Abstract

This study evaluates the linguistic landscapes of four Istanbul neighborhoods. A work-in-progress, the results presented here are based on a partial analysis of data collected over a three-month period between October and December 2016. The sites thus far surveyed for this study include a sampling of the wide range of districts in the city: two formerly Jewish, Greek, and Armenian communities and two popular tourist districts. Among other things, the findings reveal the language landscape hierarchies in place in each neighborhood. Turkish takes first position, and English second, in three of the sites. In the fourth site, English ranks first, and Turkish second. The extent to which English has established a presence throughout the sample sites, and effects of Turkification policies and practices on the formerly non-Muslim districts are discussed in light of these findings. Also noted is the complete absence of Kurdish language signage on any of the landscapes surveyed thus far.

Keywords: Linguistic landscape, sociolinguistic profile, language regimes, symbolic capital

1 INTRODUCTION

Linguistic landscape studies represent a new approach to multilingualism that is developing within the purview of sociolinguistics. These take into account all the visible language, usually found within the frame of a sign, in city neighborhoods or districts. The signs are examined along many dimensions such as their function (What purpose does the sign serve?), agency (Who placed the sign?), the message (What does the sign say?), language (Is there one or are there several languages on the sign? Which languages? In what order of appearance?), location, number, size, and configuration. Large urban aggregations with diverse populations are the typical targets of linguistic landscape studies. A sociolinguistic profile of the study site can be developed on the basis of an analysis of the signage.

The linguistic landscape approach was first developed by Landry and Bourhis (1997) in a study that evaluated the perceptions of francophone speakers in Quebec, Canada. They wanted to determine whether or not language visible in the environment was an independent and significant factor in bilingual development within the context of their ethnolinguistic vitality framework. A factor analysis conducted on their survey data of francophone high school students confirmed not only that linguistic landscape was an independent factor, but that it was also a “significant correlate of subjective francophone vitality” (Landry and Bourhis 1997:45). (It was interesting that the factor that fell out of the statistical analysis which they labeled...
'linguistic landscape' included not only public signs, but also newspapers, TV programs and the like.) Since this first study, investigators have evaluated linguistic landscapes of cities such as Tokyo (Backhaus 2010) and Bangkok (Huebner 2006), and, in comparative studies, of minority linguistic landscapes across communities such as that of a Basque community in Spain and a Frisian community in Holland (Cenoz and Gorter 2006). No one has yet conducted a study on the linguistic landscapes of present-day Istanbul, although there is one study examining the landscape of the 17th century (Csato et al 2010).

Signs (instances of written language found in public spaces) are basically about power and competition. Language is the prototypical marker of ethnic identity, and public space is the prototypical arena in which issues of identity and control are contested, negotiated, or decreed (Fishman 2919, Spolsky 1991, 2009). As Landry and Bourhis (1997:26) pointed out, “The predominance of one language on public signs relative to other languages can reflect the relative power and status of competing language groups.” As such, in addition to the meaning of the words on them, signs are revealing about both the prevailing power hierarchies in place and the “language regimes” (Blommaert 2014) that underpin them—that is, the assumptions, expectations, and behaviors that people have about the languages they may use (at home, for example) or must use (at the market place or court house, for example, in order to secure services).

But there is more work to do than merely count and classify signs, a point not lost on Jan Blommaert (2015:2) when he noted that the “first wave” of linguistic landscape studies were “marked by a synchronic, static, and quantitative approach” which limited their interpretative potential, and therefore, their value. Some time ago, Theodosius Dobzhansky, the leading evolutionary biologist of his time, famously declared to an audience of teachers: “Nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution” (1973:128). He was right, of course, and in the same spirit, nothing in linguistic landscape studies makes sense except in the light of history. Signs are placed by someone or on some body’s authority, in a particular location, at a particular instance of time in a community’s history—and by extension, that of a neighborhood, a city, or a nation’s history—and for a specific reason. The signs we find on today's street corner's have a past, a present, and a future. A meaningful sociolinguistic profile that provides insights into power hierarchies and linguistic regimes is only possible when investigators examine linguistic landscapes from the perspectives of history.

That a consideration of history must be a cornerstone in any linguistic landscape study could not be truer than for the city of Istanbul. Not only can Istanbul’s past be today read in it’s skyline punctuated by Byzantine domes, Ottoman minarets, towers and churches, but it can be read, too, in the scripts still visible on the city’s ubiquitous fountains, on the archways of its ‘hans’, mosques, synagogues, and churches, on gates leading to its cemeteries, and on the city’s many monuments, Byzantine columns, and the turn-of-the-19th-century European edifices of old Pera. Latin, Byzantine Greek, Ottoman Turkish, Roman alphabetic transcriptions of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Hebrew, Ladino, Armenian, Greek, French and many more, were the languages of Byzantium’s Constantinople and the Ottoman’s ‘Stamboul.’ These emblems of Istanbul’s past, languages inscribed in stone and metal, on both the European and Asian sides, make no sense except in the light of the complex demographic shifts that have occurred as a result of conquests, migrations, depopulations, repopulations, forced population exchanges, and top-down policies and bottom-up practices, along with corresponding details from the historical record.

Concerning the present-day language situation, modern Turkish is, without question, the top-down dominant language in the city and the country as a whole. Far from being the first language of every citizen, (Turkey, in spite of itself, is endowed with an abundance of languages, 36 in all, around half of them endangered—see the Ethnologue 2016 profile for this country), it is the language of the media, education (although many universities do feature English-medium curricula), the courts and justice system, all government and civic bodies, and the sole official language of the republic as decreed by the Turkish constitution. Turkish is a defining feature of Turkish citizenship and identity, at least as conceived by the government. In terms of language regimes, all expectations and behaviors involving communication are first and primarily oriented towards Turkish.

That said, the following sketch, albeit greatly oversimplified, provides historical context for understanding the 20th and 21st century linguistic landscape of Istanbul. The Ottoman Empire comprised groups of people from diverse ethnic, language and religious backgrounds. Istanbul itself was, in a sense, representative of the greater diversity in the far-flung empire. Many districts in Istanbul and along the Bosporous had well-established Jewish, Greek, and Armenian communities that were many centuries old. As an example, a linguistic landscape study recently conducted on 17th century Istanbul (Csato et. al. 2010) identifies Fener and Kuzguncuk (two sites included in this study) as Greek and Jewish communities as does a later study on turn-of-the-century Istanbul (Johnson 1922). These studies show that Christian and Jewish communities with
their distinct religious practices and traditions existed in specific locations without interruption for at least 300 years of the Ottoman Empire. The evidence showing how much a part of the demographic fabric these populations were is visible today in their innumerable churches, temples, schools and other buildings which mark the cityscape—just as obvious is the architectural styles of the homes and commercial buildings of these districts which are distinctly European. A long thread of tragic events caused the non-Muslim population of Istanbul to fall dramatically during the first half of the 20th century—the last major depopulation event occurring in the aftermath of the “Events of September 6-7”—the 1955 riots targeting Greeks and other minorities in Istanbul and Izmir.

As above, the Turkish Republic in 1923 inherited the diverse populations from Ottoman times, and out of this heterogeneous mix, it intended to create a unified homogeneous society, largely defined in terms of the Turkish language and Turkish ethnicity. To this end, two major developments were undertaken by the new republic: the language reform (abandoning Arabic script and eliminating Arabic and Persian influences from the language, while adopting the Roman alphabet and developing a vocabulary from the pool of older Turkish words) (Lewis 1999), and Turkification (getting foreign populations to leave their districts and neighborhoods and moving Turks into these areas, and developing a homogeneous nation of Turkish speakers—see Mills [2010] for an account of Istanbul’s Turkification). Where the reality of the republic’s Muslim population was out of step with its goals, denial set in, as in the case of the Kurdish population inhabiting the eastern third of Turkey. The Kurds, the largest (and until recently unrecognized) minority in the new republic, were branded “mountain Turks” and their language, a broken variety of Turkish. As one study has proposed, a government campaign of “invisibilization” (Haig 2003) set in which effectively denied that there was any such thing as a linguistically, ethnically, and culturally distinct population of Kurds living within its national borders. Eventually, Kurdish in any form came to be banned, its public use in speech or writing an act punishable by law.

While reliable statistics are difficult to come by, Wikipedia quotes a number of sources giving the turn-of-the-19th-century population of Istanbul to be around 942,000, of which 44% are reported to have been Turkish and 56%, minorities and foreigners (Mutlu 2003). Shaw (1979) quoting census figures writes that the Muslim population of the city grew from 44% in 1885 to 65% in 1914. For the same interval, the percentage of the Greek population grew from 17% to 23%, the Armenian population fell from 17% to 8%, while the Jewish population levels remained stable at 5%-6%. Today the population of Istanbul is around 15 million—the largest minority population being Kurdish comprising around 3-4 million (20%-27%)—the result of recent emigration into the city from eastern Turkey. Other minority population figures relevant to this study are 50,000 Armenians (0.3%), 16,000 Jews (0.1%), and 2,000 Greeks (0.01%) (Hoffmann 2003; Wikipedia 2016). Not included in this summary is mention of the many other minority mother-tongue speakers from the Black Sea areas (such as the Circassians, Laz, Pontic Greeks) or from the Balkans (such as the Bosnians).

2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

For this paper, I present the main results for all four sites surveyed thus far, but I provide a more detailed examination of only two of those sites. A complete exposition will await the full paper. The following three research questions have guided this study.

1. What are the linguistic landscapes of present-day Istanbul?
2. What processes have shaped Istanbul’s linguistic landscapes in the past?
3. What processes may be shaping the linguistic landscapes of present-day Istanbul?

3 PROCEDURES

The neighborhoods thus far surveyed for this study include a sampling of the wide range of districts in the city: two formerly Jewish, Greek, and Armenian communities (Kuzguncuk on the Asian side and Fener on the European side) and two popular tourist districts, one in the old city (Sultanahmet) and the other in Beyoğlu, traditionally known as Pera (the old European district of Istanbul). These sites (and the several sites that I will survey in the coming months), taken as a whole, will be representative of Istanbul’s historical and present-day neighborhoods. The streets surveyed at each site were in the commercial areas of the districts. The distance of streets surveyed varied between 300m (Fener) and 800m (Kuzguncuk). In all cases, signs from both sides of the streets were noted. Surveys were conducted on weekdays between noon and 6:00PM.

I noted all visible language along the streets surveyed including all signs (street names, tourist explanation signs, banners across the streets, advertisements, commercial signs, and signs on street-sellers carts—e.g.,

those selling corn, chestnuts, lottery tickets, or Turkish simit), graffiti, and notices pasted or stapled on street posts, walls, or buildings. I did not include any signs above the 2nd level on buildings—the only exceptions were in the cases of long banners hanging from the higher floors.

Each sign was counted as one unit. In several cases, where shop owners had multiple variations of the same sign (e.g., on ground-floor, real-estate office windows there were often 20 or more signs in each window featuring information about apartments for sale; or at the green-grocers where shop keepers wrote multiple signs with names of fruit or vegetables with the prices) I counted each ‘cluster’ of signs as one unit: e.g., the left side of the green grocer's displaying a variety of fruits with many small signs (having the names of fruit and the price per kilo) would be counted as one 'sign.'

Signs were classified according to agency, i.e., who placed them: either official (O), commercial (C), or private (P). A sign was official if it was placed by a municipal or national government, or a religious authority; such signs are generally made of heavy, permanent materials such as metal with metal fixtures and typically feature names of streets or monuments, or signs featuring information for tourists. A sign was classified as commercial if it was placed by a corporation or business; such signs are usually advertisements or anything that promotes a business. There were many commercial signs made of permanent materials, but just as many made with lighter, impermanent materials. A private sign is one that was put in place by an individual resident; such signs are typically made of impermanent materials such as paper or cardboard and feature requests for help finding a lost pet, or graffiti on fences or walls.

A data-driven language-based coding scheme was developed that most usefully captured generalizations and trends concerning the language on the signs. Each sign was put into one of four categories: monolingual Turkish, bilingual Turkish and English, monolingual English, and Other. The latter group comprises all additional signs and includes all other languages monolingual and otherwise, and all language combinations. This means, however, that Turkish and English may be on signs in this category appearing, for example, bilingually with Greek.

To summarize, in addition to taking photographs of the signs, I noted the following information.

- Agency: whether a sign was Official, Commercial, Private
- Language: Turkish, Turkish+English, English, Other
- The number of languages, the kinds of languages, and their order of appearance on the signs
- Any historical background of the signs observable at the site
- Any further notable characteristics of the signs: size, color, configuration.

4 MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings for the four sites are summarized in Tables 1-3 below. All told, 1,042 signs were examined: 266 in Kuzguncuk, 259 in İstiklal, 118 in Fener, and 299 in Sultanahmet. Table 1 shows the classification of the signs by agency, and the total number of signs for each site. A similar pattern was found across the sites surveyed: commercial signs comprised over three-quarters of the all signs. Kuzguncuk had the lowest proportion (78%) while Sultanahmet had the highest (90%). The proportion of Private signs was nearly identical across sites at 2%-3%.

Table 1. Agency—numbers of signs (% in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Kuzguncuk</th>
<th>İstiklal</th>
<th>Fener</th>
<th>Sultanahmet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>51 (19)</td>
<td>33 (9)</td>
<td>13 (11)</td>
<td>25 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>208 (78)</td>
<td>317 (88)</td>
<td>102 (86)</td>
<td>269 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>7 (3)</td>
<td>9 (2)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>5 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. signs</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the principal language or language combination on signs for each site. The percentage of monolingual Turkish (T) signs goes from a high of 92% in Kuzguncuk to a low of 29% in Sultanahmet. At the same time, as the proportion of Turkish decreases across the sites, those of Turkish and English (T+E) bilingual signs and English monolingual signs (E) increase. This is seen most dramatically for English in
Sultanahmet, which shows a high of 51% monolingual English signs. The category Other (O) comprises all signs not included in the former three categories and will be discussed below.

Table 2. Language or language combinations (%) of the signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kuzguncuk</th>
<th>İstiklal</th>
<th>Fener</th>
<th>Sultanahmet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turk. + Eng.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the numbers of monolingual and a breakdown of the multilingual signs. Kuzguncuk has the lowest percentage of signs (2.7% with 7 signs) while Fener has the highest percentage (21.2% with 25). İstiklal and Sultanahmet have around the same percentages (15.3% and 18.4% respectively).

Table 3. Number of languages on the signs across sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Lang.</th>
<th>Kuzguncuk</th>
<th>İstiklal</th>
<th>Fener</th>
<th>Sultanahmet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total signs</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Percent Multilingual | 2.7% | 15.6% | 21.2% | 18.4% |

5 DISCUSSION

Concerning agency, (Table 1), all four locations show high levels (over 78%) of commercial signage because, quite obviously, these locations are commercial centers. İcadiye Sok. in Kuzguncuk showed the lowest proportion of commercial signage because their businesses do not feature the high density of signage that does, for example İstiklal and Sultanahmet. By density, I mean that business’s windows and displays are cluttered with advertisements, even spilling out onto the pavement—something that you don’t find in 'soft-sell' Kuzguncuk. Sultanahmet is a tourist center where businesses aggressively compete for customers. Even in a bad year for visitors, which 2016 is because of the many terror attacks and the July 15th attempted coup, the travel agencies, money change shops and pharmacies are cluttered with multilingual signs to attract customers. As for Official signs, the percentage was highest in Kuzguncuk because of the many religious buildings (two Christian churches and a synagogue) and the many street signs. It is interesting that there were few Private signs across all settings.

The surprise of the findings (see Table 2) is that, in terms of language, the signs can, following the above discussion above concerning codification, be usefully grouped into four categories: monolingual Turkish (T), bilingual Turkish and English (T+E), English monolingual (E), and all Other (O) language combinations (including English and Turkish). This is a reasonable division for these sites (and likely Istanbul as a whole) for several reasons. One, because the first three categories (T, T+E, and E) comprise 91%-98% of the total number of signs; and two, because English is the most frequently encountered language after Turkish—the
exception is Sultanahmet, where English ranks first over Turkish. The prevalence of English can be explained two ways:

1. The symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) of English. English is laden with associations of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and/or fashion. In this sense, English is exploited in Turkey today for its symbolic potential, its modernist cachet, and for its prestige.

2. The spread of English and globalization (Mufwene 2010). As in many countries, English is the default language for the international tourist trade in Turkey. Thus it is also exploited as a medium for exchanging ideas and information—for barter and trade. (Russian comes a close second in coastal towns such as Bodrum, Marmaris, and sections of Antalya, even at the airports which service these towns—all three locations are popular with Russian tourists.)

I will next focus on two districts, Kuzguncuk and Sultanahmet.

5.1 Kuzguncuk

Kuzguncuk is a residential community of several thousand people on the Asian side south of the Bosphorus Bridge. There are two populations living there today: a tightly knit traditional generally elderly Turkish community, and a community of younger newcomers including art gallery and boutique shop owners, artists, and the like. As noted above, Kuzguncuk had been, up until 1955, identified as a chiefly Greek and Jewish neighborhood. In its day, the neighborhood also included a significant community of Armenians. These facts are corroborated by the neighborhood’s two Jewish synagogues, four Christian churches, one of the largest Jewish cemeteries in Istanbul, and a large Greek cemetery, among other non-Muslim landmarks. Kuzguncuk has in the past 20 years undergone significant gentrification. Recently, there have been efforts to restore many of the old row houses that had been abandoned or fallen into disrepair The main street leading up from the Bosphorus, İcadiye Sokak, is lined with small businesses, pastry shops and bakeries, restaurants, and art galleries. The restaurants and tea houses always have customers, most of them local on weekdays, usually seated outside on small tables and chairs, spilling out at times into the street. A popular tourist destination for locals, it’s small food establishments do a fast business on the weekends.

Tables 2-3 reveal that Kuzguncuk has a strongly Turkish sociolinguistic landscape profile (e.g., 92% of its signs are monolingual Turkish). We can deduce that the target audience is Turkish, for both the residents and the weekend visitors. A few details of Kuzguncuk’s signage will bear this out.

We note that 92% percent of the signs are monolingual Turkish, but what is going on with the other 8% of the signs? There are a total of 22 such signs: T+E = 5, E = 10, and O = 7. All of the five T+E and ten E signs are commercial. In all cases, English and the other foreign languages (but see below) are used for their cachet of modernity or cultural references outside Turkey, and minimally for the information they bear. Several examples follow:

**Turkish + English**

“Harmony Sanat Gallery” [Harmony Art Gallery]—One of the five ‘Turkish+English’ signs, the use of the English modifier “harmony” lends the establishment a warm and calm atmosphere. The use of the English word is not intended to give information.

**English**

“Olive and Beyond”—One of the ten monolingual ‘English’ signs to be found along the 400m of İcadiye Cad. surveyed. The sign appears above the store entrance, inscribed onto a fine piece of wood—there is no other signage on this store. The store features cold-press olive oil and olive oil products and has all the trimmings of being up-scale and exclusively for olive oil gastronomes. The sign “Olive and beyond” is informative about the store’s main product, and at the same time, suggests in a marginally poetic way, a further universe of olive products. Although monolingual English, I believe this sign is nonetheless intended for the neighborhood’s Turkish shoppers. There are so few foreign tourists visiting this community, the use of English in this case is meant to appeal to an educated and discriminating Turkish clientele.

**Turkish + French**

“Sarmaşık // Café de // Balık // Keyfi” [ivy // café of // fish // mood] or approximately: “Ivy In-the-mood-for-Fish Café”[—This is one of the seven ‘Other’ signs found in Kuzguncuk. The use of both Turkish and French (café de= café of) here is amusing, and the French expression gives the culinary experience a little frisson in this modest Kuzguncuk eatery. It is likely that everyone is able to translate café de, not the least because the word “café” without the accent aspir é is found everywhere in Turkey (as is the French transcription of the word, “kafe”).
In the examples above, all the uses of foreign languages were included because they amuse and give the restaurant a bit of sophistication, a feeling of modernity or cosmopolitanism. These foreign words appearing on the signs are not chiefly informational in their purpose or only minimally so.

The exceptions to the above are found in the signage for the Greek churches and the Jewish temple, all designated as Official. Altogether, there are five such signs along this Icadıye Cad.—all of them monolingual Greek or Hebrew, or bilingual Greek and Turkish. The signs announce the name of the church or synagogue (as is typically found in Istanbul, these Christian and Jewish edifices are today found behind high walls of concrete or metal, sometimes barbed wire topping the wall) and provide a spiritual message. They are intended to be informative, but there are only a handful of people today in Kuzguncuk who may be able to read them. There are few Greeks, Jews or Armenians living in the neighborhood—in fact, there is no sense in which we can say that today Kuzguncuk is a Jewish or Greek community. Therefore, one must ask to what extent these signs constitute a part of the ‘living’ linguistic landscape? Should these signs be given their own category, one that acknowledges their past relationship to the landscape, but also notes their current irrelevance, except as icons or museum pieces? The thing is, as above, there are remnants of these once vibrant communities still living in Istanbul. The Greek Patriarhate, the holy see of the Orthodox church, is located in the Fener district. Small but dedicated groups are active in keeping their religious institutions alive. Thus, these signs are relevant to a historical minority of Istanbul’s population.

5.2 Sultanahmet

Sultanahmet, in contrast to Kuzguncuk, has always been a Turkish district, albeit one with a unique status. Sultanahmet is the site of major attractions such as the Hagia Sophia Byzantine church, the remains of the Byzantine Hippodrome, the Blue Mosque, and Topkapi Palace. These and other historical sites draw millions of visitors to Istanbul every year, many of them passing through Sultanahmet. Divam Yolu, the street surveyed for this study, is the main street fronting these historical sites and is lined with kebab and fast-food restaurants, sweets and pastry shops, souvenir and money change shops, pharmacies, and travel agencies. All these business are intended to cater to the tourist trade, both domestic and international.

Tables 2-3 show that Sultanahmet has a linguistic landscape profile very different from that of Kuzguncuk. Monolingual English signs account for 51% of the total while monolingual Turkish account for only 29%. Thus the majority language (English) is not the dominant language (Turkish) in this landscape. Altogether, English is found on 66% of the signs (including T+E, E, and O) of the study site along Divam Yolu. This statistic shows the strength of the international commercial activity in this district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Turkish (T=87)</th>
<th>Bilingual (T+E=33)</th>
<th>English (E=151)</th>
<th>Other (O=28)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A breakdown of these results in terms of agency is interesting (see Table 4). The signs are mostly commercial for all groups (above 77%), but in the case of English monolingual signs, it is 100%. For the T+E bilingual signs, while 79% of the signs are commercial, 21% are bilingual. Many of these latter signs have been placed by the cultural ministry for international visitors.

5.3 Language hierarchies, language dominance, and the role of English

English is in the second position (Kuzguncuk, Fener, İstiklal) or the first position (Sultanahmet) in the language landscape hierarchies of the neighborhoods surveyed so far. Taken as a whole, Turkish monolingual signs comprise only 65% of the total signage. Given these findings, in particular for Sultanahmet, in what sense can we say that Turkish is the dominant language? And what is the role of English? The first thing is that these four neighborhoods are not representative of Istanbul as a whole because they include the two districts most frequented by international tourists. If, for example we exclude Sultanahmet from our analysis, the proportion of Turkish monolingual signs increases to 79%. English monolingual signs, on the other hand, represent 18% of the total signage, but if Sultanahmet is excluded, English falls to 6% of the linguistic landscape—a percentage that will likely be found across most Istanbul districts. Second, most English monolingual signs are used for commercial purposes (97%), and the English words and expressions on the signs are deployed principally for their connotations of sophistication or modern chic (except in the case of Sultanahmet where English is also used informationally). Regarding the ‘Official’ signs, only one English monolingual sign is found in the data set, while Turkish monolingual signs
comprise 10% (101 signs) of the total. So while the data show that English has significantly penetrated the landscapes of Istanbul signage, a fact attributable both to its status as an international language and globalization processes (Crystal 2003, Garcia 2001), these perspectives suggest that English, though pervasive in one site, plays a limited role in Istanbul’s overall language scheme, and that its function is restricted to its value as a cachet of modernity and its usefulness in the international tourist trade. As before, English has no role in the formation of Turkish identity or citizenship.

Like other regions with heavy international tourist traffic (e.g., Göreme in Cappadocia, Turkey, where I found that English monolingual signs comprised 64% of the landscape along the main street), the district of Sultanahmet is a small island in the sea of Turkish language dominance in Istanbul—but this speculation will be evaluated as other districts are surveyed in the future. The language regime on the street in Sultanahmet is that of a polyglot’s playground. Shopkeepers and touts are often functional in four or five languages and are very pleased to display their linguistic virtuosity. They will greet you first in English or Japanese or Arabic, depending on the stereotypic profile you appear to fit, and then segue into German, Chinese or French if they’ve missed the mark. Behaviors and expectations and attitudes about speaking languages other than Turkish are enthusiastically positive. In contrast, the language regime on the street in Kuzcunguk is decidedly monolingual—although you will find goodly numbers of educated, fluent English speakers among the newcomer population.

5.4 Other districts, other languages

Other languages, and observations about languages, that were notable in the data are discussed below.

5.4.1 Arabic

The 2016 year was a very poor one for tourism, particularly for Istanbul. There were few tourists from Russia, or from European and North American countries, but larger numbers coming from the Arab states, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. For this reason, we find a good number of signs in Arabic. So for example, of the 28 signs in the ‘Other’ category in Sultanahmet, half of them (50%) were monolingual Arabic or included Arabic. Of the 34 ‘Other’ signs in İstiklal, 19 included Arabic.

5.4.2 French

French was the international language of culture and diplomacy from the 19th century until the end of World War II. Over these years, Turkish incorporated hundreds of French words into the language, much as English absorbed Norman French after the 1066 Battle of Hastings. The first non-Ottoman language used on Turkish postage stamps (Wendel, 2016, under review) was French in 1876 (e.g., “Emp. Ottoman” “Postes Ottomanes”, “Vingt Kurus”). Even in the 1960s, the Turkish government issued Visa stamps for foreign passports that were bilingual Turkish and French (e.g., “Délivré le __________ “ “Nombre de Visites Permises __________” ; and the blank spaces filled in by hand with French words in ink: “22 Mars 1961”; “Plusieurs”). For this reason, one can always count on finding French inscribed in on buildings and the like around the city. The Greek consulate, for example, along the study site in İstiklal has inscribed above it: “Consulate General du Greece.”

5.4.3 Kurdish

Finally, I note that in all my observations of public signage taken across Istanbul so far, including graffiti, I have not come across one instance of Kurdish, notwithstanding that there is a significantly large population of Kurds living in Istanbul. This is doubtless due to the government’s past language policies (Zeydanlioğlu 2012) that have proscribed all use of Kurdish throughout the country. There had been a welcomed relaxation of this language policy in 2008 (in part to fulfill requirements for EU membership), but this more liberal approach seems to have hardened once again following the terror attacks and coup of 2016.

6 CONCLUSION

This work-in-progress has examined the linguistic landscapes of four Istanbul neighborhoods. The sociolinguistic profile of each site manifests influences from many quarters. These findings have revealed, in some measure, how the linguistic landscapes of Istanbul’s past had been shaped by earlier non-Muslim populations and by campaigns to Turkify non-Muslim districts. In the present day, it is English, with its accents of cosmopolitanism and modern chic, and its use as the language franca of the international tourist trade, that contributes the greatest share to languages other than Turkish in Istanbul’s public spaces. However with few exceptions, Turkish is today the language which dominates the linguistic landscapes of Istanbul. These early findings are promising, but substantive conclusions will await the full paper.
7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my colleagues at Boğaziçi University’s Department of Foreign Language Education for their most kind support for this project during my 2016-2017 academic sabbatical in Istanbul, Turkey.

REFERENCE LIST
