warning about some sort of danger; exhortation to be cautious; advice; command.

Image 5.2 Interior of bus in Chicago (Illinois), July 2017.

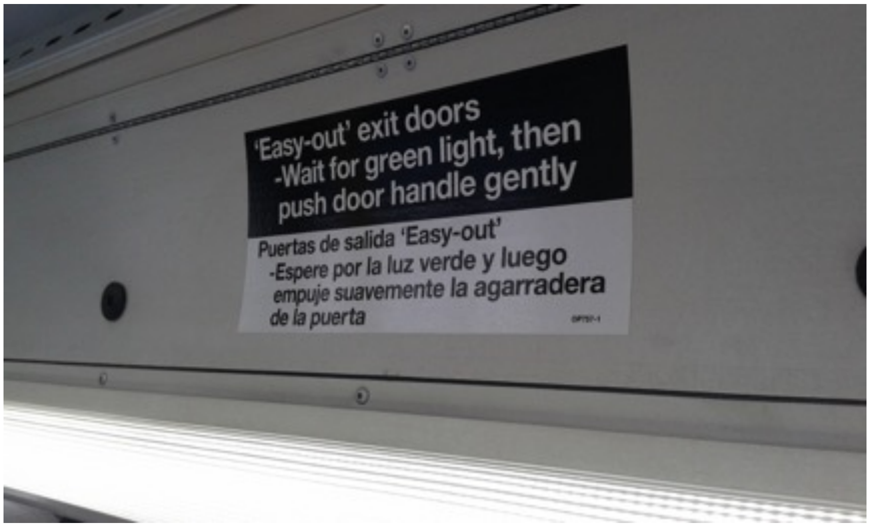
'Easy-out' exit doors
-Wait for green light, then
push door handle gently
Puertas de salida 'Easy-out'
-Espere por la luz verde y luego
empuje suavemente la agarradera
de la puerta

Image 5.2 places the English text above the Spanish, with white text on a black background. It reads: “‘Easy-out’ exit doors -Wait for green light, then push door handle gently”; the black Spanish text on a white background says: “Puertas de salida ‘Easy-out’ -Espere por la luz verde y luego empuje suavemente la agarradera de la puerta.” The first line of the translation into Spanish switches between both languages (“Puertas de salida ‘Easy-out’”), perhaps because the expression “easy-out” is thought to be easily understood, or perhaps simply because no Spanish alternative for that referent was found. “Wait for green light” is translated as “Espere por la luz verde” instead of “Espere la luz verde,” most likely a syntactic calque.

Notice, too, the change in the term used to refer to the object users must push: in Denver it is a “palanca,” and in Chicago it is an “agarradera,” a case of lexical variation.

Image 5.3 Interior of bus in Chicago (Illinois), July 2017.

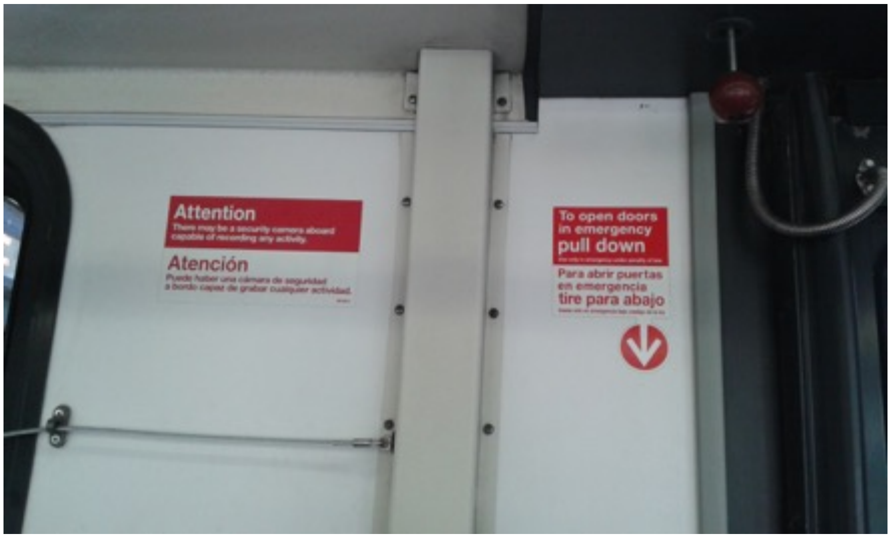
Attention
There may be a security camera aboard capable of recording any activity.
Atención
Puede haber una cámara de seguridad a bordo capaz de grabar cualquier actividad.
To open doors in emergency
pull down
Para abrir puertas en emergencia
tire para abajo

Image 5.3 again shows the inside of a Chicago bus. In this case, the contrasting colors are red and white, and the notice includes an arrow, which has the universal meaning of *pull down*. The text beside the door is a calque from English: “To open doors in emergency” translated as “Para abrir puertas en emergencia.”

Image 6. Notice on a private building. Manhattan, East Harlem, New York City (New York), August 2015.

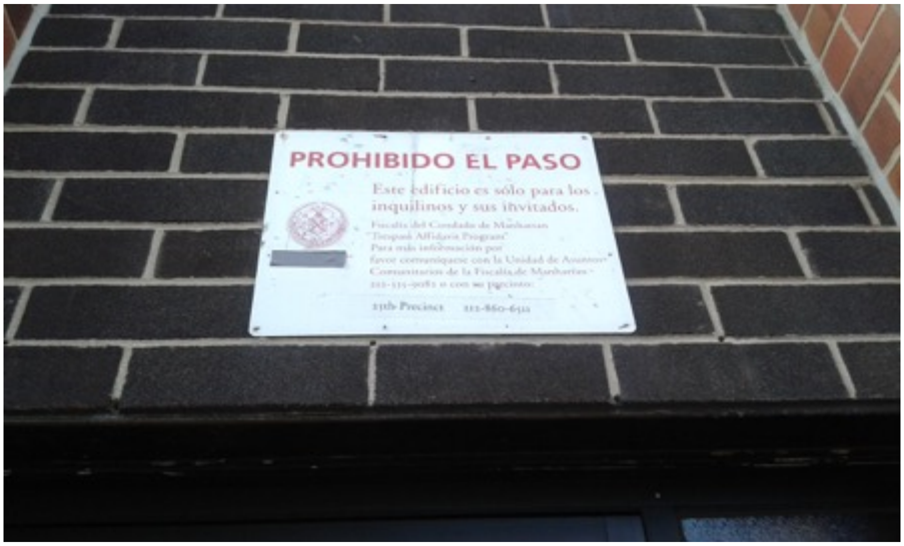

Image 6 is from East Harlem in Manhattan, an area with a large Hispanic immigrant population. In this case, the notice communicates the rules of the building entirely in Spanish, except for “Trespass Affidavit Program,”[7] which is untranslated, perhaps because its meaning in English is known, or in order to use the legal term “Affidavit” where Spanish would require a longer and more cumbersome phrase: “Denuncia jurada de intrusión en una propiedad ajena.”

In addition to the English term “precinct” in black at the bottom of the notice, the end of the Spanish text uses the adapted loan word “Precinto” in red. Moreno-Fernández recorded this term in his *Dictionary of Anglicisms of U.S. Spanish*, published by the Observatory of the Cervantes Institute at Harvard University (2018:79).

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[7] The Trespass Affidavit Program was established in 1991 as a way of combating drug trafficking and other crimes. After the proprietor enrolled the property in the program, officers were permitted to patrol the inside of the building and arrest individuals who were not legitimate tenants or visitors who had entered the building illegally.

Image 7. Pharmacy awning, Manhattan, East Harlem, New York City (New York), August 2015.

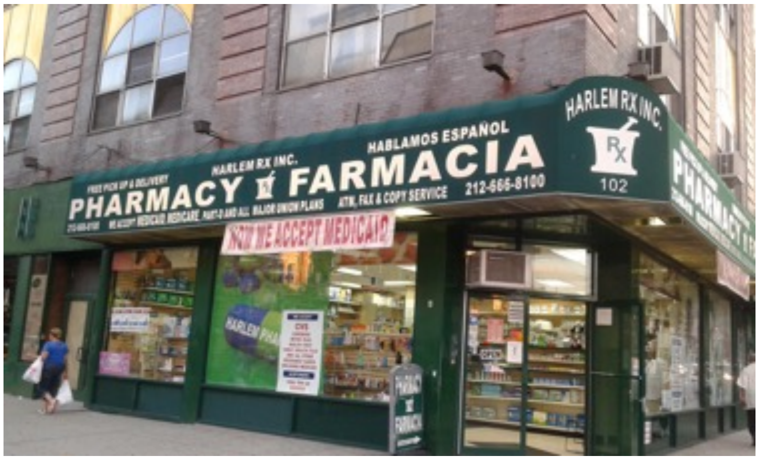
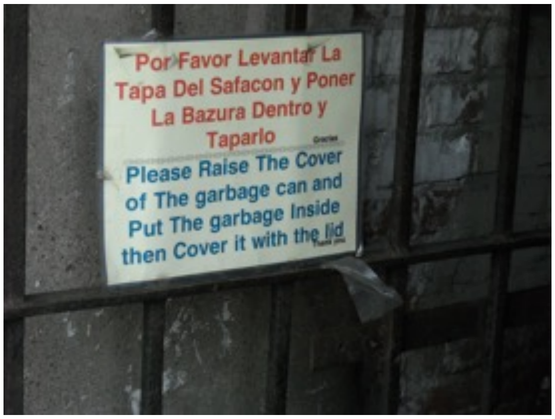


Image 7 features the word "Farmacia" in the same size as the English "Pharmacy" beside it (the same amount of text in both languages), but it also specifies at the top of the awning "Hablamos español," almost as an invitation to come inside and freely speak East Harlem's second language. Therefore, "Hablamos español" is a functional text, since this pharmacy is located in an area with high Latino density. Unsurprisingly, the affective and sensory experience that this urban landscape produces in social subjects is critical. As Muñoz Carrobles explains (2010: 108-109):

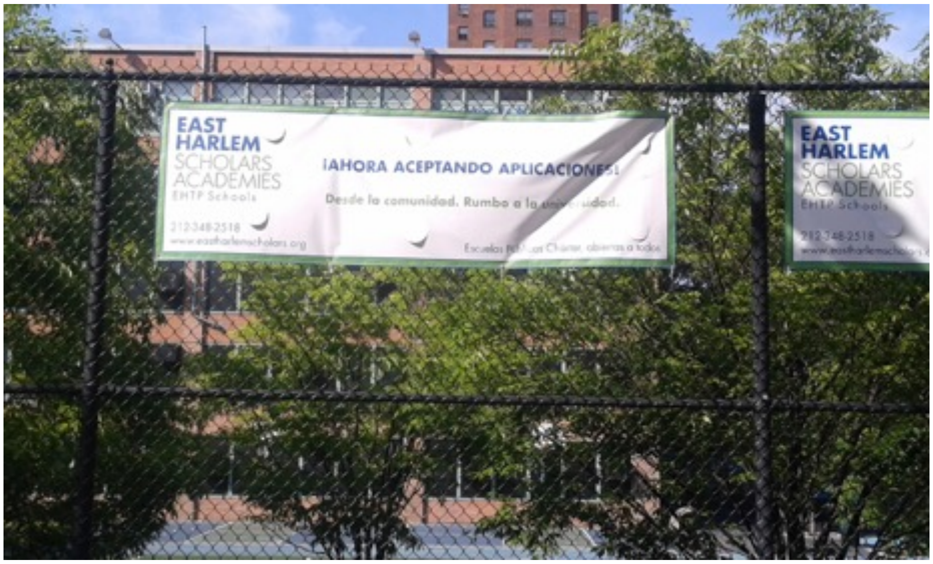
> The presence of a language in the linguistic landscape testifies to the vitality of the human group that shares it, to ethnolinguistic vitality. This fact is important, for example, to speakers of minoritized and immigrant languages, for whom the visibility of their language constitutes a major form of support.

Image 8. Private notice on building. Manhattan, New York City (New York), March 2015.


Por Favor Levantar La
Tapa Del Safacon y Poner
La Bazura Dentro y
Taparlo
Gracias
Please Raise The Cover
of The garbage can and
Put The garbage Inside
then Cover it with the lid
Thank you

The informational notice in Image 8 was posted on the wall of a building on a side street in Manhattan, near Amsterdam Ave. It has no accent marks and no punctuation in either language. Capitals are used generously (especially in the Spanish text), probably in an attempt to attract the reader's attention: "Por Favor Levantar La Tapa Del Safacon y Poner La Bazura Dentro y Taparlo." In this particular case, the English text is longer, as is clear from the photograph. The term "Safacon" is used instead of "zafacón" (a term used in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic to mean *trash can*), and "Bazura" is used in place of "basura." Interestingly, the written text applies the speakers' phonetics, since, as is well known, in American Spanish, there is no phonetic distinction between "s" and "z." "Safacón" may also be a calque of the English "safety can." There are several theories surrounding this term. Some believe that it derives from the English "save a can," the name of a World War II era campaign that promoted saving cans so that they could be used to manufacture bullets. Miguel Vargas-Caba (2017) believes that "safacón" comes from "Safety and oil waste can," used in Santo Domingo around 1920: these were the cans used in the U.S. Marines' mechanical workshops after they arrived in the country in 1916. Stavans (2003: 215) records it as "*safocón* ('garbage container'). Also zafacón."

Image 9. *East Harlem Scholars Academies*. Manhattan, East Harlem, New York City (New York), June 2016.


EAST
HARLEM
SCHOLARS
ACADEMIES
EHTP Schools
212-348-2518
www.eastharlemscholars.org
¡AHORA ACEPTANDO APLICACIONES!
Desde la comunidad. Rumbo a la universidad.
Escuelas Públicas Charter, abiertas a todos
EAST
HARLEM
SCHOLARS
ACADEMIES
EHTP Schools
212-348-2518

The announcement "Ahora aceptando aplicaciones [...]" (Image 9) offers an interesting example of linguistic contact. The Spanish text calques the English beside it ("Now accepting applications [...]") and belongs to the East Harlem Scholars Academies. In addition to calquing the English, the Spanish text also uses the term "aplicaciones," a term Moreno-Fernández recorded in his *Dictionary of Anglicisms of U.S. Spanish* (2018:38) as a feminine noun from the English "application." It is worth recalling that in the U.S., "aplicación" is currently used instead of "solicitud" in (nearly) all contexts, and several studies have included it as a typical example of Spanglish. It is also used with this same meaning in Mexico.

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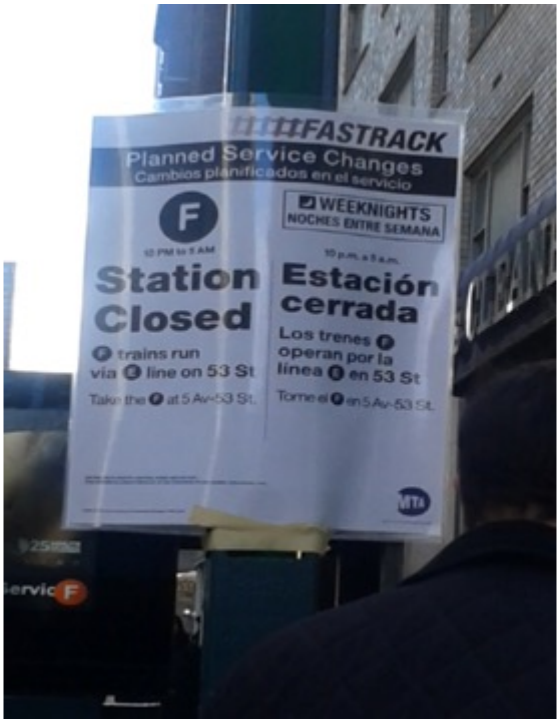
Image 10. Subway entrance Manhattan, New York City (New York), February 2017.



FASTRACK
Planned Service Changes
Cambios planificados en el servicio
F
WEEKNIGHTS
NOCHES ENTRE SEMANA
10 PM to 5 AM
Station Closed
F trains run via E line on 53 St
Take the F at 5 Av-53 St
10 p.m. a 5 a.m.
Estación cerrada
Los trenes F operan por la línea E en 53 St
Tome el F en 5 Av-53 St
MTA

Like many of the other texts analyzed here, Image 10 features an announcement in two languages: "Planned Service Changes" at the top, in a font that is slightly larger than the Spanish "Cambios planificados en el servicio." The quantity of text is the same in both languages; that is, the same information is conveyed in both parts. The rectangle in the upper right corner says "Weeknights." Beneath this, in slightly smaller text, is the Spanish "Noches entre semana." "Station Closed" and "Estación cerrada" appear in font of nearly the same size.

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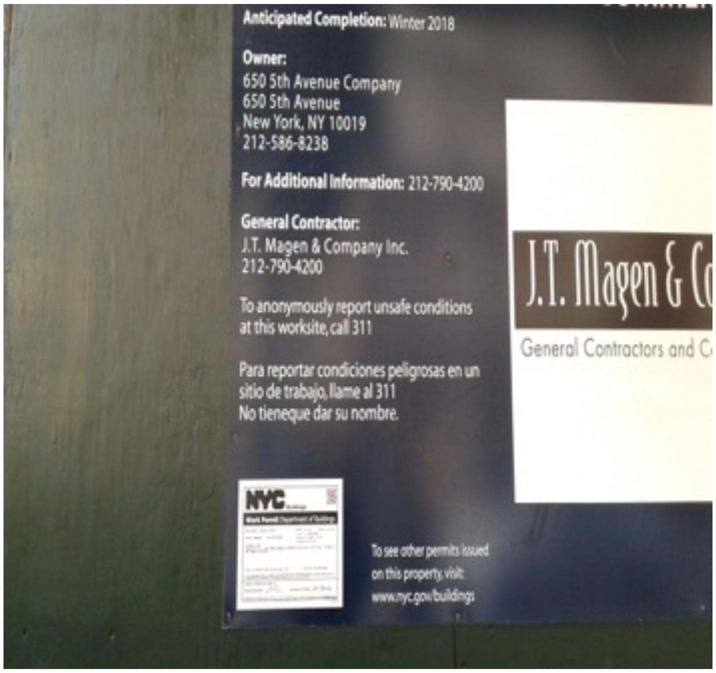
Image 11 Fifth Avenue. Manhattan, New York City (New York), April 2018.



Anticipated Completion: Winter 2018

Owner:
650 5th Avenue Company
650 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10019
212-586-8238

For Additional Information: 212-790-4200

General Contractor:
J.T. Magen & Company Inc.
212-790-4200

To anonymously report unsafe conditions at this worksite, call 311

Para reportar condiciones peligrosas en un sitio de trabajo, llame al 311
No tieneque dar su nombre.

To see other permits issued on this property, visit: www.nyc.gov/buildings

This private notice (Image 11) from Fifth Avenue in Manhattan says: “To anonymously report unsafe conditions at this worksite, call 311.” There is slightly more text in Spanish: “Para reportar condiciones peligrosas en un sitio de trabajo, llame al 311. No tieneque dar su nombre.” The Spanish uses the indefinite “en un sitio de trabajo,” unlike the more specific English “this worksite.” The English adverb “anonymously” is not translated into the corresponding Spanish *anónimamente*, but is instead paraphrased as “[…] no tiene que […].” As with earlier notices, there may be a case of *lapsus calami*: “No tieneque dar […],” in place of “No tiene que dar […].” In American Spanish, “reportar” is commonly used in the sense of “notify.”

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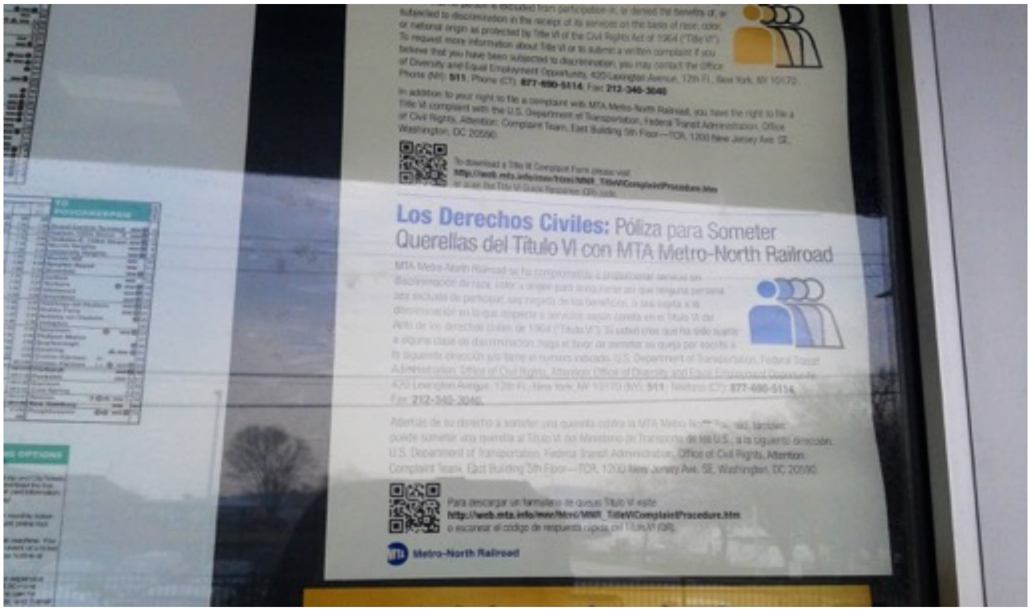
Image 12. Train station Tarrytown, Westchester County (New York), April 2018.



Los Derechos Civiles: Póliza para Someter Querellas del Titulo VI con MTA Metro-North Railroad

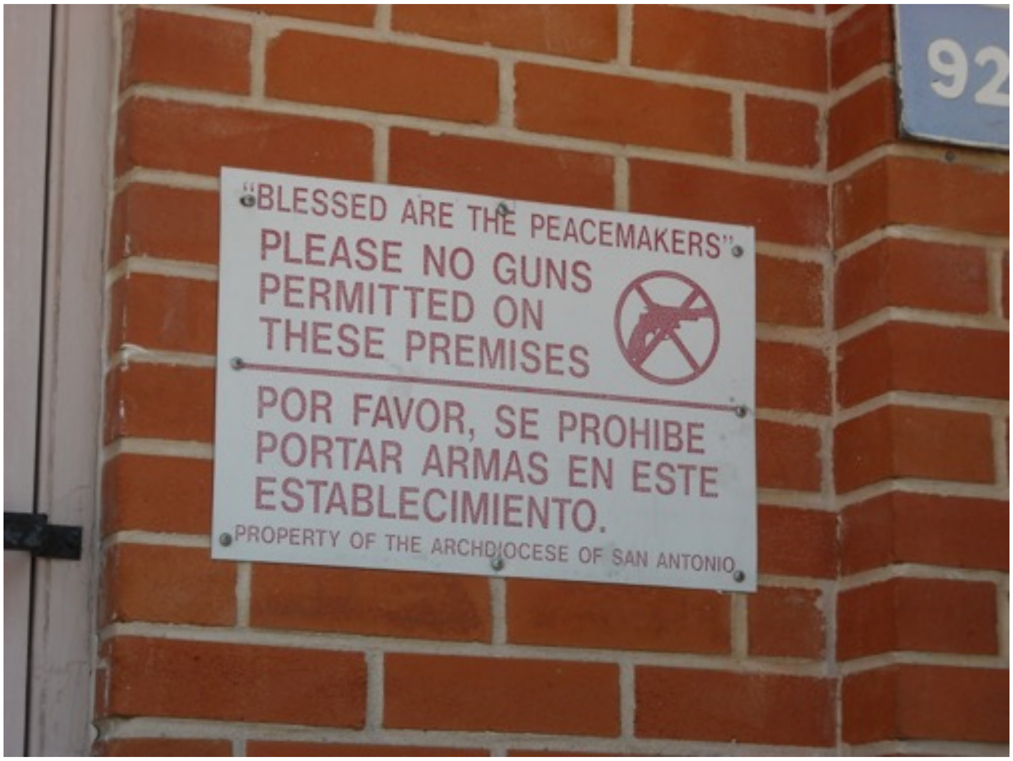
Metro-North Railroad

This notice posted by the MTA Metro-North Railroad at the Tarrytown (NY) station lacks some accent marks. It also translated the English "policy" as "póliza" instead of "reglamento" or "política [de la compañía]." These characteristics confirm Franco Rodríguez's observations that:

> […] one can observe three types of deviations from normative orthography. The first appears to stem merely from typographical shortcomings and, as such, is noticed but not quantified. These peculiarities consist of the inconsistent use of capitals, inappropriate compounding or separation of words, obvious cases of *lapsus calami* and a general absence of accent marks, tildes over the *ñ*, and diereses over the *u*. (2008: 28)

These deviations from normative orthography may stem from the fact that many organizations, businesses, and government offices use translators with little experience, out of a concern for the cost of translation services.

Image 13 Archdiocese of San Antonio (Texas), July 2013.


92
"BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS"
PLEASE NO GUNS PERMITTED ON THESE PREMISES
POR FAVOR, SE PROHIBE PORTAR ARMAS EN ESTE ESTABLECIMIENTO.
PROPERTY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO

The notice in Image 13, posted by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, is written in both languages, and features the classic red prohibition illustration, thanks to which the notice's meaning is immediately clear. Curiously, the English section includes the phrase "Blessed are the peacemakers," which is absent from the Spanish.

Image 14 La Chiquita Bakery, 1227 El Paso St, West side of San Antonio (Texas), July 2013.

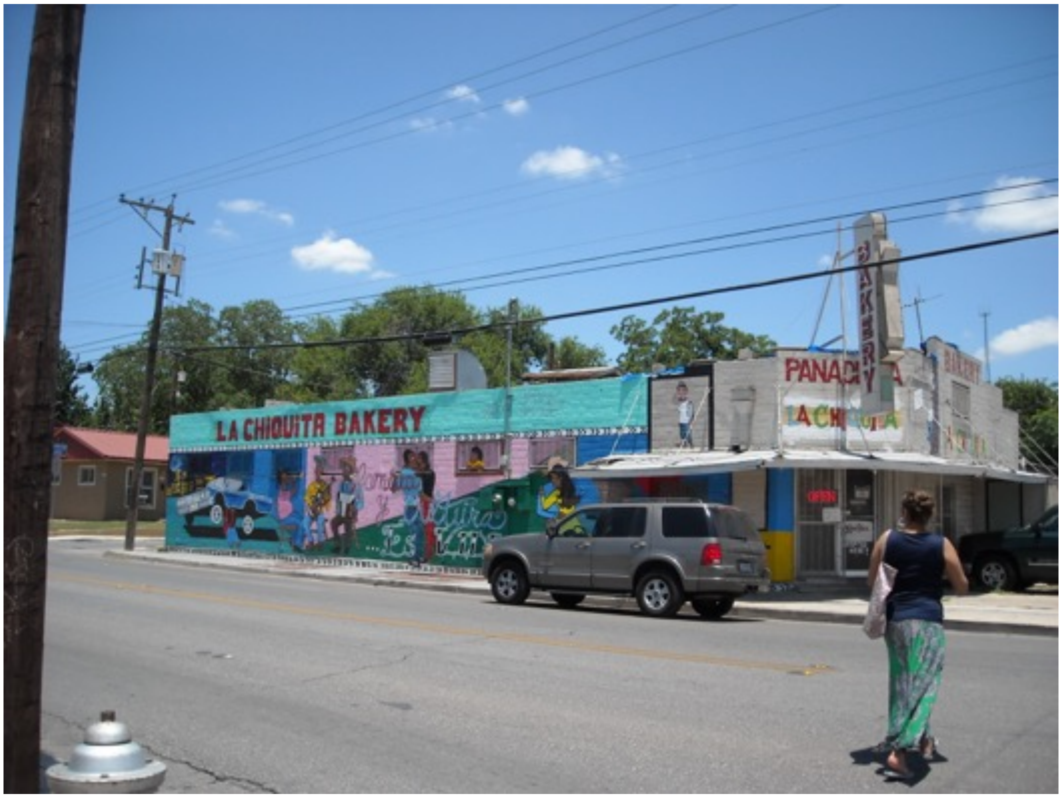
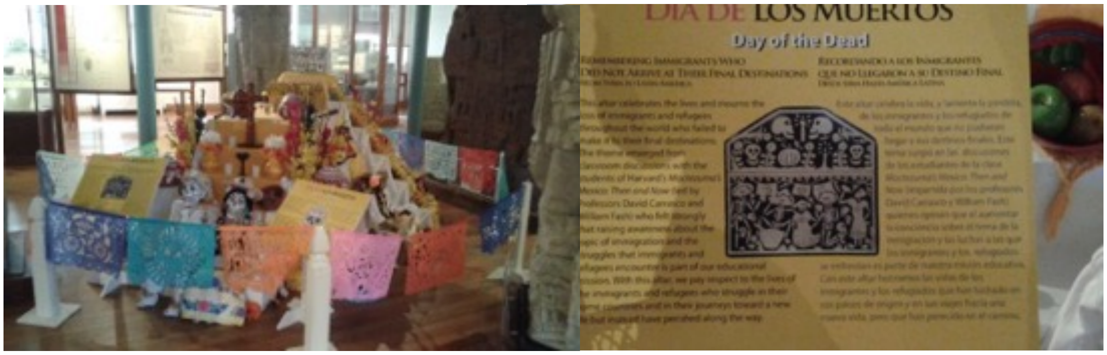


Image 14 shows La Chiquita Bakery, an establishment with Mexican roots that is among the best-known bakeries in San Antonio. The private text painted on the side of the building (“La Chiquita Bakery”) mixes Spanish and English in a natural way that effectively expresses the feel of the barrio. The text is seen again above the entrance, this time entirely in Spanish: “Panadería La Chiquita.” A colorful mural adorns the side wall and includes the text “Familia y Cultura es Vida.” The emotional function is present in this mural, which, through its representations and colors, conveys the neighborhood’s obvious Hispanic presence, culture, and language.

Images 15.1 and 15.2 Day of the Dead Installation at Harvard University, Cambridge (Massachusetts), October 2015.



Images 15.1 and 15.2 refer to an installation put up to celebrate Day of the Dead at Harvard University (Massachusetts). Though it was not a permanent assemblage, this representation has an emotional function that aptly reflects the Hispanic and Mexican presence in this region of the U.S. The altar, as can be read on the placard, is dedicated to all of the immigrants who "did not arrive at their final destinations: from Syria to Latin America" and expresses deep compassion (in the Greek sense of the term) toward uprooted peoples. As the placard states, the topic of the installation was the brainchild of the class "Moctezuma's Mexico: Then and Now," taught by Professors David Carrasco and William Fash.

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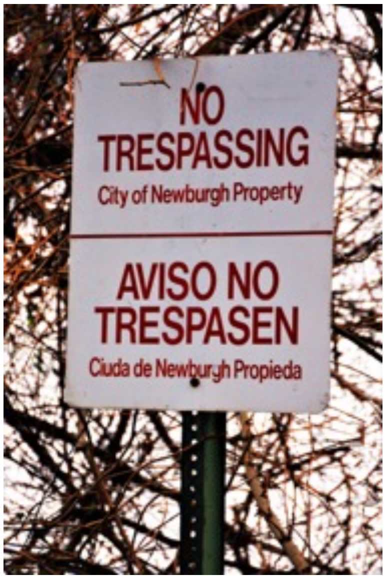
Image 16 Newburgh City, Orange County (New York), 2015. From the private collection of Prof. Piña Rosales.


NO
TRESPASSING
City of Newburgh Property
AVISO NO
TRESPASEN
Ciuda de Newburgh Propieda

The official notice in Image 16 is very striking. In addition to the calque from English "Aviso no trespasen," the sign omits the final *d* in both "ciudad" and "propiedad." There is no way of knowing if this is another case of *lapsus calami*, or if it is a form, parallel to English, that drops the final /d/.

Image 17 Garrison Park, Putnam County (New York), January 2015. From the private collection of Prof. Piña Rosales.

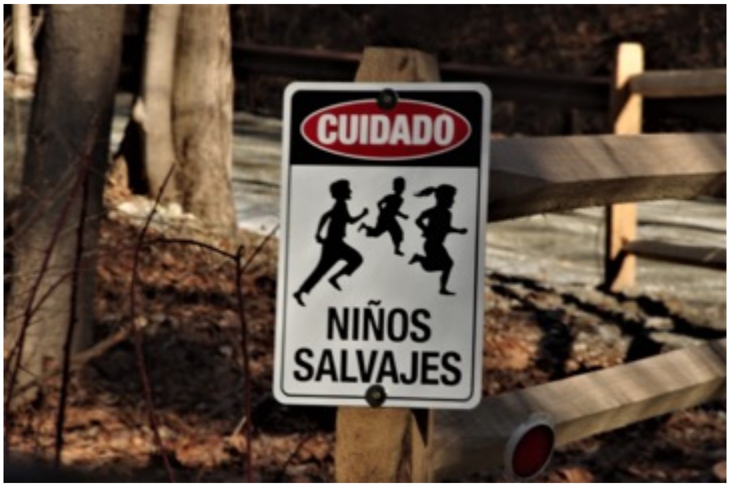
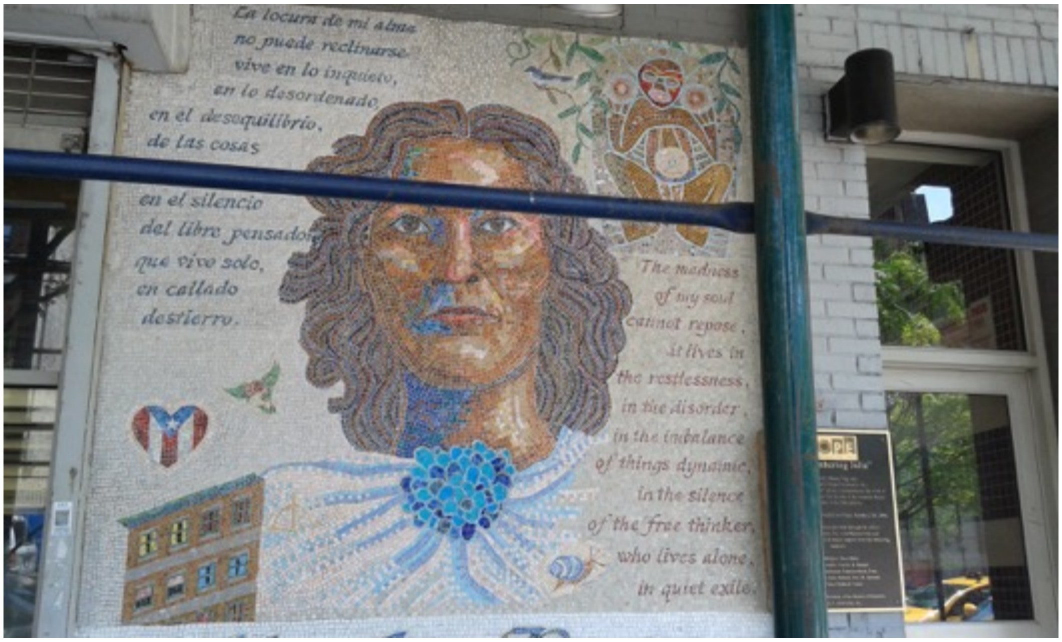

CUIDADO
NIÑOS
SALVAJES

Image 17 features the white text “Cuidado” within a red oval, which is itself within a black rectangle. Beneath that word, in white, there is an intentional use of colors (red: danger; black and white: contrasting colors), while the silhouettes (once again, the multimodality of the LL) of children running (two boys and a girl) mark a simple, quick, and universal way of communicating that such people are present.

Once again, the Spanish translation is striking: rather than “Niños que corren” or “Niños que juegan,” the text uses the curious, albeit expressive, “Niños salvajes.” The adjective “salvaje” is typically used to describe children who spent a long period of their childhood living outside of society. The use of the term in this notice connotates a certain kind of behavior.

Image 18 *Remembering Julia* Mosaic, by Manny Vega, 106th street (between Lexington and Third Avenue) in East Harlem, New York (New York), June 2016.


La locura de mi alma
no puede reclinarse
vive en lo inquieto,
en lo desordenado,
en el desequilibrio,
de las cosas
en el silencio
del libre pensador
que vive solo,
en callado
destierro.
The madness
of my soul
cannot repose,
it lives in
the restlessness,
in the disorder,
in the imbalance
of things dynamic,
in the silence
of the free thinker,
who lives alone,
in quiet exile.

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It seems appropriate to conclude these “impressions” on the U.S./*hispanounidense* LL with a mural from East Harlem (also known as Spanish Harlem or El Barrio) dedicated to poet and writer Julia de Burgos, born in Puerto Rico and known as the “daughter of El Barrio.” Along with thousands of other Puerto Rican immigrants who left their homeland, she arrived in New York in the 1940s and found a home in East Harlem. Today, this mural, a street, and a cultural center all bear her name, and her presence can be felt elsewhere in this part of the city, which continues to commemorate her legacy.

In 2006, artist Manny Vega[8] made this tile mosaic and titled it *Remembering Julia*; the work was commissioned by *HOPE Community, Inc*,[9] to commemorate Julia de Burgos’s contributions to this neighborhood. Vega invited members of the community to help him place the tiles as way of honoring the figure of Julia de Burgos in the neighborhood.

This mural, which often goes unnoticed on this colorful, noisy, store-lined street, is very powerful, due to its subject’s gaze and its accompanying symbols: a heart with a Puerto Rican flag, which represents the poet’s origins; a curve-billed hummingbird, a Taino image that represents Puerto Rican (Borinquen) roots, on a typical U.S. building (the past *in* the present). There, Julia de Burgos's poetry is written on the wall, in Spanish and in English, conveying a profound feeling to whoever stops to view it.

---

[8] Manny Vega (n. 1956) is a painter, sculptor, illustrator and printmaker. He was apprentice to Hank Prussing in the 1970s and currently maintains Prussing’s mural, *The Spirit of East Harlem*, and several other murals and public artworks that reflect the cultural and spiritual vitality of the East Harlem community.

[9] According to their website, “Hope Community, Inc. is a community-based not-for-profit affordable housing organization. Founded in 1968, the organization also enriches the lives of the people who live and work in East Harlem and surrounding neighborhoods through cultural arts, economic development, and social service alliances.” Available at: https://bit.ly/2I036hz [Accessed 5/26/2018].

Thus, the phenomena of expression and communication coexist in the urban landscape; they are identity, social, cultural, and artistic expressions, as in this case, which also attempt to communicate emotions related to the communities where they appear and reflect their own world, sensibility, culture, and language.

7. Final remarks

At this point, it is important to remember that this is a preliminary, *in fieri* analysis. It could almost be described as a series of subjective impressions based on images that are meant to be merely representative. The methodology by which the texts were gathered may seem superficial, but it examines a variety of materials in constant flux. Furthermore, it raises the possibility of analyzing texts containing linguistic information from other areas and cities. A later analysis may adopt a diachronic perspective, as new data on the Hispanic-American LL become available.

This brief examination has enabled us to observe certain facets of the urban landscape in several U.S. cities in which Spanish has a clear presence. Cities become places full of contacts, relationships, creativity, innovation, continually changing identities, and also conflict. All of this is associated with a use of language stemming from the presence of Spanish speakers in many areas of the cities considered for this research.

In our tour through these areas, we have compiled both private and official texts. In the latter case, the consequences of contact with English are clear. The fact that translation of public texts is unregulated in the U.S. may influence this reality. The American Translators Association does have a certification process, but there are no national standards concerning the subject discussed here. Businesses, public and private institutions, the government, and private citizens who require translation services decide how to translate on a case-by-case basis, a decision in which cost is a factor.

Regardless, the availability of information in Spanish in texts related to regional and municipal institutions and governments, or to private establishments, demonstrates the importance of the language in the U.S. This reality does not hinder many Hispanics from perceiving English as the language of integration and success, and Spanish as a language that can activate a sense of inferiority, even as the Hispanic population is growing in number and importance (Betti 2008).

The LL in U.S. cities reflects a *bilingualism*, a *biculturalism*, and a double sensibility that paves the way to new forms and new readings of reality, the fruit of the contact (and conflict) between two different worlds. Many speakers are already functionally bilingual and can naturally express themselves in both languages and live in both cultures. Thus, the concept of LL proposes new ways of observing the development and use of other languages and new focuses of interest: revitalization, visibilization, literacy, aesthetics, and others. This represents a means of celebrating global linguistic diversity, as well as the ethnic diversity of Latin America (Yataco and Córdova Hernández 2016) and the U.S.

Discussing indigenous Latin American languages, Yataco and Córdova Hernández (2016) stress that “any form of LL production is welcome and a topic of interest as a means of continuing the discussion in support of social groups’ linguistic difference and language rights.” They continue:

> Placing the spotlight on linguistic diversity means empowering the voice of the peoples whose languages have been cornered in the private sphere [...]. In short, it is a form of symbolic appropriation of the territory and an emotional revaluation of the Latin American linguistic repertoire (2016: 154).

And, in the judgment of this author, a revaluation of the *hispanounidense* repertoire.

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Silvia Betti
University of Bologna and the North American Academy of the Spanish Language

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