

Language Diversity in Urban Landscape: The Case of Maroua

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P. O. Box 644 Maroua, Cameroon

Received: March 20, 2025

Accepted: May 18, 2025

Published: June 3, 2025

doi:10.5296/elr.v11i1.22916

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/elr.v11i1.22916>

Abstract

This study examines language diversity as a symbolic construction of public spaces, with a specific focus on Maroua, a city in Cameroon. The linguistic landscape characterized by the presence and visibility of different languages in public spaces, serve as a reflection of the sociolinguistic dynamics and cultural diversity of a community. This study shows how the language ideology of institutions and the community of Maroua as a whole are reflected on its landscape. The study mainly focuses on language distribution, and factors that influenced the linguistic landscape in public spaces in Maroua. The research is guided by Landry and Bourhis' (1997) theory of Linguistic landscape. The researchers used the quantitative and qualitative research design. The data in this research were collected in the public spaces of Maroua. A total of 305 signs snapped with a digital camera constituted the primary source of information in this research. The researchers also used observation and interviews to gather data on the linguistic landscape of Maroua. Data analysis shows that the languages displayed in Maroua linguistic landscape are French, English and indigenous languages such as Fulfuldé. The findings show that French is the dominant language in the linguistic landscape of Maroua and minority languages are almost absent on the signs. The languages and signs reflect the political, social, ideological and cultural forces at work in the environment of

Maroua. The linguistic landscape of Maroua is also influenced by factors such as urbanization, migration and government policy on language use. This research is an important contribution to the sociolinguistic dynamics and cultural diversity study of the Cameroonian urban communities.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Maroua, Sign, Multilingualism, Public space, Language diversity, language ideology

1. Introduction

The concept of *linguistic landscape* refers to the linguistic and semiotic features present in the public environment, which are the signs, buildings, and other visual and cultural artefacts that people encounter in their daily lives. The study of linguistic landscapes as a construction of the public sign has gained popularity in recent years, as researchers (Hinmassia & Apuge, 2023; Kireina & Nurenzia, 2023; Kouega, 2019; Pütz, 2020) seek to understand the ways in which language and social identity are reflected and constructed within public discourse. Studies of linguistic landscapes have focused on diverse themes, such as the way language is used to mark social differences and power relations, the relationship between language and urban planning, and the role of language in advertising and commercial messaging (Ariffin & Husin, 2013; Ndimulunde, 2019; Wang, 2015; Zimny, 2017). Following Spolsky (2020), the content, form, and context of public signs show how elements interact with cultural, social, and political contexts to create a particular linguistic landscape. The analysis of linguistic landscape also provides insight into how social identities are constructed and reflected in public spaces and how these identities are interpreted by the public.

Linguistic landscape incorporates the languages used in shop signs, advertisements, products in the supermarket, commercial boards, names of buildings, menus, graffiti, and bus station, shopping centres, notices, advertising posters, and hoardings. Similarly, there is general agreement by Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara and Trumperhecht that language used in linguistic landscape falls into two categories, that is, top-down public signs, created by the state and local government bodies and bottom-up language use created by shop owners, private business areas (as cited in Wang, 2015). Wang (2015) finds out from an investigation on linguistics landscape that, signs have been divided into two types, “private vs government”. Landry and Bourhis (1997) developed “top down vs bottom up and Ben Rafael, Shohamy, Amara and Trumper Hecht (2006) emphasised on “official vs non official. All the terms have similar definition and scope; government sign or top down or official sign or public sign is a sign which is produced by public authorities like the government, municipalities or public agencies, and sign produced by individuals, organisations or firms or less autonomously in the authorized regulations limits refers to private sign or bottom up or non-official sign. This study therefore aims at analysing the linguistic landscape of Maroua by showing how the language diversity in urban landscapes serves as symbolic construction of public spaces. The following research questions will guide the analysis:

- What are the various languages used in public spaces in Maroua?
- What are the factors that influence the linguistic landscape in Maroua?

2. The Linguistic Background of Cameroon

The Cameroonian territory used to be inhabited by several communities which can be brought together following the geographical areas they occupied into two major groupings (Kouega, 2019). The people living in the northern area are mainly Sudanese and Fulbe while those living in the southern area are mainly composed of Bantu and Semi-Bantu people. Kouega stresses that in the northern area, the Sudanese like the Kapsiki and the Mboum seem to have been the autochthonous inhabitants; in all likelihood, they seem to have lived in the

area for the longest time. The Fulbe, also called Fulani, seem to have arrived much later. They came from Senegal, crossed northern Nigeria and northern Cameroon, and went to Sudan through Chad. The Semi-Bantu people like the Bamileke, the Nso and the Tikar, who were by far more numerous, appear to have fled from the Fulbe invaders. The Bantu people like the Douala, the Ewondo and the Bakossi, occupied the territory from the Atlantic coast to the heart of the Equatorial rain forest.

Moreover, Simo Bobda and Mbouya (2005, p. 122) state that, the linguistic landscape of Cameroon has a unique complexity, hardly paralleled by that of any other country in the world. In this sense, “before colonialism came to make the linguistic situation of Cameroon more complex, this West African nation could already boast of hundreds of indigenous languages and a major lingua franca known today as Kamtok” (Ngefack, 2010, p. 152). This suggests that the advent of colonisation only made the linguistic situation of the country denser, given that, many indigenous languages and a lingua franca were already attested. Therefore, Cameroon is often portrayed as a bilingual nation, since it has English and French as its official languages and it is actually a multilingual nation. Thus, “the coexistence of different languages suggests that the effects of language contact such as linguistic borrowing, interference, code switching and loan translation are widespread” (Echu, 2003, p. 1).

In fact, Cameroon’s linguistic landscape has been explored through the various spaces that English, French, Pidgin English, and Camfranglais and, to a minor degree, indigenous African languages occupy in its sociolinguistic composition. Figure 1 below shows the Linguistic clusters of Cameroon.

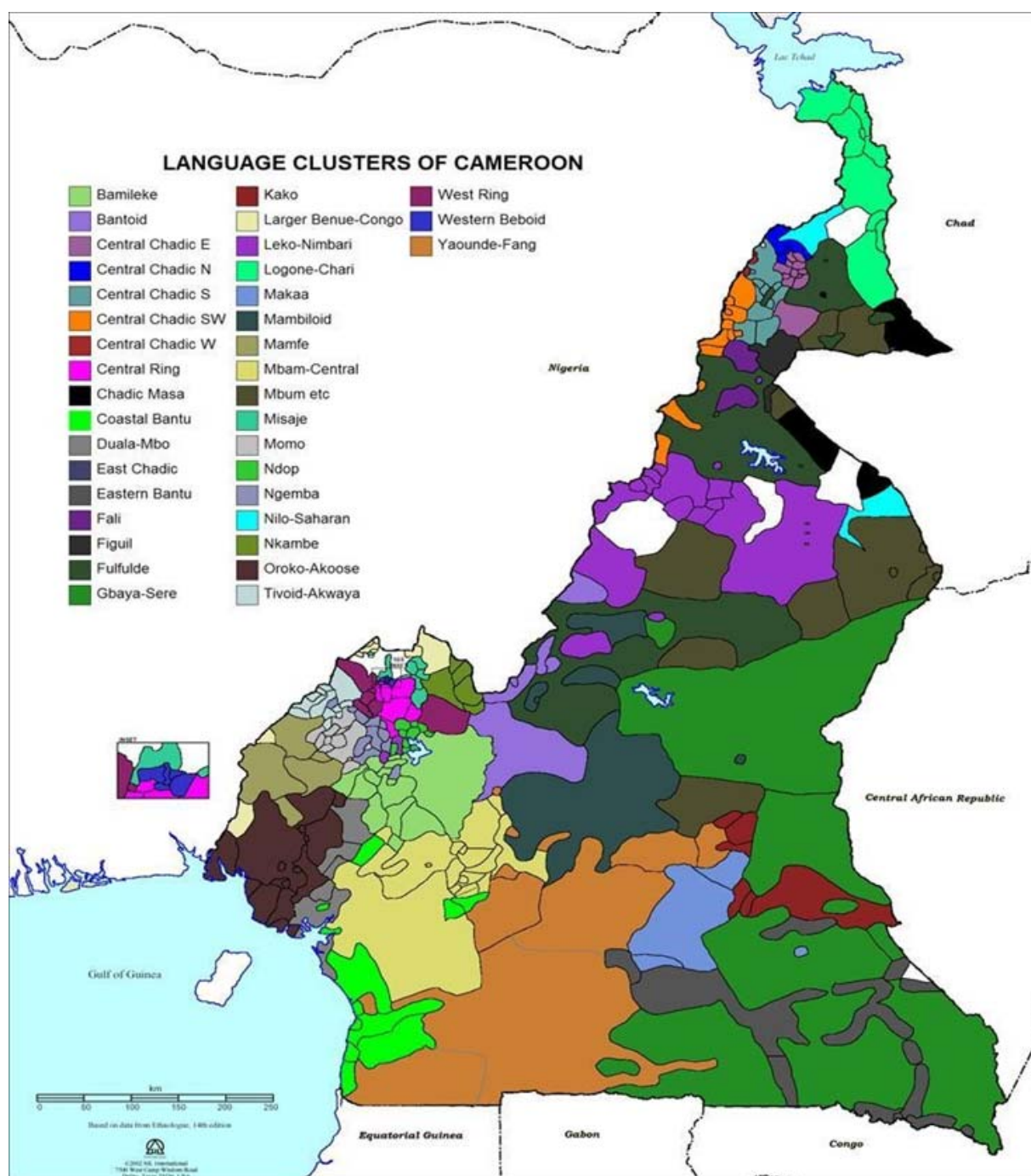


Figure 1. Linguistic clusters of Cameroon (Adapted from Michel Dieu & Patrick Renaud, 1983)

From Figure 1 above, it is indicated that Cameroon is a linguistically diverse country, home to over 280 languages, which belong to several major language families. The linguistic diversity can be broadly categorized into three main clusters: Bantu languages (this is one of the largest clusters in Cameroon, comprising languages such as Ewondo, Bulu, and Douala. These languages are part of the larger Niger-Congo family and are predominantly spoken in

the southern regions of the country.), Chadic languages (this cluster includes languages like Fulfuldé and several others spoken in the northern regions of Cameroon. Fulfuldé, for instance, serves as a lingua franca among the Fulani people and is widely used in trade and communication.), and Adamawa-Ubangi languages (this cluster includes languages such as Gbiri-Ngambaye and Mbum. These languages are primarily spoken in the Adamawa region and parts of the eastern and northern regions of Cameroon). In addition to these clusters, Cameroon is also home to several pidgin and creole languages, most notably Cameroonian Pidgin English, which serves as a lingua franca in urban areas and among speakers of different native languages. However, many of these languages are endangered due to factors such as urbanization, globalization, and the dominance of French and English as official languages.

3. The Statement of Problem

Urban areas are characterised by linguistic diversity, with multiple languages and dialects coexisting in a complex linguistic landscape. Maroua, a city in Cameroon, exemplifies this phenomenon, with various languages spoken by its inhabitants. However, this linguistic diversity poses challenges for communication, social cohesion, and urban planning. We observe miscommunication, social fragmentation and the erosion of cultural identity. This hinders collaboration and social integration among inhabitants of Maroua. Therefore, there is a need to explore the linguistic landscape in different geographical, historical, social, and political contexts to gain insight on the role it plays in shaping community identity and socio-cultural relations. Thus, the current study is conducted to find out the various languages used in public spaces and the factors that influence the linguistic landscape in Maroua.

4. Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To explore the various languages used in public spaces in Maroua.
- To examine the factors that influence the linguistic landscape in Maroua.

5. Theoretical Considerations

This research is guided by Landry and Bourhis' (1997) theory of Linguistic Landscape. The Linguistic Landscape theory was fathered by Landry and Bourhis (1997) in their seminal work on ethno linguistic vitality and signage in Canada. Both authors elaborated on the notion of Linguistic Landscape and the aim of the theory was to explain the visibility of languages on objects that mark the public space in a given territory. The linguistic landscape refers to the visible representation of languages in public spaces such as signs, advertisements billboards, and other forms of communication in urban and suburban settings. It is a product of social, cultural, and political processes that reflect the social context and history of a particular geographical area.

According to Landry and Bourhis (1997) in their theory of “the linguistic landscape”, the linguistic display of a place is the result of the dominant political, social, and cultural forces at work in that environment. The linguistic landscape serves as a reflection of how language,

ethnicity, culture, and power intersect. Different groups within a community have varying degrees of access to the representation in the public space, which is reflected in the linguistic landscape. For example, minority communities may have their languages and cultures subordinated or erased from public life, while the dominant ethnic group language and culture dominated the public space.

Landry and Bourhis (1997) put forward two basic functions related to the study of Linguistic Landscape: an informational function and symbolic function. While informational function involves the use of languages in public spaces to convey factual information, such as street signs, advertisements, or public notices, the symbolic function refers to the use of languages in public spaces to convey deeper meanings, values, or cultural identities. The development of the linguistic landscape is influenced by various factors, such as urbanisation, globalisation, migration, and governmental policies on language usage. Therefore, the transformation of the linguistic landscape may indicate political and social changes within a society. The theory of “linguistic landscape” provides a critical framework for understanding how language and space intersect, and it is a useful tool for analysing the sociolinguistic dynamics of urban spaces.

6. Review of Literature

Studies on linguistics landscape have been carried out from diverse perspectives. One of the earliest studies on the linguistics landscape was conducted by Xia and Li (2016) entitled “Studying Languages in the Linguistic Landscape of Lijiang old Town”. The main objectives of the study were to find out the languages use and their distributions, especially the use of the bilingual and multilingual signs and the attitudes of local governmental officials, shop owners or employees, domestic and international tourists towards the use of Chinese, Dongba script and English. In this research, both the qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. A digital camera was used to take photographs. The corpus comprises 329 units of analysis that were collected in Fuhui Street and Xinhua Street respectively. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the local government officials, shop owners and tourists from home and abroad. There were 33 participants in this research. Findings indicate that the linguistic landscapes of Fuhui and Xinhua Streets have great difference.

Zimny (2017) carried out a research entitled “Language and Place-making: Public Signage in the Linguistic Landscape (LL) of Windhoek’s Central Business District”. The objective of the study was to investigate the dynamic of LL, namely Independence Avenue in the central business district (CBD) of Windhoek, Namibia. The data for this study were extracted from different districts of Namibia. It showed how many languages were used in Namibia. The researcher used a survey research design of quantitative research. The number of physical signs were 679. Results showed a division of public signage into zones with markedly different characteristics, with a central zone that appears more exclusive and tourist-oriented, and to peripheral zones that instead resemble sites of necessity. Also, Pujara (2018) conducted the study entitled “language Formation in Linguistic Landscape and Teachers’ Views on its use for ELT Pedagogy” to find out the language formation system on linguistic landscapes in terms of the number of languages used, priority in the selection of language, transliteration, translation,

code-mixing and non-standard structures. The study found that there were altogether seven languages used on the linguistic landscapes of three different areas of Kathmandu district including English, Nepali, Newari, Urdu, Japanese, Chinese and Korean. Moreover, the results show that LLs are useful materials to teach language skills and aspects of language with high motivation in the classroom.

Moreover, Thapa (2018) explored the choices of languages used in the signboards of governmental and nongovernmental organizations from Kathmandu and proposes different languages in the signboard of different organizations. The study followed a descriptive research design which is based on primary and secondary sources of data. The samples of this research were 100 photos of the signboard used by governmental and nongovernmental organizations and interviewed 6 concerned people such as heads and owners (each from 3) of the governmental and nongovernmental organizations from Kathmandu. Findings showed that Nepali and English languages were highly used together and Nepal vasa were also found in some of the governmental organizations' signboards along with Nepali and English. In the same way, the study found the domination of English was higher than that of Nepali and other languages on the signboard of nongovernmental organizations.

In the perspective of globalisation, migration, and identity formation, Blommaert and Maly (2018) hold that linguistic landscape can serve as a site of contestation between different groups over issues such as political power, cultural identity, and language rights. They suggest that linguistic landscape analysis can be used to uncover the symbolic and material struggles that take place in public spaces. Vincent Jenjekwa (2022) investigated the language situation in the public space in Masvingo from a linguistic landscape point of view. The data consists of written information displayed on billboards, road signs and buildings. The study recommends equitable treatment of languages in the public space to ensure that the languages and cultures associated with all languages of Zimbabwe do not gradually die. Putu and Verayanti (2023) examined the translation strategies of bilingual information boards and discovered that the information boards in temples have various syntactic scopes, namely in the form of phrases and sentences.

Pütz (2020) investigated the linguistic landscape of Cameroon. The purpose of the research was to study linguistic landscapes in the Central/Western African state of Cameroon, with particular reference to its capital, Yaoundé. He suggests that the field of linguistic landscapes can acts as a reflection of linguistic hierarchies, ideologies and acts of resistance in multilingual and multicultural communities. He added that the deployment of languages on signs and linguistic tokens, apart from serving informative and symbolic functions for the audiences or passers-by they target, also has social and political implications in an ethnically heterogeneous and linguistically hybrid society such as Cameroon. Also, Suar Betang (2023) examines the use of language in public spaces, especially at the Majapahit Kingdom site. He suggests that, the form of languages use in the public spaces are divided into three categories of language signs in public spaces, namely warning signs, information signs and place name signs.

Hinmassia and Apuge (2023) investigated language choice in a public setting. The study

intends to scrutinize the factors accounting for the choice of some language users at the University of Maroua. At the end of the analysis, it has been shown that students, the teaching staff (involving some university administrators), and the support staff have some positive and negative attitudes following the language choices made in relation to where the communication takes place as well as the language situations such as enabling mutual intelligibility, social inclusion/exclusion, intimacy and showing identity, solidarity, and work coordination.

The review shows that studies on linguistic landscapes of Maroua are insufficient or few. In addition, the linguistic diversity of Maroua is a vital aspect of its social, cultural, and economic life, reflecting the complexities of language use in a multilingual context. Understanding this landscape can provide insights into the dynamics of communication, identity, and community in the region. It is therefore worthwhile to examine the various languages used in public spaces in Maroua; to find out the factors that influence the linguistic landscape in Maroua and identify the categories of signs in the city of Maroua linguistic diversity.

7. Methodology

Data for this research was gathered with a digital camera which was used to snap the public spaces of Maroua such as shop signs, advertisements, products in the supermarket, commercial boards, names of buildings, menus, graffiti, and bus station, shopping centres, notices, advertising posters, boardings, the airport and some places of interest in Maroua, including private institutions and public institutions. A total of 305 digital photos (Signs) constitute the primary data in this study that were taken in the public and private spaces of Maroua: signs issued by public authorities (government, municipalities, public agencies, schools, universities, etc.) and on the other hand, the signs issued by individuals, associations or firms acting more or less autonomously within the limits authorised by official regulations (shops, private companies, department stores). The corpus came from six (6) survey areas among which were Djarengol (50 signs), Pitouaré (66 signs), Hardé (28 signs), Ouro-Tchedé (47 signs), Dougoi (26 signs), and Domayo (88 signs). Table 1 presents the corpus composition.

Table 1. Corpus composition

| Date | Survey area | No. of signs |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 13/04/2023 | Domayo | 88 (28.85%) |
| 17/04/2023 | Pitoaré | 66 (21.63%) |
| 26/01/2023 | Djarengol | 50 (16.39%) |
| 21/04/2023 | Ouro-Tchedé | 47 (15.41%) |
| 14/04/2023 | Hardé | 28 (9.19%) |
| 15/04/2023 | Dougoi | 26 (8.53%) |
| Total | Six areas | 305 (100%) |

Table 1 shows the date and the places where the data was collected, the survey area (the different districts of Maroua) and the number of signs that that were snapped in all the districts of Maroua. Some samples of signs collected with a digital camera are presented below:



Figure 2. Sample of signs

The above billboard shows the trilingual sign using English-French-Fulfuldé languages in Maroua linguistic landscape. This sign is written in English, French, and Fulfulde languages which indicate multilingualism in the advertisement billboard in the city of Maroua. The written form of languages in Figure 2 above are French “via ton forfait ou Data au”, English “plenty money” and Fulfuldé language “woila manga”. More signs can be found in the appendix.

Categorisation of signs: top-down and bottom-up signs in linguistic landscape of Maroua

The signs collected were categorised. Top-down and bottom-up signs were considered based on the categories provided by Rafael (2006). According to Gorter (2006), “top-down signs” are considered official signs placed by government, whereas “bottom-up” signs are non-official signs placed by other instances. The distribution of sign categories discovered in the public spaces of Maroua linguistic landscape can be found in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Top-down and Bottom-up signs

| Category | Type of item | | Number | Percentage |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------|
| Top-down | Public institutions | Governmental | 100 | 32.78% |
| | | Educational | 35 | 11.47% |
| | | Information | 30 | 9.83% |
| | | Religious | 20 | 6.55% |
| | | Medical | 20 | 6.55% |
| Bottom-up | Shop signs | Food & Drink | 35 | 11.47% |
| | | Beauty & wellness | 25 | 8.19% |
| | | Clothing | 14 | 4.59% |
| | Private Business | Offices | 17 | 5.57% |
| | Signs | Factories | 9 | 2.95% |
| Total | | | 305 | 100% |

With regard to the theory of Landry and Bourhis (1997), the classification on Table 2 show that, “top-down signs” in linguistic landscape of Maroua are considered official signs placed by government (public institutions, public signs and public announcement), and they are the dominant signs in the city of Maroua. whereas “bottom-up signs” in the linguistic landscape of Maroua are non-official signs (shop signs, clothing, drink & food, private business signs and private announcements) and the researchers found 100 appearances (32.78%) of bottom-up signs in the city of Maroua linguistic landscapes. The total of “top-down signs are 205 appearances (67.21%) in the city of Maroua linguistic landscapes. The statistics show that the interplay between top-down and bottom-up signs in the linguistic landscapes of Maroua reveals much about the social, cultural, and political dynamics of the community. Analysing these signs can provide valuable insights into issues of power, identity, language policy, and community engagement.

The categories of signs discovered in the public spaces of Maroua linguistic landscape were further classified into: slogans, orders and prohibitions, informative signs and building names. The categories of signs in public spaces of Maroua recorded in the data are contained in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Categories of signs in the city of Maroua linguistic landscape

| Total of signs | Categories of signs | Number | Percentage % |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------|--------------|
| 305 | Orders & Prohibitions | 107 | 35.08% |
| | Building names | 96 | 31.47% |
| | Slogans | 72 | 23.60% |
| | Informative sign | 30 | 9.83% |
| Total | | 305 | 100% |

It is indicated in the above Table 3 that 305 signs put into four categories were analysed. The results indicate that orders and prohibitions are most often found and dominant in the linguistic landscape in the city of Maroua (35.08%), follow by building names (31.47%). The other important signs category in the LL of Maroua are slogan signs (23.60%) and informative signs (9.83%). All of those slogan signs are presented in monolingual signs by using English language or French language.

8. Results and Discussion

Different languages were found in the public spaces of Maroua. These will be presented and discussed in turn.

8.1 Language Distribution

Concerning the distribution of languages in the linguistic landscape of Maroua, French and English are dominant languages in official and formal settings such as government offices, schools, and business establishments. Fulfulde is also visible in some signage and cultural contexts, as it is an important language within the population of Maroua. In addition, the local language like Fulfulde, depending on the specific population/group within the city, is heard and seen in informal, everyday interactions such as markets and street vendors. The distribution of languages in the linguistic landscape of Maroua is therefore varied or diverse. Table 4 shows the linguistic distribution in the city of Maroua.

Table 4. Linguistic distribution on LL of Maroua

| Languages | Number of signs | Percentage % |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| French | 233 | 76.39% |
| English | 66 | 21.63% |
| Fulfulde | 5 | 1.63% |
| Mafa | 1 | 0.32% |
| Total | 305 | 100% |

Statistics from Table 4 reveal that the most frequent language is French (76.39%). This language is found everywhere on the signs in the linguistic landscape of Maroua. It is followed by English as an official language in Cameroon (21.63%). The indigenous languages in the linguistic landscape of Maroua have a frequency of 1.95%. Therefore, the French language with 76.39% is definitely the dominant language in the linguistic landscape of Maroua, and the findings show that the indigenous languages in the city of Maroua are marginalized in the public spaces. This marginalisation of minority languages in the public spaces is due to the historical dominance of colonial languages which are French and English in education, government, and media. These languages have been prioritised over indigenous languages, leading to the marginalisation of local languages. Also, proofs of the marginalisation of indigenous languages in public spaces of Maroua can be seen in the limited

availability of educational materials, government documents, and media content in local languages. Additionally, the lack of research and documentation on minority languages in academic institutions and linguistic organisations further contributes to their marginalisation.

8.2 Signs Displayed in the Linguistic Landscape of Maroua

According to Eastman and Stein (2010), language display is a language-use strategy whereby members of one group lay claims to attributes associated with another, conveying messages of social, professional, and ethnic identity. Following this, all the signs that have been photographed in all the districts of Maroua were classified based on the number of languages displayed. In the linguistic landscape of Maroua, the signs displayed in the city were monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual. Table 5 presents the signs displayed in the city of Maroua linguistic landscape.

Table 5. Nature of signs and languages displayed in Maroua linguistic landscape

| Total | Nature of signs | Languages | Number | Percentage % |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|--------------|
| 305 | Monolingual | French-only | 183 | 60% |
| | | English-only | 36 | 11.80 % |
| | | Fulfulde-only | 1 | 0.32 % |
| | | Mafa-only | 1 | 0.32% |
| | Bilingual | French-English | 56 | 18.36 % |
| | | English-French | 24 | 7.86 % |
| | | French-Fulfulde | 2 | 0.65 % |
| | Trilingual | English-French- | 2 | 0.65 % |
| | | Fulfulde | | |
| Total | | | 305 | 100% |

Facts gleaned from Table 5 indicate that languages displayed in the city of Maroua are French, English, Fulfulde and Mafa languages. They were found in public spaces of Maroua linguistic landscape based on monolingual, bilingual and trilingual signs. However, the presence of monolingual, bilingual, and trilingual signs in the linguistic landscape of Maroua has several implications which relate to reflecting social, cultural, and political dynamics within a given community. So, the linguistic landscapes characterised by monolingual, bilingual and trilingual signs in the linguistic landscape of Maroua serves as a rich source of information about the social fabric of a community, revealing insights into identity, power relations, and the dynamic of language use. The statistics show also that French is the dominant language in Maroua linguistic landscape with 183 appearances on signage (60%), followed by English language with 36 occurrences on the signs (11.80%). The highest appearance of French in terms of frequency is due to the fact that Maroua is a francophone zone and the majority of the population speak only French. Fulfulde and Mafa as the indigenous languages used on signage in public spaces of Maroua, score 0.64%, with 1 appearance each. Concerning

the bilingual signs and trilingual signs, the statistics show that French and English were used 56 times with 18.36%, 24 occurrences of English and French with 7.86%, and usage of French and Fulfulde with 0.65%. The presence of indigenous languages in Maroua enriches the linguistic landscape and has far-reaching implications for cultural identity, social dynamics, education, and economic opportunities. It also presents challenges that require concerted efforts for preservation and promotion.

8.3 Factors that Influence the Linguistic Landscape of Maroua

The linguistic landscape of Maroua only to some extent reflects the languages spoken in the city. However, the linguistic landscape of Maroua is influenced by the following factors: geographical distribution, power relations, symbolic value, identity issues, and language vitality.

8.3.1 Geographical Distribution

Geographical distribution is a key factor that influences the linguistic landscape of Maroua. The region is home to several different ethnic groups, each with their own languages and dialects. These groups are often concentrated in different areas of the region, which can affect the way that languages and scripts are used in public spaces and various ethnic groups reside in different parts of the region, and this geographical distribution has a considerable impact on the linguistic landscape of the era. For example, in urban areas of Maroua, French and English are more prevalent, reflecting the influence of normal education and official use.

8.3.2 Power Relations

Power relations are a significant factor influencing the linguistic landscape of Maroua. These power dynamics have led to the dominance of French and English in official and public spaces in Maroua linguistic landscape, marginalization of local languages, and the creation of linguistic boundaries that limit the use of certain languages in the city of Maroua linguistic landscape.

8.3.3 Symbolic Value

Maroua is a multilingual city with a diverse population that speaks various languages, including French, English, and local language like Fulfulde. Each language has its symbolic value and presents different aspects of identity, culture, and social status. For example, in linguistic landscape of Maroua, French and English are often associated with education, power, and modernity, while local languages are linked to tradition and cultural heritage. However, the symbolic value of language can influence the LL of Maroua in various ways. For instance, signs, billboards, and advertisements in French and English are more prevalent in wealthier and commercial areas of the city, while local languages are commonly used in traditional markets, religious settings, and rural areas. The symbolic value of a language can also influence language policies and language patterns among individuals and community.

8.3.4 Identity Issues

Language is often closely tied to identity, and the use of certain languages or scripts may be

seen as an expression of cultural, ethnic, or national identity. This can influence the way that languages and scripts are used in public spaces, on signs, and other forms of communication. The linguistic landscape of Maroua reflects the identity issues of its residents. For example, the presence of various language signs, posters, and advertisements in different languages in the city is a reflection of the competing identity interests among different groups.

8.3.5 Language Vitality

In Maroua, there are several languages in use, including Fulfulde, French, and English. Each language has its level of vitality, which is reflected in the linguistic landscape. French, for example, is the most widely used language in Maroua linguistic landscape and has a high level of vitality. It is used in many contexts, from informal conversations to formal settings like education, government, and media. Signs, billboards, and other forms of public communication are mostly written in French, highlighting its status as a vital language in the city of Maroua linguistic landscape. Therefore, the vitality of a language can also influence the linguistic landscape. For example, if a language has low vitality, then language policymakers may take steps to increase its use and vitality, such as implementing in schools or promoting its use in public spaces.

However, the linguistic landscape of Maroua is shaped by a complex interplay of demographic, cultural, economic, political, and social factors. Understanding these implications is crucial for foresting an inclusive environment that respects and promotes linguistic diversity, ensuring that all languages and cultures are valued and preserved in the community. Therefore, understanding these factors can help policymakers, educators, and community leaders create environments that respect and promote linguistic diversity, foresting a more inclusive society.

9. Conclusion

This paper has discussed linguistic landscape in Maroua on the basis of Landry and Bourhis' (1997) theory of Linguistic Landscape. This framework was considered as a broader and less abstract approach for analysing how the language diversity in urban landscapes serves as symbolic construction of public spaces and to what extent does the linguistic landscape of Maroua reflects the languages spoken in the city. After investigation and analysis, statistics from the data analysed show that French is the predominant language in the linguistic landscape of Maroua. French language has the highest percentage (60%) among the other languages followed by the English language that occupied the second position with 11% in the linguistic landscape of Maroua city. Fulfulde and Mafa occupied the last position with 0.32% each in the linguistic landscape of Maroua. Fulfulde is widely spoken in Maroua, but marginalized on the public signs. This calls for

The current research presents some limitations which open the way to a new area of research in linguistic landscape. However, further research can focus, for instance on the impact of migration on linguistic landscape, looking at how migration patterns affect the linguistic landscape of public spaces and how this can influence social interactions between migrants and the host community.

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Appendix A

CODEBOOK

Table 1. Number, Date, Area, Government and Private sign, Establishment, Proper name, order of language

| Variable number | Variable name | Description | Value | Value label |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| 1 | NUMBER | Sign number | 305 | |
| 2 | DATE | Date on which sign was photographed | 1 | 26/01/2023 |
| | | | 2 | 17/04/2023 |
| | | | 3 | 21/04/2023 |
| | | | 4 | 13/04/2023 |
| | | | 5 | 14/04/2023 |
| | | | 6 | 15/04/2023 |
| 3 | AREA | Survey area | 1 | Djarengol |
| | | | 2 | Pitoiré |
| | | | 3 | Ouro-Tchedé |
| | | | 4 | Domayo |
| | | | 5 | Hardé |
| | | | 6 | Dougoi |
| 4 | GOV & PRIV | Government & Private sign | 1 | Government signs (39.47%) |
| | | | 2 | Private signs (16.72%) |
| 5 | ESTABLIS | Type of establishment | 1 | Shop |
| | | | 2 | Bar |
| | | | 3 | Restaurant |
| | | | 4 | Bank |
| | | | 5 | Hairdresser |
| | | | 6 | Repair shop |
| | | | 7 | Travel agency |
| | | | 8 | Health centre |
| | | | 9 | Office |
| 6 | PROPER | Presence of proper name(s) | 1 | Proper names |

| | | | | |
|----|----------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 7 | ORDER | Language in order of dominance on signs | 1 | French (60%) |
| | | | 2 | English (11%) |
| | | | 3 | Fulfulde (0.32%) |
| | | | 4 | Arabic (0.32%) |
| 8 | SIZE | Font size of text in languages | 1 | Different for all languages |
| 9 | TRANSLAT | Presence of translation | 1 | Word-for-word translation |
| | | | 2 | Free translation |
| | | | 3 | Partial translation |
| 10 | MIXING | Presence of language mixing | 1 | Mixing on text level |
| | | | 2 | Mixing on sentence level |
| | | | 3 | Mixing on word level |

Appendix B

COMPLETE LIST OF LANGUAGES FOUND

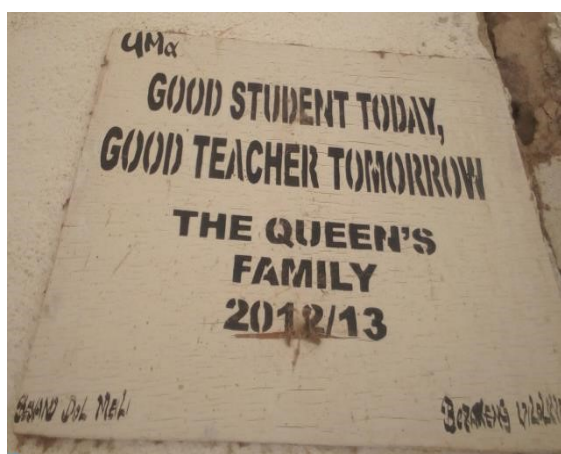
Table 2. Languages found on the signs in the survey areas in linguistic landscape of Maroua

| Languages | Djarengol | Pitoiré | Ourotchedé | Domayo | Hardé | Dougoi | Total/% |
|------------------|-----------|---------|------------|--------|-------|--------|--------------|
| French | 37 | 40 | 14 | 64 | 17 | 11 | 183 (60%) |
| English | 4 | 9 | 8 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 36 (11.80%) |
| Fulfulde | 1 | | | | | | 1 (0.32%) |
| Mafa | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 | 3 (0.98%) |
| Total | 43 | 49 | 22 | 76 | 19 | 14 | 223 (73.11%) |

Appendix C

Some of the digital photographs that were snapped in the street of Maroua LL











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