

Multilingualism and Linguistic Landscape in Hungarian Daily Newspapers from Transylvania in the Interwar Period

The concept of linguistic landscape primarily refers to the totality of signs, words, texts and images displayed in public spaces. However, it can also be applied to the analysis of press materials from a given region and historical period. The media represent a central role in public discourse, and in multiethnic regions the linguistic landscape of the press reflects the status of languages in the same way as language use in public spaces, on streets, in public offices, educational institutions and commercial establishments. The bilingualism or multilingualism of official announcements and other texts published in newspapers that, based on their function and target audience, are considered monolingual, the proportion and positioning of individual languages carry symbolic meaning: these elements reveal the status and importance of languages and the visibility of minority languages. In this sense the linguistic landscape also reflects power relations, as well as relations of subordination and dominance between minority and majority groups.

The volume examines issues of multilingualism and the linguistic landscape in Hungarian daily newspapers from Transylvania during a period that was decisive for the emergence and spread of language contact phenomena in the press, marked by events that contributed significantly to subsequent processes of language loss. The redrawing of state borders was accompanied by a transformation of ethnic, linguistic and language policy conditions, the effects of which can already be detected from the early 1920s in the language use of the Hungarian press in Transylvania, in the use of institutional and place names, as well as in advertising practices. From the third decade of the twentieth century onwards, in the Transylvanian Hungarian newspapers the use of place names and institutional names and the language of official announcements was regulated in the same way as in the actual public sphere.

The analysis of the press language phenomena presented was carried out within the framework of the following sociolinguistic aspects: multilingual texts and code-switching in written language, the issue of the translatability of proper names, the development of research on the linguistic landscape, and linguistic attitudes reflected in the press of the period. It also includes a brief history of research on Romanian-Hungarian language contact, as well as an overview of historical and press-historical background, with particular attention to the minority and language poli-

cies of the period in the Carpathian Basin, restrictions imposed on minority languages, and regulations affecting the minority press.

The most extensive section of the volume is a detailed analysis of the occurrence of Romanian linguistic elements, with special regard to the administrative and economic spheres, which are the most common contexts in which Romanian names, words, passages and texts appear. It presents bilingual and entirely Romanian-language official texts, announcements and notices, as well as names of official institutions, job titles and documents. The chapter also includes an analysis of the linguistic features of the official sphere and of language contact phenomena in economic and advertising discourse, the latter extending to the names of financial institutions, commercial companies and enterprises, product and occupational names, and Romanian-language advertising texts. The tendencies that fundamentally shaped language use are clearly evident in economic and commercial advertisements, since in this domain, alongside censorship and regulations, economic and financial interests also played a role, such as maintaining and increasing purchasing power. Accordingly, an effort to use Hungarian, bilingual or multilingual names for enterprises can be traced throughout most of the period, and similar tendencies can be observed in the use of product names, service names, and occupational titles appearing in job advertisements. The chapter also discusses the two key functions of linguistic landscape elements, namely their communicative and symbolic function, as well as the connections between visibility and the spread of language contact phenomena. A separate subchapter examines the toponymic linguistic landscape, analysing the use of Romanian and bilingual settlement and street names appearing in Hungarian-language textual contexts. It also presents statistical data on the use of Hungarian, Romanian and bilingual place names in major cities across different periods.

The analysis also discusses the German-language elements occurring in Hungarian newspapers. Although the motivations behind their use differ in several respects from those of Romanian elements, they significantly influenced the linguistic landscape of the Hungarian press of the period, particularly in regions with a substantial Saxon population. German names, words and text passages appear primarily in the economic and commercial spheres, but the analysis also includes the German place names. The linguistic analysis of the advertising sphere extends to English and French advertising elements, which, although not the primary focus of the research, are also part of the multilingual character of the period's newspapers.

The conclusions drawn from the analysis address code-switching as a defining feature of multilingual texts, the language attitudes that shaped the language of the press during the period, the relationship between social changes and written language use, as well as the connections between genre, context and language choice, including regional differences.

The significance of this research lies in its detailed exploration of language contact phenomena in written language, particularly in the language of the press, and this analysis represents a significant contribution to both Hungarian and international sociolinguistic literature. While research on the linguistic landscape in recent decades has primarily focused on the linguistic representation of street signs and public spaces, the present study examines the linguistic landscape of the press in a specific historical period. The publication of the results contributes to the expansion of sociolinguistic knowledge, to a better understanding of language contact phenomena in written language, and to the exploration of the historical antecedents of the present-day linguistic situation of the Hungarian communities in Romania.