

**Research Article****A SNAPSHOT OF LANGUAGE DIVERSITY AND HYBRIDITY IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF LUBUMBASHI, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO****^{1,*} Mambo Kalume, ¹Katsuva Ngoloma, ¹Mulamba Nshindi and ²Philippe Hambye**¹English Department, University of Lubumbashi, Lubumbashi, DRC²French Department, Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium**Received** 17th January 2023; **Accepted** 20th February 2023; **Published online** 30th March 2023

Abstract

This paper explores the increasing visibility and ubiquity of language diversity and hybridity in the linguistic landscape (LL) of Lubumbashi city in the DR Congo in recent years. Based on a restricted sample of data collected with a digital camera, the study investigates into the motivations behind the choice of languages in public display by sign owners in keeping with Spolsky and Cooper's conditions model. It also discusses the motivations behind the drastic changes in language use from monolingual to multilingual and hybrid practices in a traditionally French-speaking country. It finally attempts to account for the paradoxical pervasive rise of English in public spaces in a country belonging to the Expanding Circle and in which the scarcity of the use of English by the population sharply contrasts with the ever-growing visibility of this language in public space. The findings reveal that the major motivations behind the current language diversity and hybridity that are worth mentioning involve the concern of the inclusiveness of a wider audience, modernity and globalization, adaptation of the global to the local (glocalization), local and global corporate identity, and symbolism.

Keywords: Language diversity and hybridity; Linguistic landscape; globalization; English; Lubumbashi/DR Congo.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a striking and intriguing phenomenon observed in the public space of the Democratic Republic of Congo, (henceforth the DRC) in general, and, more particularly in Lubumbashi, the second city of the DRC, is the fact that a glance around the city centre discloses a snapshot of the increasing visibility and ubiquity of language diversity and hybridity that is gaining momentum. These drastic changes seem likely to be an outcome of new parameters brought about by, among other factors, the process of globalization, the mobility of the population from one province to another, and the growing empowerment of national and local languages prompted by linguistic decolonization. The DRC is well known as one of the most multilingual countries of the world, with French as the official language, four national languages, namely Ciluba, Kikongo, Kiswahili, and Lingala, and a host of vernacular languages. To these languages can be added English, which is taught as a class subject from secondary school to the university and which is used as the main working language in multinational companies and international organizations, and Chinese in some mining companies owned by Chinese investors. Owing to its highly multilingual status, the DRC has often been referred to as a "Tower of Babel" or a "linguistic scandal". The crux of the matter is that since the country is faced with such a plethora of languages, the choice of languages which are used in the public display is not made at random. There are undoubtedly some motivations that underlie this choice of languages. This paper is therefore aimed at investigating the motivations that account for language diversity and hybridity which are so characteristic of the DRC's Linguistic Landscape, with special reference to Lubumbashi city.

Since 1997, Lubumbashi has become gradually overpopulated owing to the massive arrival of new dwellers who have settled down for different reasons, namely fleeing areas devastated by wars, economic degradation, unemployment, exodus from the countryside, studies, job transfer from other places, family gathering, and poverty in less privileged provinces. The new dwellers have brought along with them their culture in general and particularly their languages. The advent of foreign businesses like international organizations and mining companies has also brought in new languages that are used as working languages like English and Chinese. Lubumbashi has therefore become a great melting pot where a large number of languages are competing on the linguistic landscape market. From its traditional sociolinguistic situation where French, the official language, was used along with Kiswahili, the local lingua franca, the city has become a highly multilingual setting. The LL of Lubumbashi has thus diversified and hybridized to such an extent that it has shifted from a monolingual French city to a multilingual one (Kasanga, 2010). To quote Jaworski and Thurlow (2010), Lubumbashi has become a real "festival of signs".

Theoretical and methodological considerations**Language Diversity and Hybridity**

Throughout this paper, the term Language diversity, or linguistic diversity, should be understood as a broad term used to describe the differences between different languages and the ways that people communicate with each other. Language hybridity, or linguistic hybridity, on the other hand, refers to a mixture of languages. Referring to hybridity in Linguistic Landscape, Demska (2019), asserts that a linguistic landscape can be considered as hybrid when many languages and scripts work within it. He further adds that being heterogeneous, urban signage (shop signs, business signs, outdoor advertising,

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etc.) is open to hybridization, particularly in moments of historical and geopolitical transformation and at the intersections of different cultures.

Linguistic landscape and language choice

Landry and Bourhis (1997) were the first to provide a clear explanation of the term Linguistic Landscape, "the language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration". It is worth recalling that linguistic landscapes in general belong to language practices, which are considered as one component of Spolsky's (2009) theory of language policy which is made up of three interrelated but independently describable components, namely language practices, beliefs, and management. It is in this vein that Spolsky establishes a link between linguistic landscape and language management since the choice of language for advertising, for example, is an important form of language management and its study interacts in interesting ways with the study of public signs. In fact, Spolsky defines language management as "the explicit and observable effort by someone or some group that has or claims authority over the participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs". Language choices in linguistic landscapes are never made at random. There are always reasons behind such choices. This assumption is confirmed by what Kelly-Holmes (2005) asserts: "Language choices in advertising are never random. They represent an attempt to use language to achieve a particular goal. In commercial advertising the goal is, ultimately, to sell. The words that are in advertisements are the product of a very conscious decision to put those particular words there rather than other words". In other words, the choice of a language for advertising reflects conscious and explicit efforts by advertisers to modify the practices or beliefs of customers. Therefore, the choices of languages made by advertisers are a result of language management as advocated by Spolsky. So are the choices of languages made by the designers of all the other categories of public signs. In connection with the choice of languages in linguistic landscape, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) have elaborated on a theory of language choice in public signage and have proposed a conditions model suggested earlier by Jackendoff (1983), which explains the choice of languages. According to this model, the first condition, "write a sign in a language that you know", relates to the literacy of the sign writer. This condition explains why signs are not written in languages without a writing system. The second condition, "prefer to write a sign in a language which can be read by the people you expect to read it", is referred to as the "presumed reader's condition". It requires the sign writer to use a language that the presumed readers are expected to understand. It stems from the communicative goal of public signage. The third and last condition, "prefer to write a sign in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified", is referred to as "the symbolic value condition". This condition implies that sign designers should write signs in their own language or in a language they want to be identified with.

Globalization and linguistic landscape

Globalization has been defined by Mufwene and Vigouroux (2006) as the interconnectedness of different parts of the world thanks to better networks of communication and transportation,

both of which have facilitated worldwide exchanges of goods and movements of people. It follows that globalization has tremendously affected the sociolinguistic context of the world. The linguistic effects of this process can be perceived through a hierarchy of the world languages. According to the gravitational model developed by De Swaan (2001) first, and subsequently by Calvet (1990), English is considered as the hyper central language, enjoying the status of the global language, as Crystal (2003) suggests. Around English revolve some super central languages, namely Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Around these languages revolve in their turn one to two thousand central languages which have the status of the national languages (Dutch, Finnish, Hindi, Kiswahili, Malay, Norwegian, Swedish, etc. Finally, around these central languages revolve four to five hundred thousand peripheral languages which have the status of vernacular or local languages. As a consequence of this linguistic hierarchy, the process of globalization has resulted in a pervasive intrusion of English in linguistic landscapes across the world to the detriment of other languages to such an extent that it is considered as the language of globalization because of the status of a language of wider communication that it enjoys. It is in this vein that Cenoz and Gorter (2008) assert that "the omnipresence of English [.....] is one of the most obvious markers of the process of globalization". Likewise, Kasanga (2010) suggests that "English is a carrier of globalizing cultures", or at least it "is involved in global flows of culture".

In connection with this spread of the use of English around the world, Gorter (2013) asserts that "English is often associated with modernity, internationalism, technological advancement, or what Rosenbaum *et al.* (1977) call *snob appeal*". Thonus (1991) contends that English is used for its symbolic function: "it sounds modern, scientific and fashionable". Piller (2003), on his side, states that English has become the language of modernity, progress and globalization. Chrismi-Rinda (2016) points out that "the impact of globalization on the LL is not only reflected in the commodification of languages, but also in the spread and dominance of English". This dominance of English is what Phillipson (1992) has referred to as linguistic imperialism. Crystal (2003) attributes the present-day world status of English to two main factors, the expansion of British colonial power, which reached the peak towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century. As for Phillipson, cited in Crystal (2003), he argues that "English has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine, and computers; in research, books, periodicals, and software; in transnational business, trade, shipping, and aviation; in diplomacy and international organizations; in mass media entertainment, news agencies, and journalism; in youth culture and sport; in education systems, as the most widely learnt language [.....]. This non-exhaustive list of the domains in which English has a dominant, though not of course exclusive, place is indicative of the functional load carried by English". With regard to the use of English in Lubumbashi's linguistic landscape, according to Katsuvael *et al.* (1997) and historians, the pervasive intrusion of English in Katanga can be traced back to three main historical periods, namely the arrival of English-speaking protestant missionaries from Switzerland, the USA, and Great Britain and the beginning of the mining industry in Katanga during colonization with Cecile Rhodes from South Africa and the Tanganyika Concessions Limited, the

introduction of English in the school system after the country's independence, and the advent of the overtaking of power by the late President Kabila in 1997 with his Anglophone allies. This last period opened the way to the massive arrival of English-speaking investors in mining activities. To these historical periods can be added the wind of globalization that has been and is still blowing in all directions worldwide with English as its carrier.

Methodology

The present study rested on a triangulated qualitative-quantitative approach. It was based on observation of the growing number of linguistic signs on public space that is increasing more than ever before in the DRC in general, and in Lubumbashi in particular. The data were collected from a selected representative sample of pictures taken with a non-professional digital camera and transferred to a laptop for analysis. Among the data identified, we can mention road signs, hospital signs, drugstore signs, schools and universities signs, restaurants signs, advertising billboards, graffiti, traffic signs, hotels signs, etc. However, owing to space constraints, the selection of data for the present study was restricted only to private and public institutions signs on one side and to shop names signs and commercial products signs on the other side.

The data were first categorized according to the distinction between bottom-up and top-down signs, the languages that appear on the signs, the areas or domains of activity, and the motivations that account for the choice of the linguistic codes. Some informal non-structured interviews were conducted with a random sample of sign writers and consumers in order to collect respectively their motivations behind or impressions and reactions to the languages that appear on signs. These provided useful insights and life experiences, which in their turn, were relevant to the interpretation for analysis in conformity with the three conditions formulated by Spolsky and Cooper for language choice. In the next section, an analysis of the data is provided.

Semiotic Analysis of data

The data were subdivided into two categories, namely top-down signs and bottom-up signs following Ben-Rafael's (2006) categorization of signs in Linguistic Landscapes.

Top-down signs

In this category are found official signs, namely signs written by public institutions or government agencies.



Figure 1. A sign from Lubumbashi Town Hall written in Kiswahili



Figure 2. A sign from Lubumbashi Town Hall written in French

Although they have been removed, the two signs above mentioned were written by authorities of the Town Hall of Lubumbashi city and were addressed to the public to call their attention to keeping the city clean and avoiding filthiness.

The signs were visible at the tunnel of Lubumbashi, a place where the signs can be seen and read by a great number of passers-by. Two main languages were used in these signs, namely Kiswahili and French. However, the adjective wantanshi (= clean) which is used after Lubumbashi comes from Kibemba, a local language spoken by a great number of local people considered to be the original inhabitants. French and Kiswahili were used in order to reach a wide audience of inhabitants both educated and uneducated. Kiswahili is the emblematic language which is used as a lingua franca in Lubumbashi, while French is the official language. The sign in Kiswahili is more explicit than the one in French because it goes straight to the point in stating that "filthiness is witchcraft". It is also affecting the innermost feelings of all the people who speak Kiswahili. The function of the two signs consists in the sensitization of the inhabitants of Lubumbashi to keep the city clean. The choice of the languages used in the two signs is in conformity with Spolsky and Cooper's three conditions.



Figure 3. A sign from the Provincial Direction of duties and taxes written in French and Kiswahili

The sign displayed above is written in French with a translation provided in Kiswahili. Although French is the official language used in the administration, the local authorities are aware that a message delivered to the public in French will be read and understood by a limited number of educated people. The translation into Kiswahili helps them to reach a wider audience because both educated and uneducated people living in Lubumbashi understand this symbolic language. The sign provided above is intended to sensitize the

inhabitants of Lubumbashi to pay their duties and taxes as a civic obligation. Yet, the translation contains linguistic hybridity through the use of the French words *impôts* and *taxes* which people know. It would be misleading to use the equivalent words *ushuru* and *kodi* in standard Kiswahili because people are not acquainted and familiar with them. Hybridity in this case is motivated by a lack of the appropriate vocabulary. The choice of languages in the sign displayed above is in conformity with Spolsky and Cooper's three conditions.

Bottom-up signs

Owing to space constraints, only two categories of signs have been retained in this domain, namely shop names signs and commercial product signs.

Shop names signs

As the official language, French has traditionally been the predominant language in most of the signs. The LL of Lubumbashi has indeed been dominated by the exclusive use of French for decades owing to the status of a language of prestige that French has usually enjoyed.



Figure 4. A shop sign written in French

Today, however, the LL of Lubumbashi is undergoing a kind of decolonization through the diversity and hybridity of the languages used. Shop owners have come to realize that, in marketing, French is not enough to reach a wide audience and that Congolese languages are also valuable. This is why French is very often used in combination with other languages. The start of linguistic diversity in the LL of Lubumbashi in particular, and of the DRC in general, can be traced back to the 1990s, as Kasanga (2012) explains, " Since the 1990s, following the political liberalization and an ensuing explosion of ethnic and regional nationalism, multilingual linguistic landscape has increased exponentially. As more power is devolved to provinces, politicians as well as the masses have been sparing no effort to entrench their new found local identity. Language being a powerful badge of identity, the use of national languages in public display has been on the increase at the local level. Multilingualism seems to be the norm, especially in advertising. The mix of French as unmarked and national languages as a symbol of local identity is common". It stands to reason that prompted by a feeling of nationalism, shop owners have decolonized their minds in

empowering national languages through signs as a strategy to attract more customers in displaying national pride through the use of these languages. Rubango (1986), cited in Kasanga (2010) has argued that local languages are preferred to French, although a "superior" language, or high language in Fishman's terminology, because the advertisers wish to reinforce the inclusiveness of the non-French-knowing audience. Hence, in their choice of languages to be used in shop names signs, the owners are influenced by the symbolic role of Kiswahili as the lingua franca and of Lingala as the language of the capital city, the two being the most prestigious national languages behind French, the official language. Below are provided some illustrative cases:



Figure 5. A shop sign written in a mix of French and Kiswahili

The sign above is hybrid since it starts with the French tag Ets (in French Etablissements=Establishment in English) which is followed by KATANGA YETU in Kiswahili. It is fulfilling the function of ownership or identification. In using the sign Ets KATANGA- YETU, (our Katanga), the owner intends to identify himself as an original inhabitant of the Katanga Province and to attract educated and uneducated customers who speak Kiswahili.



Figure 6. A shop sign written in a mix of French and Lingala

As to the sign displayed above, it is hybrid because it contains the French tag Sté (French Société= Company in English) before BISO NA BISO in Lingala (which approximately means "we are the same people"). The presumed readers of this sign are all the people who speak and understand Lingala.



Figure 7. A shop sign written in a mix of French and Ciluba

With regard to the sign displayed above, M.son TSHANZAMBI TSHANZAMBI to which can be added another sign, QUINCAILLERIE MAKUMI A NZAMBI, which was removed for space constraints, they are hybrid owing to the fact that they respectively combine French and Ciluba words. M.son (short for French Maison, equivalent to English Establishment) combines with TSHANZAMBI TSHANZAMBI (what belongs to God belongs to God) in Ciluba, and Quincaillerie (French equivalent of English Ironmongery) combines with MAKUMI A NZAMBI (the grace of God in Ciluba). The two signs are used to declare ownership and identity, but also, although implicitly, tribal affiliation with people from Kasai area where Ciluba is the symbolic lingua franca. The use of the two hybrid signs may have some implications. On the one hand, it is likely to entice a restricted audience of Ciluba native speakers, while on the other hand it is likely to cause some repulsion and resentment in a great majority of people who do not speak the language. However, some customers do not care about the languages displayed in the signs provided they find the tools they need for their work in an ironmongery. The two signs are likely to comply fully with the first and third conditions of the model suggested by Spolsky and Cooper, but only partially with the second condition since not all the presumed readers are expected to read and understand these signs. Quite surprisingly, the pervasive visibility of English in public display is gaining ground in Lubumbashi, whether English is used alone or in combination with French, as an outcome of globalization as pointed out earlier. Here are some illustrations:



Figure 8. A food store sign written in a mix of French and English



Figure 9. A store sign written in a mix of French and English



Figure 10. A store sign written in a mix of English, Chinese and French

A glance at the signs displayed above reveals how English is now intruding the linguistic landscape of Lubumbashi city. As pointed out earlier, the signs displayed above are written either in English or in a mix of English and French. These signs are written in English exclusively in order to declare ownership and identification, whereas they are written in English and French in order to declare ownership, identification and for advertising. In the two cases, English is also used for the symbolic function of its status as the language of modernity, globalization, and of a language of distinction from other languages. With regard to Spolsky and Cooper's conditions, the signs which are written exclusively in English comply with the first condition since we assume that the shop owners write in a language they understand. The signs partially comply with the second condition because of the fact that not all the presumed readers are expected to understand them since English is not understood by all the intended readers. The signs also partially comply with the third condition owing to the fact that some shop owners may not wish to be identified with this language and they use it because of its symbolic value as the language of modernity or through "a snob appeal". The signs written in English and French comply with Spolsky and Cooper's three conditions. Unstructured interviews with some shop owners have revealed that they use English in the signs in order to attract and seduce customers, especially foreign customers. By and large, languages displayed on shop signs are distributed as follows: French used alone, English used alone, hybrid language: French in combination with Kiswahili or Lingala, French with Greek names, French in combination with Ciluba, French in combination with English, and English in combination with Chinese and French.

Commercial Product signs

All of the commercial signs displayed in the pictures below fulfill the function of advertising. As already pointed out, in

commercial advertising, the ultimate goal is to sell goods by attracting customers through language. It is a form of marketing. Therefore, the words that are used in commercial signs are not chosen at random. Rather, they are the product of a conscious decision taken by shop owners to make the signs appealing to the public. Advertisers influence customers' behaviour towards commercial products through some techniques that attract, convince, and persuade customers to buy.

Let us scrutinize the signs displayed below:



Figure 11. A sign advertising Colgate toothpaste in French

Here, the tooth paste Colgate is advertised exclusively in French. The sign complies with Spolsky and Cooper's first and third conditions. However, it partially complies with the second condition since not all the presumed readers are expected to read and understand French.



Figure 12. A sign advertising Nido milk in French



Figure 13. A sign advertising Nido milk in Kiswahili

In Figures 12 and 13 above, Nido milk is respectively advertised in French and Kiswahili. The sign owners have realized the necessity of taking advantage of a bilingual advertisement in both French as the official language and Kiswahili as the symbolic lingua franca of Lubumbashi to reach a widespread readership among customers. Taken together the two signs comply with the three conditions set by Spolsky and Cooper rather than taken individually.



Figure 14. A sign advertising Momo milk in Lingala with details on the product in French

Here, Momo milk is advertised in Lingala because it is mostly sold in Kinshasa where this language is used as the lingua franca.

As it was the case with shop signs, French is considered as the predominant language used for commercial signs because of its traditional long-standing prestige of the official language, as evidenced in Figure 12 above. However, the exclusive use of French in today's context restricts the readership only to customers who read and understand it. The two signs are in full agreement with Spolsky and Cooper's first and third conditions, while they comply only partially with the second condition. Many shop owners take advantage of the fact that there is neither language legislation nor regulation for advertising in the DRC and feel free to use whichever language can fit their commercial needs.



Figure 15. A sign advertising Fuchs lubricant in English and French

In Figure 15, the sign is advertising Fuchs lubricant in English first and then a translation is provided in French. The sign owners undoubtedly realize that their products are international brands and for this reason they have to advertise them in English as the global language and that since the products are purchased in a French-speaking country, they have to comply with the official language, French in this case. They are unaware that Kiswahili is the symbolic language in Lubumbashi and that some well-off people who speak it do not speak neither French nor English but are potential customers. Therefore, the two signs only partially comply with the three conditions set up by Spolsky and Cooper.



Figure 16. A sign advertising XL drink in English

In Figure 16, quite surprisingly, the sign is advertising XL drink exclusively in English in a French-speaking country. It is obvious that the sign is an international brand that was originally advertised in English. The owners of the sign do not even care to write the sign in the official language of the country. They may just be local representatives of an international brand. In this case, the use of English takes into account only the third condition set up by Spolsky and Cooper. It is worth pointing out that French predominates in advertising commercial products as the traditional official language. It can be used alone for some foreign products, in combination with Kiswahili or Lingala for some local products, and in combination with English for some foreign products. English is used alone or in combination with French in advertising products of international brand and for the purpose of ‘glocalization’, that is, localizing global products or adapting global products to the local environment.

DISCUSSION

A scrutiny of the languages displayed in public space reveals that the LL of Lubumbashi city has undergone some drastic changes accountable to economic, historical, political and sociolinguistic parameters. For historical reasons, French as a legacy of the Belgian colonization has traditionally held the monopoly of the predominant medium in the LL of the DRC in general, and of Lubumbashi in particular for decades. Subsequently, French has been intermingled with Kiswahili for official signs up to the present day for the symbolic role that this language enjoys in Lubumbashi as the lingua franca. Since the 1990s, owing to political instability, turmoil, wars, economic degradation, exodus from the countryside, job transfer, unemployment elsewhere, studies, and family gathering among many other reasons, Lubumbashi city has witnessed a massive arrival of new dwellers from other provinces of the country with their cultures and languages. Consequently, the LL of Lubumbashi has shifted from monolingual to multilingual and subsequently hybrid practices. Accordingly, language diversity and language hybridity in Lubumbashi have been conditioned by factors like the fall of the Mobutu dictatorial regime that opened the way to political liberalization with an ensuing explosion of ethnic and regional nationalism along with an empowerment of national languages, the overtaking of power by the Kabila regime supposedly Anglophone, the wind of globalization of which English is considered as the gateway, especially in business, the intrusion of English through the massive penetration of mining multinationals (mainly American, Australian, Canadian, South African, and Swiss) and the intrusion of Chinese due to the massive investment in mining companies by Chinese. Overall,

six languages are involved in the linguistic landscape of Lubumbashi, namely French, Kiswahili, Lingala, English, Ciluba, and Chinese. French remains predominant owing to its traditional role of the official language. It is used in both official (top-down) and private (bottom-up) signs. Kiswahili comes in the second position with its role of the lingua franca of Lubumbashi and it is used in both domains. These two languages are the major in which signs are displayed in public space and they are the only two that comply with the three conditions set up by Spolsky and Cooper. Official signs are bound to observe the implicit bilingual French-Kiswahili language policy prevailing in Lubumbashi, while the lack of regulations on the use of languages for private signs gives rise to an explosion of hybrid signs that serve the purposes of their owners. As paradoxical as it may seem, the growing visibility of English, used alone or mixed with French, is gaining ground to such an extent that English is gradually holding the third position after French and Kiswahili in the linguistic landscape of Lubumbashi. Languages that participate in linguistic hybridity are mainly French-Kiswahili, French-Lingala, English-French, French-Ciluba, Chinese-French and sometimes English-Chinese-French. This linguistic hybridity reveals the cultural hybridity of which it is an element. Broadly speaking, the LL of Lubumbashi depicted in the present study only partially reflects the languages spoken in the city since some widespread languages like Kibemba, Kiluba, Kihemba, Kisanga, Kitabwa, Uruund, Otetela, Kikongo, etc. are not represented in the sample of signs under study. Hybrid signs containing Chinese, Ciluba, and Lingala are presumably aimed at indicating identity and attracting the sympathy of customers sharing the same linguistic affinity with the sign owners. Signs containing English alone may be targeted at preserving the brand name used internationally. Local shop owners may presumably also use English in their signs to attract the customers’ attention and persuade the latter that their products are imported, alien, sophisticated, modern and therefore superior to local products and that they are the products of globalization. [3] Hybrid signs in English and French are first intended at preserving the brand names and subsequently at accommodating the local audience in providing them with information about the quality of the products. This is the case where ‘glocalization’ takes place in attempting to adapt the signs to local customers’ tastes.

Conclusion

The present study set out to investigate the motivations behind the explosion of the visibility and ubiquity of language diversity and hybridity on public signs in Lubumbashi. From its monolingual tradition with French as the official language, to which Kiswahili was associated as the lingua franca, language use in public space has profoundly shifted to multilingual and hybrid practices. As already pointed out, these sudden changes in Lubumbashi linguistic landscape can be traced back to the 1990s and are accountable to a number of economic, historical, political and sociolinguistic parameters, namely the historical status of French as a legacy of the Belgian colonization and the post-independence official language, the changes in political regimes, the political liberalization with ensuing linguistic decolonization and empowerment of national languages, the massive arrival of new dwellers with their languages, the role of English as the language of globalization and business and as the working language in mining multinationals and the massive investments in mining companies and businesses by Chinese. All in all, the

outcome of the investigation has revealed that out of six languages identified, French is by far the prominent language in public display, while Kiswahili holds the second position. French is used in hybridity with Kiswahili, Lingala, English, Ciluba and Chinese. Paradoxically enough, although it is spoken only by a tiny minority of the population in Lubumbashi, English is on the rise in public display, whether used alone or in hybridity with French. It is deemed as the language of globalization and modernity. If predictions were permitted in sociolinguistics, one could venture to predict that if English keeps on to be all pervading it will likely hold the third position behind French and Kiswahili in public display. The findings have revealed that the on-going language diversity and hybridity in the linguistic landscape of Lubumbashi finds its motivations in the following factors: the concern of the inclusiveness of a wider audience, modernity and globalization, adaptation of the global to the local (glocalization), local and global corporate identity, and symbolism. Although the language situation depicted above does not fully reflect the sociolinguistic reality at play on the ground, it is hoped the study has nevertheless contributed to inspire insights as to the way languages in contact interact and more specifically to the way language diversity and hybridity may reveal a strategic choice that adds value to the linguistic landscape of an area in today's increasingly globalized environment.

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