

Dominik Gerst, Maria Klessmann - Multilingualism and linguistic demarcations in border regions. The Linguistic Border Landscape of the German-Polish twin cities Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubiце

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Abstract: The present paper presents the results of the investigation on the Multilingualism and linguistic demarcations in border regions. The topic is linguistic border landscape of the German-Polish twin cities Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubiце.

Keywords: multilingualism, linguistic demarcations, border regions, linguistic border landscape,

1. Introduction

A prominent feature of national borders is its visibility or invisibility. Starting in general as an act of political force, national borders require great effort to be rendered not only (politically) recognizable, but also perceivable by the population. Border controls, fences, customs shacks, exchange offices, information signs, boundary marks, traffic controls, entry signs – this list could be continued indefinitely. So, what makes borders a complex phenomena is not only the manifold social relations they facilitate or limit. First of all, it's the specific possibilities to make them visible or invisible.

The questions of visibility and perceptibility of the borders and border regions are even more persistent when considering the changing character of the interior European borders in the Schengen zone, which have often been described as softening, fading or even disappearing (e.g. Łada/Segeš Frelak 2012). Although generalizations like „interior European borders“ should be used with caution, because all borders and border regions should be analyzed against the background of their specific historical circumstances, it is obvious that the process of European integration has an effect on the visibility of borders and the shaping of border regions. In the case of the so-called German-Polish twin cities Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubiце, the visibility of the border within the city has been continuously transformed. In the years following the Polish accession to the Schengen Agreement in 2007, and the subsequent opening of the border, customs shacks, boundary marks and border controls have been abolished.

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This article will tackle questions of the visibility and perceptibility of borders and border regions from a sociolinguistic point of view, focusing on the role of language use in creating borders and border regions.

Basically, language use relates to the topic in two ways. Firstly, border regions can be seen as multilingual spaces of language contact (Abel/Stuflesser/Voltmer 2007). In Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice, not only do speakers of the local languages of German and Polish come into contact, but also the use of English – a lingua franca in different domains such as European administration, tourism or global advertising – and potentially a variety of other languages can be observed. Secondly, language is the most prominent medium used to construct or contest regions and borders as symbolic forms (Bourdieu 1991). Localization, addressing, indexing and categorization are linguistic practices that are used as a means of demarcation. In this way, borders become multidimensional as they are realized as spatial, temporal or social borders through and by language use.

A sociolinguistic methodology that we will be applied here – and that in our view links questions of the visibility and perceptiveness of borders and border regions to matters of multilingualism and linguistic demarcations – is called „Linguistic Landscapes”(LL). This approach focuses on visible and perceivable (mainly written) language use in the public space. As Landry and Bourhis note in their seminal paper:

„The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration.“
(Landry/Bourhis 1997: 25)

A research in the growing field of Linguistic Landscapes focuses on a variety of urban environments. Spolsky (2009: 25) even prefers the term Linguistic Cityscapes to emphasize the connection between the visible language use and the urban locus of observation. So far, there has been little investigation in the context of border regions, especially in cases of urban borderland environments. This particular lack of interest is astonishing, since border towns, and especially twin cities, create multilingual spaces of language contact and linguistic demarcations that distinguish them from cities located further from the border. Furthermore, borders themselves become both the subject and the resource of Linguistic Landscaping.

As we will argue, the approach of Linguistic Landscapes is a particularly apt framework for the study of all kinds of boundary issues, especially when it comes to linguistic aspects of

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borders. Kallen (2010: 41) summarizes some basic ideas of Landry and Bourhis seminal paper:

„According to Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25), 'the most basic informational function of the linguistic landscape is that it serves as a distinctive marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a given language community'. They further argue (p. 25) that the linguistic landscape informs 'in-group and out-group members of the linguistic characteristics, territorial limits, and language boundaries of the region they have entered'. “

In this essay, we will focus on some preliminary work for a case study that will be conducted in the context of a course at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder). The aim is to focus on the German-Polish border region from a sociolinguistic point of view as an example of the changing interior borders of Europe resulting from the process of European integration. We believe that studying the Linguistic Border Landscape can give important insights into the status quo of this particular border and border region, how it is perceived, and how visible it is to the public in Europe today.

In the following, we will therefore first take a look at the border region of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice, its characteristic features and sociolinguistic context. Next, we will discuss some key concepts as well as the significance of multilingualism in the field of Linguistic Landscape, with the goal of presenting chosen actors who are more or less engaged in shaping the public space. Following the analysis of some examples of signage in the border region, framed by a broader discussion on language ideological declarations, we will finally derive guiding questions for the case study to come.

2. The sociolinguistic context of a German-Polish border region

As an indicator for different concepts of city identities, you can find a variety of designations for the cities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice: In different official contexts, they are depicted as neighboring cities, border cities, a Euroregion, divided cities, twin or sister towns. Divided by the river Oder, Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice can be described as border cities, because they are neighboring cities in the immediate vicinity along the German-Polish national frontier. Existing as one city until the Second World War, Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice nowadays are a so-called divided border city at a European internal border. The concept of

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twin or sister towns describes two autonomous cities working together on certain levels, but which are also seeking delimitation from „their other half“.

Due to the Second World War, the German-Polish border was closed and secured by the military until 1949; in subsequent years it was not very permeable for cross-border traffic. Although a treaty of 1971 set the framework for passport- and visa-free border traffic, the actual freedom of travel was still restricted. On behalf of the GDR, the border was closed again in 1980 to reduce outbound emigration. Visa restrictions were finally abolished in 1991 after the reunification of West and East Germany. During the 1990s, a larger number of bilateral agreements would follow, showing both the will to broaden and deepen relations, and also the large pent-up demand when it came to creating a stable and more lively neighborhood, especially along the German-Polish border.¹ When Poland joined the Schengen agreement in 2007, border controls were eliminated. All other national borders of Germany had already been more permeable for some time, for example for maintaining economic exchanges and political cooperation with the neighboring countries and border regions.

As the two cities look back on a relatively brief history of a shared border, the border region cannot be described as a traditional border area with developed historical conditions in terms of cultural and economic exchange (Banse 2013: 191). Although the border was opened, it is still a politically and culturally robust border, concerning for example prosperity and language (Banse 2013: 192).

Frankfurt (Oder) today has a decreasing population numbering about 58.000 inhabitants, including 3.000 foreigners and a majority of people over 45 years of age.² Słubice has around 17.000 inhabitants and a majority of people between the ages of 20 and 45 years. Estimates show that there will likely be a significantly negative population development in Frankfurt (Oder) by 2020, with a decrease of about 0,9 % per year. In Słubice, the population decline is

¹ Bingen, Dieter: Fast ein Wunder. Nach der Wende. Mit dem politischen Umbruch 1989 traten auch die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen in eine neue Phase, in: Das Parlament, Nr. 33-34 2014, 11.08.2014 URL: <https://www.das-parlament.de/2014/33-34/Themenausgabe/51399709.html>

² Einwohnermelderegister, Einwohner mit Hauptwohnsitz - Stadt Frankfurt (Oder) – Stadtteile - 31.12.2013 URL: https://www.frankfurt-oder.de/stadt/WusstenSie/DatenFakten/Dokumente%202011/Bev%C3%B6lkerung_Stadtteile.pdf

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estimated to be only 0,01 % per year.³

Today the Frankfurt (Oder)-Słubice area is the most important transition space for cross-border traffic between Poland and Germany. Road transport travels across the frequently-used Bundesautobahn 12/Autostrada A2 motorway bridge, and visitors, commuters and tourists use the so-called city bridge as a gateway across the Oder. The one prominent bridge that also used to house the customs building connects the two city centers.

In comparison to the rest of Europe, the German region of the German-Polish border is seen today as an underdeveloped and structurally weak economic region, although Frankfurt (Oder) is thought to be a center of development, evidenced by its technological and scientific institutions, and other potential advantages located outside the capital of Berlin. (Witt 2003: 98ff.) Słubice benefits economically from belonging to the Special Economic Zone Słubice/Kostrzyn established in 1997. Even though the price differences between Poland and Germany have become smaller, Słubice still profits from the importance of the so-called shopping tourism (Schultz 2002:14).

As of the end of 2013, the municipality of Frankfurt (Oder) houses 5,168 business enterprises, 543 of them - being Polish. Especially those businesses with fewer than 10 employees shape the corporate structure.⁴ Following official numbers, the income level in Poland is about four times lower than in Germany.⁵ According to the estimates of the IFO (Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich), the Polish wage level is predicted to adjust to Germany's wage level in about 2035. Meanwhile, expenses of Polish customers on the German side and German customers on the Polish side are equal. Both cities benefit economically from being situated at a border (Witt 2003: 102). German customers in Poland save especially by buying fresh products from the market or men's and women's clothing, shoes and leather goods. For Polish customers it is much cheaper to buy for example confectionary, cosmetics

³ Emmerling, Sandra, Gesellschaft für Unternehmens- und Kommunalberatung: Potenzialanalyse des Einzelhandels in Frankfurt (Oder) und Słubice, Ergebnispräsentation 17.09.2012 URL: http://www.zentrum-ffo.de/sttf-mitte/dokumente/DLP1375_FFO_Endpr%C3%A4sentation_17092012_gezeigt.pdf

⁴ Stadtverwaltung Frankfurt (Oder) URL: <https://www.frankfurt-oder.de/wirtschaft/Unternehmen/Seiten/default.aspx>

⁵ Industrie und Handelskammer Ostbrandenburg URL: <http://www.ihk-ostbrandenburg.de/html/1372Einkommensniveau>

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and detergents in Germany rather than in their home country.⁶ The old image of German consumers as bargain hunters, and Polish commuters as job seekers as an expression of a strong prosperity gap may dissolve slowly.

The Polish-German border region is also an area characterized by (possible) language contact. As in many border regions, speakers of at least two languages come into contact, and this contact can be intensified especially when crossing the border to exchange goods, and when speakers' mobility is facilitated. The perceived importance of German and Polish differs very much on both sides of the river Oder. Due to the economic imbalance, questions of prestige, and of real or perceived usefulness, among other factors, the inhabitants of Słubice are much more likely to learn German than Germans in Frankfurt (Oder) learning Polish (Damus 2008: 23). The meeting of different language families such as Slavic and Germanic also makes the situation more difficult than situations where, for example, two Germanic languages come into contact, as in the case of Dutch and German at the border of Germany and the Netherlands. A characteristic feature of language contact situation in this region is the asymmetric dominance of the German language. Here, the Polish language is the so-called asymmetrically dominated language.

Historically, there also have always been fewer Germans on the Polish side than Poles on the German side. Today, a few hundred Germans live in Słubice, and about 2,000 Poles in Frankfurt (Oder).⁷ Since in Słubice, re-settlers have begun to take up residence, you do not find large settled minority communities that are often characterized by multilingualism. (Damus 2008: 28)

Nowadays, the region is characterized not only by the so-called full migration, but also by “partial migration, in which the main areas of life (such as work or family life) are split between the origin- and destination-country.” (Łada/Segeš Frelak 2012: 7, translation: MK)

As multilingualism in large inner-state cities is shaped by immigration and cultural heterogeneity, border cities more often show a coexistence of the different language groups,

⁶ Döll, Wilko (2008): Neue Tendenzen im Einzelhandel in der Grenzregion, in: FORUM - das Wirtschaftsmagazin für Ostbrandenburg, URL: http://www.wirtschaftsmagazin-ostbrandenburg.de/html/1130-Neue_Tendenzen_im_Einzelhandel_in_der_Grenzregion/forum_mode/add/forum_pi/0

⁷ Bederke, Jeanette (2011): Frankfurt (Oder) sucht polnische Mieter, in Berliner Morgenpost vom 17.10.2011, URL: <http://www.morgenpost.de/brandenburg/article1795786/Frankfurt-Oder-sucht-polnische-Mieter.html>

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since every group has their own „refugium“ and is only partly confronted with the other language group:

"Since the multilingualism in divided border towns did not emerge by immigration, but mostly by division and resettlement, not 'uprooted migrants' are confronted with the long-established, but in the divided border town at least two large and compact groups of (more or less) established are facing each other. Therefore there are also emerging other identity constructions. " (Damus 2008: 21, translation: MK)

Although the mobility of the inhabitants of the two cities may have increased since the border between Poland and Germany has been opened up, the mixing of the two language groups is still limited to certain domains, such as the European University in Frankfurt (Oder), where Polish speaking students can frequently be found.

3. Multilingualism in Linguistic Landscapes

Bi- or multilingualism are key topics for studying Linguistic Landscapes, as Aiestaran, Cenoz and Gorter (2010: 223) put it: „The study of the linguistic landscape is particularly interesting in bilingual and multilingual environments, where language contact and conflict take place.“ In many case studies, researchers have focused on a variety of multilingual environments and how these are reflected in public signage.

When it comes to multilingualism, especially in urban environments, many authors have emphasized the relationship of practices of signage and metalinguistic attitudes. As Gorter (2012: 10) notes: „The interaction between the words as they are written on the signs and language policy is a crucial issue for Linguistic Landscapes“. Descriptions and interpretations of Linguistic Landscape texts have been correlated with underlying structures of language policy, language planning, language regimes or language ideology in order to clarify the interplay of practice and structure, linguistic creativity and directives. Jaworksi and Thurlow (2010: 11) note:

„(...) the presence or absence of a language on public signage, in combination with the type (or genre) of signs, their contents and style, are indicative of public and private language ideologies, i.e. "[r]epresentations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard 1998: 3)“.

This compared to the broader concept of language ideology, Kaplan and Baldauf's definition of language planning focuses on the strategic aspect of change. They define language planning as:

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„a body of idea, laws, and regulations (language policy), change, rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language used in one or more communities. To put it differently, language planning involves *deliberate*, although not always overt, *future oriented* change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a societal context.”(Kaplan/Baldauf 1997: 3, emphasis in the original)

The concept of language ideology has the advantage of embracing any metalinguistic statement: implicit or explicit, specific or vague; and link it to positions of actors. However, creating LL texts cannot be reduced to the fulfillment of official directives. As Shohamy and Gorter (2009: 3) emphasize, „while 'officiality' can affect language practices, the public space has its own rules and regulations, which are often unique as they tend to defy declared policies“. Therefore, the relationship of signage and metalinguistic statements should be conceptualized in a broader way, as Coupland (2010: 78) claims:

„If linguistic landscaping is underpinned by ideological processes, then we need to develop a less direct account of its indexical function and a more rounded understanding of metacultural processes.“

So, in the following, we will use the broader concept of language ideology to characterize the field of actors in the border region that are supposed to be engaged in shaping the borderlands Linguistic Landscape. In doing so, we follow Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: 9), who see Linguistic Landscape actors as those „who concretely participate in the shaping of LL by ordering from others or building by themselves LL elements according to preferential tendencies, deliberate choices or policies“. As the production and location of a text can be a complex process with different persons involved (Malinowski 2009), we see the actor of a text as the entity or joined entity that composed the text and is in charge of the content.

In literature, the question about categories or levels of actors is predominantly related to the question of forms of signs and types of texts. Following Backhaus (2007: 66), signs can be understood as „any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame“. The basic unit of analysis is the Linguistic Landscape text. According to Franco Rodriguez (2009: 2), „[t]his term is defined as all writing displayed in public spaces that has content linked to the business, institution or individual that posts it.“ Extending the understanding of text, Scollon and Wong Scollon make clear that multilingual signage should not be reduced to content. They demonstrate how design characteristics (font, colors, shape etc.) and the positioning in the text have an impact on the meaning of the text, and help to establish a „hierarchy of languages“ (Scollon/Wong Scollon 2003: 120).

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In their influential paper, Landry and Bourhis (1997) introduce the distinction between public and private texts that may fulfill either an informational or a symbolic function. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) amend a top-down versus bottom-up model to differentiate levels of hierarchical, official versus non-official, sign production. As Jaworski and Thurlow (2010: 10) add, this distinction also attracts attention toward the symbolic value of certain practices of signage:

„It is commonly believed that, apart from indexing a particular linguistic community, the act of displaying a language, especially on central or local government signage, carries the important symbolic function of increasing its value and status“.

For Coupland (2010) then, the strategic effort in producing a Linguistic Landscape text plays a major role:

„We need to see *all* linguistic landscaping as generated 'from above', if, as I propose, this means that it is conditioned by language-ideological forces and strategies that find value in putting linguistic text into the visible environment for some particular purpose.“ (Coupland 2010: 97, emphasis in the original).

In contrast, Kallen criticizes the whole idea of a hierarchical multilevel model, because it implies the idea of direct competition between different actors. He rather speaks of the Linguistic Landscape as a network of „separate visual discourse frameworks“ (Kallen 2010: 43), such as the civic frame or the marketplace, which comprises specific actors and structures of meaning. These discursive systems are not „hierarchically nested within each other“, which gives the Linguistic Landscape its sometimes „chaotic appearance“ (Kallen 2010: 42).

Finally, although every public sign is considered to be part of the Linguistic Landscape, it is worth emphasizing advertising and marketing signage. On the one hand, public signage in urban environments consists in large part of advertising and marketing signs (Ben-Rafael 2009: 41). On the other hand, the language of advertising can be seen as a site of language contact, as Piller (2003: 170) notes. So it is not only actors with political or private, but also economic interests that shape the LL, and in this way take up a position in the field of language ideology, as Edelman and Gorter (2010: 96) note: „Language choices in advertising messages displayed in the linguistic landscape give valuable information about prevailing language regimes and challenges to these regimes.“

4. The Linguistic Border Landscape of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice: An initial approach

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Making use of the concepts and theoretical frameworks outlined above, the engagement with phenomena of multilingualism in the border region should shed light on the following questions: Who are the actors that produce or abstain from multilingual signage? Which textual and aesthetic characteristics can be found? How are practices of multilingual signage related to attitudes of language ideology? And what can the presence or absence of visibility tell us about the status quo of any kind of border?

To tackle these questions, we want to give just a few examples of actors that may play an important role in shaping the Linguistic Border Landscape of Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubice: 1. The Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA as a cross-border actor linking various other actors in the border region concerned with cross-border cooperation to administrative decisions of the EU. 2. The Frankfurt-Ślubice Cooperation Center as a cross-border actor that mainly connects the two city administrations. 3. Ślufurt as an association and joint private actor devoted to the construction of a unified city. 4. Finally, we want to focus on actors that are shaping the Linguistic Landscape by participating in (local) business.

The aim in the following is to bring together initial analysis of chosen signs on the one hand, and language ideological declarations on the other. We are interested in the ways these actors position themselves with respect to the question of multilingualism in the border region, and which multilingual signage we actually can find. However, this comparison is difficult in cases of (local) businesses, because for now we have no access to the language policies of certain shopkeepers. Thus, the discussion of examples in advertising is framed by a broader description of the regional business structure, as well as a discussion of findings in the field of multilingual advertisement.

Euroregion PRO EUROPA VIADRINA

The Euroregion "PRO EUROPA VIADRINA" (lat: to Europe via the Oder) is one of about 160 European cross-border cooperative ventures that are devoted to the development of a certain region. It was founded in 1993 as one of four German-Polish Euroregions that were installed in the 1990s with the main task of initiating and promoting mutual growth on different levels by strengthening the local economy and identity, as well as the harmonization of living conditions. The Euroregion links administrative units, public bodies and NGOs, organizations, associations or educational institutions in fields such as economic relations, development of

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infrastructure, ecology, development of rural environments, science or culture, that are committed to cross-border processes, to EU directives by facilitating access to INTERREG funds.

As a source that represents the Euroregion's position in the field of language ideology, we would like to quote the recently released Development and Action Concept "Viadrina 2014", which analyzes the Euroregion's status quo and presents a guideline for cross-border developments:

"All consequences for the services of general interest aside, those responsible in the Euroregion view the teaching of the neighboring language during the pre-school years as a reliable and sustainable means of reducing the language barrier and improving cross-cultural competencies. Additionally, the attainment of the neighboring language is beneficial for employers and employees in that difficulties surrounding employment contracts and the transfer of information and knowledge are mitigated or minimized. Proficiency in the neighboring language also helps the population living and working in both parts of the Euroregion to improve mutual understanding and trust in everyday situations. Understanding and getting to know one another helps to establish a mindset whereby prejudices and stereotypes are more easily overcome. All of these points confirm that the elimination or weakening of language barriers has effects in all areas of social life."⁸ (Translation: DG)

Following the analysis presented in "Viadrina 2014", the endeavor of fostering the acquisition of the neighboring language shows asymmetrical intensity in the German and the Polish part of the Euroregion. Considering educational facilities like daycare centers, primary and secondary school and the adult education center, it is considerably more difficult to continuously learn Polish in Germany than the other way round. While English is taught as the first foreign language on both sides, the concept argues for the development of opportunities to learn the neighboring language, especially for learners of (pre-) school age, as well as the establishment of exchange programs and a framework for intercultural experience.

Besides that, the concept "Viadrina 2014" states further goals related to matters of multilingualism in the Euroregion, and thus plays a significant role when it comes to the question of language ideology and their visible implementation: on the one hand, the improvement of language proficiency of the public administration, e.g. in cases of police cooperation and administration of justice. On the other hand, it strives for the improvement of

⁸ Development and Action Concept „Viadrina 2014“: http://www.euroregion-viadrina.de/cms/upload/EHK_2014_-_2020_deutsche_Printfassung_-_Download.pdf

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cross-border information about events, offers, attractions and places of interest including their visualization (trilingual descriptions, maps, web pages, navigation etc.).



Figure 1: A sign of the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina, Słubice 2014

Figure 1 shows at least one example of the visibility of the Euroregion. The sign is located in Słubice, shortly after the bridge that connects both cities at a spot that could be described as the entrance to the center. It shows the vertical writing EUROREGION PRO EUROPA VIADRINA, as well as the name of the city, the two emblems of the Euroregion and the city, and a note in Polish that the sign was commissioned by the EU. On the one hand, the location in the Polish part of the Euroregion is demonstrated by the city's name on top, its emblem and the Polish note. On the other hand, the city is presented as a part of the Euroregion, in written form through the combination of the city's name and the official trademark of the Euroregion, and through the left-right alignment of the emblems. The city as part of the Euroregion is represented by the subordination of the city's emblem.

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What makes this sign interesting for our analysis is that it does not present the Euroregion as an actor or a developing structure, but as a geographical space, an accessible region. As such, its construction is tied to a specific idea of living and working together, as the quote above shows. As we are also interested in linguistic demarcations, the sign offers the reader the spatial category 'Euroregion' to accomplish the ongoing task of locating the self in the space, to gain a „sense of one's place“ (Goffman 1959: 17), and in this way to find a European identity.

Frankfurt-Słubice Cooperation Center

The foundation of the Frankfurt-Słubice Cooperation Center marks the institutionalization of constantly increasing cross-border cooperation of both city administrations⁹. In 1991, both mayors executed the first joint statement about future cooperation in the fields of urban development, public services, traffic, culture, education, sport, trade, tourism and also the settlement of Polish-German and European institutions. In the following years, various forms of cross-border cooperation have been integrated, such as joint sessions of both borough councils which led to the union of the "Common Committee of the European Integration" in 2007, or programs for the struggle against unemployment, and a common tourism concept. In 2010, the Frankfurt-Słubice Cooperation Center started to operate as a joint institution of both city administrations. Its primary task is the coordination and realization of projects and strategies that have been bundled and passed as the "Frankfurt-Słubice Action Plan 2010-2020"¹⁰. This Plan is the outcome of the "Frankfurt-Słubice Future Conference" in 2009, with the collaboration of over 200 inhabitants, and with the goal of establishing a vision for the European twin city. An advanced and updated version of the Action Plan with a focus on the period 2014-2020 has been passed just recently¹¹.

In the field of border regional actors following the idea of European Integration, the Cooperation Center performs the function of a relay in two ways. In a horizontal sense, it is a link between the two city administrations. In a vertical sense, it is a link between

⁹ A short history of German-Polish Cooperation can be found on the web site of the Cooperation Center: www.frankfurt-slubice.eu

¹⁰ Frankfurt-Słubice Action Plan (2010-2020): http://www.frankfurt-slubice.eu/Files/files/frankfurt-slubicer_handlungsplan_ii.pdf

¹¹ Updated version of the Frankfurt-Słubice Action Plan (2014-2020): http://www.frankfurt-slubice.eu/Files/files/handlungsplan_gesamt_08.05.2014.pdf

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administrative structures and associations, initiatives or private inhabitants committed to cross-border projects. This location at an intermediate level, as well as the involvement in both strategic planning and practical implementation, makes the Cooperation Center an interesting organization that may play a significant role when it comes to language planning and policy, and its reflections on LL texts.

Not only does the Center have considerable expertise in providing multilingual translations (written or oral), but also shows the aforementioned Frankfurt-Słubice Action Plan some metalinguistic statements concerning questions of multilingualism in the border region. On the one hand, the Plan groups seven strategic goals, which, when attained, should reinforce the integration of the twin cities. The second goal, a "Plurilingual Twin City", shows three development targets *explicitly* linked to an ideology of multilingualism: 1. Mastering the neighboring language is a matter of course as of early infancy; 2. After sixth grade, pupils are able to speak to peers from the other side of the Oder in the neighboring language; 3. Childcare workers and teachers possess knowledge of the foreign language and cross-cultural competence. According to the updated Action Plan of 2014, at least some progress has been achieved so far through the upcoming opening of a bilingual German-Polish daycare center in Słubice, as well as the first bilingual flood prevention drill, where German and Polish firemen are able to learn basic vocabulary in the foreign language. However, the situation, especially at school, is described as remaining static, since less than 10% of Frankfurt's pupils are learning Polish, and no more learning opportunities have been generated since 2010.

On the other hand, we want to argue that some of the practical measures and project proposals that are mentioned in the Action Plan are *implicitly* following a multilingual language ideology. To mention just a few examples: 1. Pre-investment study and conceptualization of a common, cross-border public transport; 2. A concept for common public-sector marketing; 3. A common bi- or trilingual touristic guidance system. The status quo in these cases also demonstrates some developments. In 2012, the first cross-border local traffic bus route was established. Also in 2012, the first common umbrella brand of a German and Polish City has been established in order to specify common public-sector marketing: "Frankfurt (Oder) Słubice – Ohne Grenzen Bez Granic". Finally, while in Frankfurt a trilingual orientation system was instituted, the adoption in Słubice remains unrealized.

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Figure 2: Signs of the touristic guidance system, Frankfurt (Oder)

Figure 2 shows an example of the above-mentioned touristic guidance system that can be found in Frankfurt (Oder). Three visible features suggest its touristic use: First, it is located on the sidewalks next to a busy crossing in the center of the city. Second, the sign points destinations within walking distance attractive for tourists. Third, and maybe the most striking, the sign shows a trilingual design, additionally supported by three symbols. Focusing on the content presented, the writing can be described as a „parallel text trilingualism“, extending Coupland's (2012: 20) term by a third language, which means that all destinations are fully translated in the three languages. Focusing on the textual placement and stylistic features such as font size, the trilingual writing can be described in terms of what Lou (2010: 101) calls the „strategy of minimization“, favoring the German designations. The English and Polish translations are subordinated by different means: On the one hand, the font size of the English and Polish translations is about half as big as the size of the German letters. On the other hand, the sign establishes a vertical hierarchy of the languages by putting the German designations in a line above the two translations. Additionally, the English and Polish translations, which are on the same line and divided by a dot, show a relation of subordination. According to van Leeuwen (2005: 204), in a left-and-right-subordination, the language on the left is recognized as the more familiar. What the sign in fact shows is a textual

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arrangement according to a value system of languages that ranks the 'lingua franca' English higher than the neighboring language Polish, which may reflect a self-conception as an international rather than a border regional city. More subtly, the sign also shows how multilingual signage is related to social categorization, as it separates „International“ and „Polish“ tourists.



Figure 3: A sign of the common umbrella brand Frankfurt (Oder) Słubice "Ohne Grenzen - Brez Granic", Słubice 2014

Figure 3 then shows a welcome sign located in Słubice, not far from the Euroregion sign. The design shows the common umbrella brand of both cities, „Frankfurt (Oder) Słubice – Ohne Grenzen Bez Granic”“which was established in 2012 in order to promote a common marketing strategy. The emblem contains two trapezoids colored in blue and green, one below the other. Each of them shows the name of one of the cities and a reference to the river

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Oder – the upper one shows the written German word and the one below shows an arching line. The emblem is completed by writing that resumes the bicolor schema and says „without borders“ in German and Polish. The left-right arrangement reflects the vertical hierarchy of the cities names. In the lower part, we find again the two trapezoids, while the blue one is set behind or beneath the green one. They are a background for writing that says „welcome“ in Polish.

This multilingual sign has an interesting relation to its location. First of all, the immediate vicinity to the Euroregion sign shown above raises questions of the competition of diverging spatial categorizations that make the public space an arena of identifications. While the emblem of the umbrella brand states that the sign and its reader are located in a twin city with two names and no borders, the welcoming part seems to establish a special connection to Słubice. First, the writing is solely in Polish. Second, the trapezoid that sets the background for the writing is colored in green, the color that is connected to the Polish (part of the) city. Finally, to welcome a visitor to the twin city (and not particularly to Słubice) at this spot would be a paradox, as the sign is placed at a spot where exclusively people who crossed the bridge would read it, and who thus came directly from the other part of the twin city, and therefore need not be welcomed again. So this sign shows a subtle strategy of spatial sub-categorization, which raises questions of how spatial or social categories, located at one sign or at vicinal signs, relate to each other.

Słubfurt

As an example of more private actors in the border region that are related to practices of multilingualism, we want to talk about Słubfurt. It is the name of an association of artists, volunteers and inhabitants, and of the city that emerged from the two "former" cities of Słubice (Słub) and Frankfurt (Oder) (Furt). The city was founded in 1999 by the artist Michael Kurzwelly, following the idea of shaping a common space in between the two national states in accordance with Joseph Beuys' concept of the social sculpture. It is the artistic as well as political aim to find and define new identities and forms of living together beyond national territories, language barriers and cultural peculiarities. Started as a project of practical social constructivism, Słubfurt has become a social reality in many ways over the last fifteen years.

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In 2000, the city was entered into the Register of European City Names (REC�). Since then, every person is allowed to apply for the Słubfurt ID card. In 2008, the first borderland Olympics took place, with events such as golfing across the Oder, or the cigarette carton throwing competition. In 2009, the first Słubfurt parliament took place. Since then, inhabitants of Frankfurt (Oder) and Słubice are invited to join the irregular parliamentary sessions to discuss further projects. After the border controls were abolished, and finally all border installations were demolished, Słubfurt, together with representatives of Frankfurt's city administration and inhabitants, organized an open council in 2012 to discuss possibilities of a civic temporary use of the open area in the vicinity of the city bridge. Since then, the creation of the so-called "Brückenplatz – Plac Mostowy" (bridge place) is an ongoing project. Also, as a lecturer at European University Viadrina, Kurzwelly for a few years now has been encouraging students to develop their own ideas of a common space. Projects such as the art and performance event Słubfurt triennial or the founding of a time bank and Słubfurts own currency, are examples.

The idea of a common German-Polish space has become widespread in the whole border region. Artists and inhabitants of other border towns adopted concepts and even founded their own projects. Together, these cities are working on the concept of a new country called "Nowo Amerika", which ranges from the Warta River on the Polish side to the Spree River on the German side, and includes the cities of Gorzów, Zielona Góra, Gubien, Fürstenwalde und Küstrzyn. The periphery extends further, from Poznan in the east, to Berlin in the west, from Szczecin in the north and to Dresden in the south.

The engagement of Słubfurt also affects matters of multilingualism in the border region:

"Słubfurt is located in a special microzone "between" cultures. Here the people speak Polish, German, English and – of course – Słubfurtish, which makes this place an attractive centre for the solar energy industry, garden sculpture and tourists from all over the world."¹²

Although there is no 'official' language policy, the idea of a common space is also represented in terms of language use. Publications, web pages and events are at least bilingual, with English translations also sometimes being available. Furthermore, the aim to find idiosyncratic cultural and social forms is reflected in what Słubfurt calls „ Słubfurtisch“ or „Nowo-Amerikanisch“. It can be described as a radical form of language mixing that makes

¹² http://www.slubfurt.net/en_start.html

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constant code switching its main principle. Mostly having a mixed German-Polish audience, the idea is to have a common code that every listener may understand at least partly. In this way, speakers constantly get attuned to both Słubfurtisch and the neighboring language they are not proficient in, whereas simultaneous translation would mean maintaining the language barrier.



Figure 4: A sign of the association Słubfurt, Frankfurt (Oder) 2014

Figure 4 shows a sign located at the „Brückenplatz – Plac Mostowy“ we mentioned above. There, you can do many activities such as playing boules, volleyball or chess. Every station has its own sign that gives information about the game and its rules. Figure 4 shows the sign at the pump track, a mogul field for BMX cyclists. Three characteristics make this sign an interesting case: First, the writing “Słubfurt“, which you cannot be found very often in the public space, denotes both the author of the sign and the place in which it is located. In this way, it becomes not only a conceptual, but also a spatial reality. Second, in the green circles you can find safety advice and liability notes respectively in Polish and German. Focusing only on this sign, we would describe this as parallel text bilingualism in left-right subordination,

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favoring the Polish. However, compared to the signs at the other stations in that area, this is not a continuous strategy. Rather, the sign-specific bilingual arrangement is realized in multiple ways, so that a possible hierarchy of languages is negated. This makes analytic categories necessary that take into account not only the design, but also a broader context. Third, the writing in the smaller yellow letters that contains contact information shows



language mixing. To mention here for example one line: WE WITORKI OD / *DIENSTAG*: 14.00 DO 16.00 *UHR*. (German parts in cursive). This suggests that it is a private sign that holds the potential of linguistic creativity, as opposed to official signage, where the separation of languages, even in cases of multilingual signage, is essential.

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Figure 5 & 6: The street dictionary of the association Słubfurt, Frankfurt (Oder) 2014

Figure 5 and 6 show signs that have been created in the context of the project „street dictionary“. The idea is to create a visible dictionary on the sidewalks and pedestrian areas in the vicinity of the city bridge on the German side of the Oder. The list of words that have been realized was compiled through an Internet poll that was conducted to find the most beautiful words in German and Polish. The open and ongoing project is being realized by artists, volunteers and committed inhabitants, and is supported by Słubfurt.

Figure 5 shows the bilingual information sign, designed in a vertical hierarchy. It also shows the creative attempt to mix the two national flags. The words painted on the streets show the same strategy as stated for figure 4 in negating a hierarchy of languages. The arrangement of the Polish and German words, mostly vertically, as can be seen in Figure 6, and sometimes horizontally realized, shows no continuous principle of subordination. The dictionary uses two colors, blue stands for the German words and green for the Polish, so the dictionary uses the same color schema as the common umbrella brand of the two cities. In this way, colors connect official and non-official bilingual signage. But what may lead the reader to the impression that it may be a non-official sign?

First of all, the informational sign seems to be handmade, with visible screws, no authority is mentioned, and the mixing of the flags seems unofficial. Furthermore, the dictionary itself

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seems handmade. Compared to official road marking, for example, the color used for the street dictionary lacks quality; it is fading gradually and has to be renewed from time to time. Finally, the words presented, such as “earthworm”, “fog”, or “with tongue”, seem to be very uncommon for official signage.

So what all these examples of Słubfurt's signs show is that compared to conversational practices like creating one's own language, the written signage can mainly be described in traditional terms of bilingualism and translation. According to Landry and Bourhis' observation that public signage either fulfills an informational or a symbolic function, we want to argue that the multilingual strategies found here rather follow the aim of informing.

(Local) Business

Finally, we want to take a look at actors who shape the borderlands Linguistic Landscape through practices of advertisement and marketing. Multilingualism plays a major role in addressing specific customers, their language preferences and shopping habits, as well as in transmitting certain images and self-conceptions of corporate identities.

A basic distinction can be drawn between global and international companies on the one hand, and local business on the other. Słubice is especially marked by retail activity in the area near the Oder. The old town and the so-called "cigarette mile" directly behind the town bridge, with its smaller local shops for tourism demand and various services such as hairdressers, offer a small-scale, vibrant old-town culture. The major shopping centers and the so-called bazaar, which mainly specializes in clothing and shoes, are located further inland. Often, the role of these local shopkeepers as actors who may influence language change has been emphasized: „Furthermore, advertising is a form of public discourse in which language play and innovation are more likely to be tolerated, and to certain extent expected”. (Edelman/Gorter 2010: 96-97)

On the other hand, in the city center of Frankfurt (Oder), which was partly destroyed during the Second World War, along with retailers, you mainly find the usual chains that shape every medium and large German city nowadays. Of course, larger shopping centers in the city center and outside draw customers, so that the city center always struggles with vacancies. Global companies do not decide on a local level, as marketing strategies, advertising practices and

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decisions about the use of one or more languages are made at distant headquarters. Local shopkeepers, in contrast, mostly live in the area where the shops are located, and design their storefronts and advertising on their own.

As mentioned above, their relationship has been conceptualized in different ways; in terms of power relations between top-down and bottom-up actors, as Kelly-Holmes (2010: 25) notes: „It is impossible to examine market contexts without addressing issues of power“ as well as a common discourse network. Nevertheless, global and local actors create a common local marketplace and are a part of a bundle of actors shaping the border regional LL, whereat, „their choices, it is safe to assume, will be based on market considerations.“ (Edelman/Gorter 2010: 99)

Many authors have emphasized Bourdieu's view that languages have a value on the language market, and somehow every “market-discourse situation” (Kelly-Holmes 2008: 25) opens up a language hierarchy. As Edelman and Gorter (2010: 107) sum up Grin's (2003: 36) ideas, „languages have a market value and using certain languages makes it easier to sell goods to a public that speaks these languages and will thereby give rise to higher profits.“ Language use thus gives hints both about speaker identities and imagined addressees, as well as references to the product.

According to Kelly-Holmes (2010: 22-24), at least three basic relations between language use and the market can be found: first, the process of commodification “by which exchange values enter linguistic relations and languages come to have economic value or utility”. Thus, language hierarchies are created, contested or changed. They add values to brands and products, and give information about self-identification of shopkeepers and imagined addressees. Second, it is multilingualism in commercial discourse that can show different forms, as Haarmann (1989) shows. He distinguishes between “lived multilingualism” as an expression of a multilingual environment, and “impersonal multilingualism”, which draws on symbolic values of languages, especially English. Third, it is the general connection of globalization and linguistic processes, for example the expanding role of English. According to Bhatia (2000), language use in advertising and marketing can follow the idea of localization, which would mean to use the local language(s) only, or the idea of globalization, which would mean to use English as the lingua franca of the marketplace. Furthermore, strategies of language mixing can also be found, which he calls 'glocalization'.

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So the question is which languages are used in the border region for means of advertising and marketing? While we can expect to find the local languages German and Polish, and of course English as “the lingua franca of the marketplace” (Piller 2001: 181), the questions would be: where we can find them (how they are distributed), which strategies for the use of the different languages can be identified, and which other languages we can find?



Figure 7: Billboard at a platform of the train station, Frankfurt (Oder) 2014

Figure 7 shows a trilingual billboard that is located at a platform of the train station in Frankfurt (Oder). The station is an intersection for Polish commuters (mainly to Berlin). Also, there are direct connections to larger Polish cities like Poznań or Warszawa. The German and Polish text give information where to find the next Burger King store in a redundant way, as the information is given twice in both languages. A hierarchy is realized through the vertical and horizontal subordination of the Polish translation, as well as a smaller font size. The sign

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shows nearly pure parallel text bilingualism; just one word of the lower writing (direct) has not been translated. The use of English is an example for English as a lingua franca being the language of internationalism, modernity and global advertisement (Piller 2003: 175). It is the language of the global company, and so the information concerning the offer (travel special), as well as the name of the product, are given in English. Focusing on the textual position of the English writing, the sign follows what Androutsopoulos (2012) calls 'English on top', which he observes to be a common strategy of the use of English in German Media and Advertising. Considering especially the words „travel“ and „special“ to be globalized words, Huebner's observation pretty much fits to this case that the aim in using English can be „to convey a cosmopolitan air rather than to attract an audience proficient in English“. (Huebner 2006: 41)



Figure 8: Storefront of a local tobacco shop, Ślubice 2014

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Figure 8 shows the storefront of a local tobacco shop in Słubice. The shop is located at the so-called „cigarette mile“, where you can find shops selling mostly cigarettes and alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverages, service providers like hairdresser or nail and beauty studios, and small restaurants. Consistent with the shop's name „border tobacco shop“, the emblem is designed based on the former border crossing signs, which were abolished after the Polish accession to the Schengen zone. Moreover, the reference to the border is realized through boundary posts on both sides of the front, as well as the barrier tape that decorates the top and the bottom of the window. Finally, the colors of the boundary posts symbolize the Polish and German nation states, while the steps to the entrance with the alternating color schemes and the recurring name of the shop mark the border crossing. Concerning the language used, we can find three types of writings: the shop's name within the logo written in German, a handwritten poster offering „Red Bull“, with the price in Euro and the yellow colored and vertically written Polish word for „phone cards“.

If Kelly-Holmes (2008: 107) is right that „[a]dvertising today is expected to speak to people ‘in their own language’”, then the storefront of this shop in Słubice is an interesting case, as the shop's name is written solely in German, and the only indication of price shows a Euro sign, which tells us a lot about the imagined customer and the “attempts to reach different audiences through the use of different languages”. (Kallen/Dhonnacha 2010: 21) It is remarkable then to find the information that the shop offers phone cards is written in Polish only. Language in this case is used to separate types of customers who speak different languages – and, as the color schemes suggest, come from different countries – and according to their origin are interested in certain kinds of goods.

4. Discussion & Conclusion

The aim of this essay was to document some preliminary work for a case study focusing the Linguistic Border Landscape of Frankfurt (Oder)-Słubice. We started with the basic idea that language use and the construction of borders are related in at least two ways - through creating a border regional space of multilingualism, as well as practices of linguistic demarcations. Then we discussed the sociolinguistic context of the border region and previous theoretical considerations in the field of Linguistic Landscapes to frame an initial analysis of chosen actors in the border regional field of language ideologies and examples of

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signage. The comparison of language ideological positioning and multilingual signage shows at least a tendency: multilingualism is neither solely pushed in the border region „from below“, nor is it solely „orchestrated and engineered“ (Du Plessis 2010: 92) change „from above“. In fact, there seems to be an ideological consonance that integrates all levels of actors. What is crucial then is the variety of actual multilingual practices that our initial analysis shows.

First, cases of multilingual signage bring up a domain-bound multilingualism that includes the local languages as well as English as a *lingua franca*. The trilingual space is related to common motives for border-crossing, like shopping and tourism as well as the disparate symbolic value of the local languages and the value of English as a global language. This impression is based not only on occurrence, but also on features like textual positioning and design characteristics, for example font size or color schemes. They show subtle strategies of either holding up the language barrier by recurrent principles of subordination, or negating it through changing textual arrangements and practices of language and symbol mixing. Second, even if not categorical, the contradiction of disjunctive strategies on the one hand, and creativity in signage on the other hand has something to do with the distinction of private and official signage. Focusing on these different text types, we could find integrating motives like the twin city-related color scheme, as well as text type-specific features like the quality of materials used and the constructed durability of the language barrier. Finally, the role of English as a global language associated with different strategies. So far, we can state an ideal typical difference between the often impersonal and symbolic use for means of advertising and marketing that is related to English as the global language of the marketplace, and the informational use in contexts of, for example, tourism that is related to English as an international *lingua franca*.

Besides matters of multilingualism, we found basic evidence that public signage is used to construct an actual border and a spatial urban area along the border by referring to a border as both linguistic subject and resource. Border region, Euroregion, twin city, border city, Ślubiце, etc. are everyday categories of spatial categorization that can be found in the Linguistic Landscape, and that make political concepts perceivable. They determine the profile of the „reality of the border“, just as direct linguistic or symbolic references to the border and its controls as we could find them in cases of advertisement.

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Furthermore, our analysis shows that it is worth taking into account the more subtle ways in which public signage draws on not only spatial, but also social categorizations to construct the border region as a diverse social structure. If multilingual signage either separates “International” and “Polish” tourists on a sign of the local orientation system, or it separates “German customers that buy cigarettes and drinks”, and “Polish customers that buy telephone cards” on a storefront, we have to deal with linguistic demarcations that construct a social reality that in a specific way is characterized by its border regional reality.

Finally, the chosen cases made clear that qualitative analysis has to be confronted and lined with a broad quantitative analysis of occurrences and patterns of distribution. Even if it seems to be a good starting point to see the border region as a whole, the question of how the Polish and German (part of the) cities differ in occurrences and distribution, as well as practices of multilingualism and linguistic demarcations should be focused upon. This will lead to an understanding that puts the case into the wider context of the process of the European Integration, and the question of how the transformation of the internal European borders and public languages use are related. So if we understand the border region on the one hand as a space of possible language contact and linguistic diversity, and on the other hand as a space where language is used to establish references and localizations of the actual border and its region, our further analysis of the „Linguistic Border Landscape“ should follow three main questions: First, is the border region constructed as a region of bi- or multilingualism and, if so, in what way? Second, how is the actual border (e.g. as a language border, geographical border, social border, temporal border) on the one hand, and the spatial area along the border (e.g. as a border region, border town, twin city, Euroregion, etc.) on the other hand linguistically constructed, and therefore perceivable in the public sphere? Which spatial areas are specified and how are these localizations related to each other? And third, how do other linguistic demarcations, such as ethnic, social or cultural, constitute or fragment the border region? And how are they related to the border and its region?

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