The Potential of Linguistic Landscapes for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Cuenca, Ecuador

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Abstract. Linguistic landscapes have been studied for different purposes, being one of them language learning. They could be considered pedagogical tools for learning a foreign language, specifically English, in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Cuenca, a multicultural city in the south of Ecuador was the site for this study. The linguistic landscape of the city has gone through changes during the last two decades. There are several possible reasons for this transformation, but special attention is given to those related to tourism and the arrival of foreign residents who have come to Cuenca, a place considered one of the best in the world to visit and/or live. The aim of this descriptive study is to systematically analyze the linguistic landscape of two selected areas of Cuenca with the purpose of portraying the potential it holds as a public space for learning English. Data collection was conducted by means of systematic observation and digital photography. A total of 200 photographs were collected, recorded, coded, and analyzed. The analysis revealed the presence of seven languages in the landscape of the city, with English being the most predominant. The study highlights the potential of linguistic landscapes as a pedagogical tool for language learning and suggests implications for educators and policymakers.

Keywords: linguistic landscapes; language learning; English; public space

1. Introduction
Landry and Bourhis (1997) define linguistic landscapes (LLs) as a term that includes all readable signs that are publicly visible to people in a given area. The authors applied this concept to "public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings" (p. 25). Other scholars refer to LLs as the public spaces of a city or

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territory where different languages are exposed in signs, generally for commercializing and advertising goods and services (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Gorter, 2013). Studying linguistic landscapes as suggested by Cenoz and Gorter (2006) involves looking into the content and purposes of written forms of language in the public space. In this light, Backhaus (2006) suggested that examining and understanding the field of LLs involves asking three key questions: who is the designer of the linguistic landscape, who is its reader, and what is the social language juncture that it reflects.

A linguistic landscape (LL) is intrinsically linked to the public space in a two-fold relationship as proposed by Kallen (2023). In fact, Kallen (2023) argued that "the LL can be contained by public space, but […] the language display of the LL in fact creates the public space" (p.80). In this sense, linguistic landscapes could have a direct influence on the activities that take place in public spaces, namely, on tourism (Hasni et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2020), the economy (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009; Järlehed et al., 2023), the visual organization of the cities (Farfán Pacheco, 2020; Leeman & Modan, 2010; Rola, 2019; Shohamy et al., 2010), and language learning (Gorter et al., 2021; Hatoss, 2023; Li et al., 2020)

Public areas that have language related to tourism are places where people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are found. The display of different languages in these areas portrays this diversity, which contributes to a sense of inclusivity and fosters a richer cultural environment. However, the relationships and possible tensions between the languages present are also evidenced (Hasni et al., 2022). Tourism can be a strong driver of shifts in the LLs of spaces, but they, in turn, also have an effect on tourism (Handiyah & Arts, 2019). This effect makes foreigners feel welcome and included, especially when they find their language or a lingua franca like English in the spaces they visit. As Handiyah and Arts (2019) show, the importance of LLs is reflected in the ways tourism affects businesses and attends to tourist demands.

LLs benefit the local economy as commercial signage can help attract more customers who use a variety of languages, including English (Cenoz & Gorter, 2009). In this sense, Cenoz and Gorter (2009) highlighted that "by using English, businesses aim at increasing their sales and thus its presence is motivated by economic reasons" (p. 57). Grin (2007) referred to the study of the economics of language in four dimensions: (1) languages and income, (2) language maintenance and changes, (3) language and economic activity, and (4) language policy. In regard to the first and fourth dimension, they are directly related to how language can influence and improve production, consumption, exchange, and as a result, increase the income of a business. Furthermore, today's globalized world provides new conditions for language practices, which in turn challenges how we think about language, particularly in relation to economy (Heller, 2010; Järlehed et al., 2023). When language is used to advertise products, places, and experiences, it "contributes to the commodification of culture typical of the symbolic economy" (Leeman & Modan, 2010, p.196).

The visual organization and aesthetic of the cities is important as they add value to a place and contribute to an organized physical environment that can attract more tourists and therefore improve economy (Rola, 2019). The visual organization of cities relates to the field of linguistic landscapes to the extent that the elements displayed contribute to the identity and character of a city. Street words shown through signs are integral to the texture of the landscapes which must be understood and supported by a thorough knowledge of city forms and dynamics (Leeman & Modan, 2010). Researchers have studied public spaces as physical environments that are constructed on the basis of social interaction, cultural expression, and identity recognition (Farfán Pacheco, 2020; Shohamy et al., 2010). In the words of Farfán Pacheco (2020), the "public space is the space of memory, the space where we can understand the society that lives and coexists, it is a space of identity; moreover, the public space is an essential space of interaction between the resident and the visitor" (p. 150). Therefore, studying the LL of public spaces can offer insights on understanding the people, culture, socio-economic, and even power dynamics of the cities.

LLs have also been studied as spaces which offer potential opportunities for education, particularly in terms of language learning. The visual presence of foreign languages in public spaces can act as a catalyst for language learning, enhancing motivation and creating opportunities for developing language proficiency and intercultural competence (Hatoss, 2023). In the words of Gorter et al. (2021), "languages on display in public spaces can be an important resource for language learning and teaching, as well as being a useful tool for raising language awareness" (p.179). In addition, LLs are rich sources for language input and the acquisition of pragmatic competence and foreign language literacy skills (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Rowland, 2013).

Particularly addressing LLs as resources for language learning, this study aims at analyzing the LL of Cuenca, Ecuador, focusing on its potential as a tool for teaching and learning English as a foreign language. In an effort to achieve the proposed objective, the following research questions are posed: (1) What are the dominant languages represented in the LL of the selected areas in Cuenca, Ecuador, and how are they used in public spaces? (2) How does the LL of the two selected areas in Cuenca, Ecuador contribute to the learning of English as a foreign language?

2. Linguistic Landscapes and Language Learning

The use of LLs as a potential pedagogical tool has been studied by several researchers who claimed that LLs can be used as an approach for (critical) language teaching and learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Rowland, 2013; Sayer, 2010; & Shohamy & Waksman, 2009).

Cenoz and Gorter (2008) proposed that LLs can be beneficial for teaching second or foreign languages in five different dimensions: First, learning a language incidentally when seeing it on the streets on an everyday basis; second, developing pragmatic competence by reading texts that have different purposes or functions; third, acquiring multimodal literacy skills, which refers to the ability

to view, read, understand, produce, and interact with different types of texts; fourth, developing multicompetence, referring to the interaction between the first, second, and/or additional language competence and fifth, valuing the symbolic and affective power of languages as communication tools. Along the same lines, Li et al. (2020) suggested that the studies of LLs and its influence on language learning should deeply analyze factors such as "informal environmental penetration, learning material, stirring interest, broadening vocabulary and knowledge, and its close relationship with life" (p. 120). The authors argued that approaching LLs from these perspectives could aid efforts to integrate language learning and serve as an innovative teaching method that could benefit the teaching-learning experience of teachers and students. In addition, as suggested by Hatoss (2023), LLs provide opportunities to develop intercultural competence as they open up spaces to for learners to engage with other cultures and languages.

As aforementioned, research on LLs has focused on different areas, usually giving more emphasis to the impact they can have on tourism or economy. The links between LLs and language learning have not yet been deeply studied anywhere around the world, and even less in the Latin American context, where published literature in the field is almost nonexistent.

Li et al. (2020) explored the importance of LLs when learning English. They compared the LLs and their purposes, in both middle schools and universities, noting the effects they had on students' English learning. Results showed the benefits that integrating LLs and language learning could bring; that is, participants improved their language proficiency through a "practice-oriented, teacher-led and student-centered" (p.119) approach. With similar results, Rowland (2013) also mentioned the benefits of engaging language learners in linguistic landscape classroom projects. The author argued that LLs can help students develop symbolic competence and literacy skills by challenging "them to account for the relationships between languages and other modes of communication, in their heads, in their lives, in the classroom, and in the public sphere more broadly" (p. 504).

Gorter et al. (2021) studied the impact of LLs in the teaching of Basque, Spanish, and English, which are the languages of instruction in the Basque Country in Spain. Through the analysis of the data they and their students collected, the authors concluded that LLs are effective resources not only for teaching and learning a language but also for increasing language and cultural awareness. Similarly, Dagenais et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal study that documented how elementary school students in Montreal, Québec, and Vancouver, British Columbia encountered the languages of their communities. The authors described how, through participating in language awareness activities, the participants co-constructed "representations of languages, language speakers, and language learning" (p.259). The authors concluded that, by observing the interaction between languages in LLs, students may better understand the interaction of their communities as well. Moreover, they claimed that "approaching the LL through

critical pedagogy enables us to capture and transform awareness of cities in children's eyes" (p. 266).

The study conducted by Sayer (2010) in Mexico aimed to examine the use of English on public signs. Through a framework that differentiated between intercultural and intracultural uses of English, the author identified six social meanings represented on the signs that were photographed. The author concluded that projects like his could be used in the EFL classroom to engage students in investigating how language is used in context.

3. The Study of Linguistic Landscapes in Ecuador
Research on LLs in Ecuador is recent and therefore scarce; only one study has analyzed the use of LLs for educational purposes, which reveals an area for extensive research due to an increasing presence of different languages, native and foreign, in the country.

Studies on this field have mainly focused on the use of languages for commercial purposes, especially the use of Kichwa, which is one of the indigenous languages recognized by the Ecuadorian Constitution as an official language for intercultural relations, along with Spanish and Shuar (Constitución de la República del Ecuador, 2008). The studies conducted by Litzenberg (2018), Enríquez Duque (2020), Zambrano et al. (2020), and Wroblewski (2020) analyzed the presence of Kichwa in the LLs of different cities, the latter aimed at creating awareness in university students. In studies conducted in Otavalo, Katz (2019) compared using Kichwa with Spanish and with English, and Puma Ninacuri and Narváez (2021) studied the presence and relationship of Kichwa and English. Only two studies examine the existence of English in the LLs of cities in the country (Alm, 2003; Lavender, 2020).

In an analysis of the presence of Kichwa, Litzenberg (2018) studied language policy related to using this aboriginal language in the official signage of two government institutions in the city of Yachay (Yachay Tech and Yachay EP). Data was collected from signs that promoted the image of the institutions. Only signs located in publicly-accessible areas were included. The study found that, contrary to what it was assumed, Kichwa is absent in the signage of the area of the study. However, the author argued that the aboriginal language is used as a commodity to promote the brand of these two institutions whose names use a Kichwa word: Yachay, which means knowledge.

Similarly, a longitudinal ethnographic study conducted by Wroblewski (2020) analyzed the use of Kichwa in the LL of a public hospital in Tena, located in the Amazon region of Ecuador. The study focused on ethnolinguistic authority, emphasizing the power dynamics in representations of ideologies. This research did not collect data from existing signs. Instead, in a university project named "Hampirina hatun wasipimutsurik shimikuna" (Useful words from the hospital by its translation in English), students translated Spanish signs in the hospital into the Kichwa language. They used neologisms and direct translations to convey the information in a meaningful and orthographically correct manner. These signs

were later carved by artisans and placed below the Spanish signs in the hospital. The main purpose of this project, which is the only study with educational ramifications in the country, was an attempt to revitalize this aboriginal language and create language awareness and cultural understanding in the participant students.

The presence of Kichwa has also been examined for economic purposes through the analysis of commercial signs (Zambrano et al., 2020; Enríquez Duque, 2020). On the one hand, Zambrano et al. (2020) studied the use of this aboriginal language to name products and their producers. It was noticed that Kichwa was not used correctly and the signs which included this language also used its English translation. The authors highlighted that the purpose of these signs was not to preserve Kichwa but rather used it for commercial purposes and even to attract consumers. On the other hand, Enríquez Duque (2020) described the use of Kichwa in commercial signs in Quito and described its cultural exploitation for economic benefits. Although this aboriginal language is not used for communicative exchanges in the capital city of Quito, its presence is evident in its LL.

It was interesting to find two studies conducted in Otavalo, which is a recognized tourist destination in Ecuador. It is home to the largest handicraft market in South America and its products have been exported and commercialized around the world. The first study was conducted by Katz (2019) in Otavalo's Plaza de los Ponchos, focusing on comparing two linguistically dominant languages, Spanish and English, with the aboriginal language, Kichwa. The author concluded that even though Kichwa has reclaimed importance in this commercial space, English is still prevailing most important. Similarly, Puma Ninacuri and Narváez (2021) examined through a mixed method study the presence of English and Spanish in the linguistic landscapes of Otavalo. The researchers concluded that Kichwa is still seen as "an identity and cultural marker and a commodity, while English is indexed to modernity and international orientation" (p. 1). Business owners and tourists dictate why and for what purposes these languages are used, with Kichwa the language that displays the roots of the city itself and English the language that connects the town with the world and global economic dynamics.

Studies that focus on the presence and use of English in the LLs of Ecuador are extremely scarce; the only two such studies found are separated by more than 15 years, which suggests that further research in the field would be valuable. The mixed-method research study by Alm (2003) was conducted in Quito and focused on analyzing perceptions of the use of English in advertising and the distribution of this language in magazine ads and commercial signs. Through a socioeconomic framework, the author offered a profile of sociolinguistic attitudes towards the use of English in Ecuador. The results suggest that, at that time, English was perceived as commercial capital that gave access only to a part of the population which usually had socioeconomic stability and purchasing power. More recently, Lavender (2020) studied the signage in the city of Azogues, which is located in southern Ecuador. By collecting photographs of commercial signs in Spanish and English, the author examined linguistic features and semiotic resources. The

analysis of the data was performed within the brand linguistics framework, leading the researcher to conclude that there are several languages present in Azogues (Spanish, English, Chinese, and Italian) but that Spanish still dominates the context. The author also highlighted that in some types of businesses (salons and boutiques), English is predominant. Lavender´s (2020) contribution to the study of LLs is important because language is presented as "an assemblage of both linguistic and semiotic resources that function together to create meaning" (p. 403).

The Case of Cuenca

The LL of Cuenca has not yet been investigated in any dimension: linguistic, economic, organizational, educational, or as part of any language or education policy; therefore, it could be considered an important area for studying various researchers in different fields, particularly language educators. Undoubtedly, Cuenca has gone through changes over time, especially since its declaration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 (UNESCO, 2023) which has attracted tourists around the world and more recently foreign residents. As a result of the massive arrival of foreigners either to visit or live, the LL of the city has also changed to meet the needs and demands of its new inhabitants, making it a field worth investigating.

Regarding tourism, García et al. (2017) mentioned that an increase in the number of tourists who visit the city was noticed after 2012, the year when foreigners (especially from North America and Europe) settled in the city. The authors reported that these newcomers activated informal links of tourist services, offering visitors accommodation and eating places owned by their fellows; also, these tourist business owners have arrived at agreements with local people (most of whom are informal) to assist newcomers.

It is imperative to mention that since 2009 numerous awards and recognitions especially from organizations and magazines from the United States and Europe have been given to Cuenca (Farfán Pacheco, 2020). For instance, International Living, an American magazine, named Cuenca as one of the best retirement destinations in the world several times, 2023 being the most recent (International Living, 2023). Of course, this positive press has influenced residential immigration, attracting the attention of foreign retirees who now live, spend, and invest in the city.

4. Method

A quantitative descriptive research design was used for this study. According to Gorter and Cenoz (2024), quantitative studies in LLs collect signs, for example through photographs, in a given geographical area with the purpose of establishing the number of signs, presence (or lack of presence) of languages, distributions, and other features that respond to the specific objectives of each study. Furthermore, the descriptive design was chosen to specify properties and characteristics of the phenomenon studied in the selected context (Hernández Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2023).

Context and Areas of Study

To better understand the present research study and to highlight its importance, it is necessary to describe in detail the context in which it took place. The study was conducted in two selected areas of the city of Cuenca (Figure 1), located in the province of Azuay in the south of Ecuador. Cuenca is the third largest city in the country in terms of the number of inhabitants. According to the available data from the last national census, in 2010 there were 505,585 thousand inhabitants with a projection for 2020 of 636,996 inhabitants in the city (INEC, 2024).

As aforementioned, an important aspect that has contributed to the variations in Cuenca´s population, economy, and the change in its LL is the arrival of foreign residents who, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Census, add up to approximately 9,727 people (INEC, 2024). According to a more recent publication (Naula Herembás, 2023), the number of foreign residents has reached 10,000; this author mentioned that 95% of these people come from the United States and Canada. In addition, factors like owning a property (25% of foreign residents) and living with their partners or families (75%) indicate they are planning to stay.

Foreign residents represent a significant contribution to the city as they add more than 360 million dollars annually to the local economy (Naula Herembás, 2023). The majority are retirees and live on their pension, but 9% percent of this population generate income from economic activities to meet the needs of their own community (real estate, restaurants, and tourism services) and/or to link with the local population such as education and professional services (García et al., 2017; Naula Herembás, 2023).

Figure 1: Map of Cuenca

Two areas of the city were chosen for the study. First, downtown Cuenca (Figure 2) was selected because it is a popular tourist landmark for nationals and foreigners. Even more, the historic center of a city is important because it is the place where different "cities" co-exist: "the city of tourists, the city of business, and the city of leisure and culture" (Precedo Ledo, 1996, p. 245). The downtown streets included for data collection were Calle Larga, Benigno Malo, Mariscal Sucre, Simón Bolívar, Luis Cordero, Hermano Miguel, Presidente Córdova, and Coronel Guillermo Tálbot. The second area is located at the outskirts of the city; Avenida Ordóñez Lasso, and its intersections, from Eloy Alfaro roundabout until la Virgen del Milagro Church – Balzay, (Figure 3) was included in this research

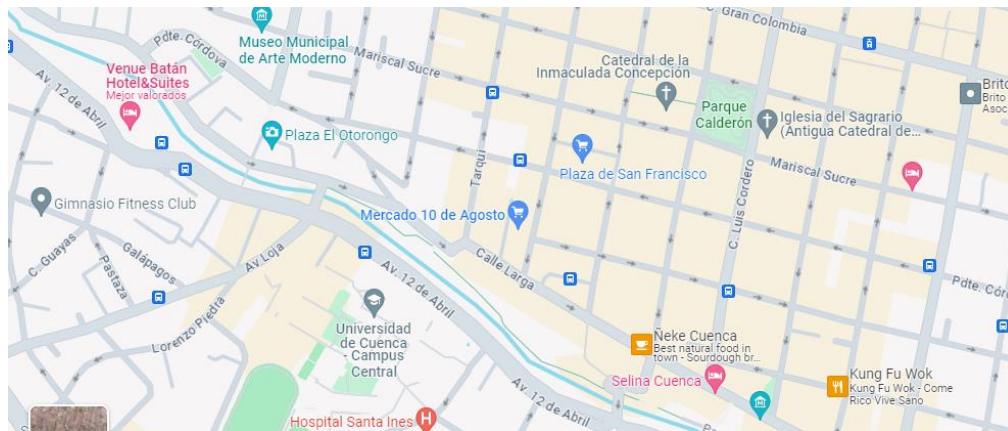study because this location has the largest number of foreign residents (INEC, 2024; García et al., 2017).
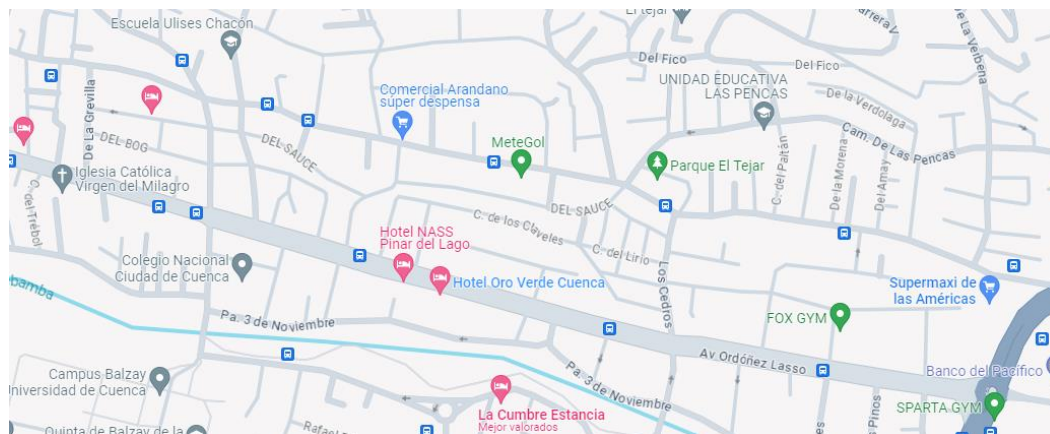

Figure 2: Downtown Cuenca

Figure 3: Ordóñez Lasso Avenue

Data collection

Data was collected through systematic observation and using a digital camera to take photographs of commercial signs (businesses or services) written in foreign languages in the two selected areas of Cuenca. Using this digital device, as stated by Gorter and Cenoz (2024), "is probably the most distinctive data collection method in the field of linguistic landscape studies" (p. 129). Furthermore, photographs are important and indispensable for LLs research as they are considered powerful tools for studying society, telling the story, and preserving a historical record of a particular place (Gorter and Cenoz, 2024; Lou, 2016). Photographs are a form of data as valid as questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, or observation notes; they are usually analyzed through procedures to code elements of the photographed signs (Gorter and Cenoz, 2024).

During several days, the researchers walked through the selected areas and collected a corpus of 200 photographs, 100 for each area. A coding scheme was created on Microsoft Excel to record the elements of each photographed commercial sign (area, language of the sign, type of sign, errors, and type of error).

Data Analysis
Before the analysis, it was decided that each photograph constituted a unit of analysis (Gorter and Cenoz, 2024). Moreover, the four researchers individually coded the data, followed by a discussion to reach a consensus and ensure inter-rater reliability, as recommended by Mackey and Gass (2022). Then descriptive statistics were performed using the abovementioned software in order to provide a numerical summary of the data.

5. Findings
As mentioned above, the unit of analysis for this research study was a digital photograph for each sign. A total of 200 photos were collected from the two areas of the study (100 hundred signs for each area). In total, seven languages were identified (Table 1). From the analysis, it could be observed that the most predominant language, in both areas selected, is English (Figure 4).

Table 1. Languages of the signs

	Number of signs	Percentage (%)
English	186	93%
French	5	2.5%
Italian	3	1.5%
German	2	1%
Japanese	2	1%
Chinese	1	0.5%
Kichwa	1	0.5%
Total	200	100%
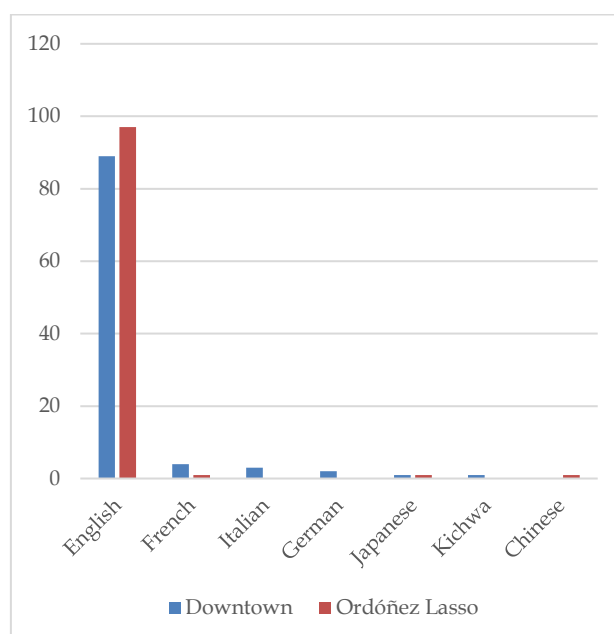
Figure 4: Languages of the signs by area of study

Since the presence of English in the signs of both areas surpassed the other languages, further analysis was conducted of the 186 signs written in English. The commercial signs were classified according to the business they advertise or service they provide (Table 2).

Table 2. Type of business or service with signs in English

	Number of signs	Percentages (%)
Restaurant	29	15,59%
Professional	25	13,44%
Technology	23	12,37%
Beauty service	11	5,91%
Clothing store	11	5,91%
Cafeteria	8	4,30%
Information	7	3,76%
Travel agency	7	3,76%
Hotel	6	3,23%
Specialty store	9	4,84%
Convenience store	6	3,23%
Brewery	4	2,15%
Car Services	4	2,15%
Courier	4	2,15%
Laundry service	4	2,15%
Services	4	2,15%
Language School	4	2,15%
Bakery	3	1,61%
Bar	3	1,61%
Museum	3	1,61%
Tattoo studio	3	1,61%
Bookstore	2	1,08%
Gym	2	1,08%
Drugstore	2	1,08%
Music school	1	0,54%
Yoga Studio	1	0,54%
Total	186	100,00

Figure 5. Bakery sign in English

Figure 6. Warning sign in English

Figure 7. Immigration lawyer sign in English
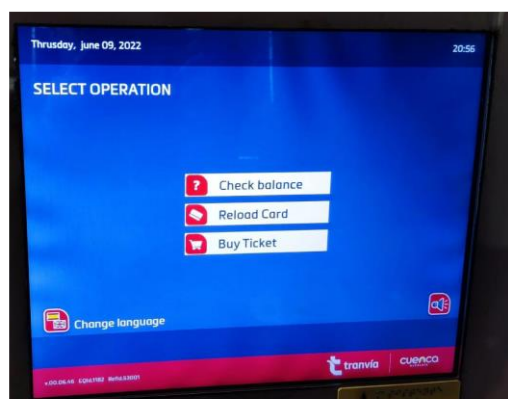

**Figure 8. Information in English**

Figure 9. Public transportation ticket dispenser in English

As seen in Table 2 there is a wide range of businesses and services. Even though the two selected areas are different as one is more residential and the other more touristic, the use of English in the category restaurants is the second most predominant for both; this could indicate that this language is being used for everyday activities and for attracting foreign customers. It is notable that the most predominant service promoted through English belongs to the professionals' category in Ordóñez Lasso avenue and technology in the downtown area. It is worth mentioning that certain types of businesses and services are only found in one or the other area of the study such as bars, book stores, and museums which can be seen only in the center of the city. Conversely, there are music schools, gyms, laundry services, beauty services, car services, services, yoga studios, and drugstores in Ordóñez Lasso avenue (Figure 10).
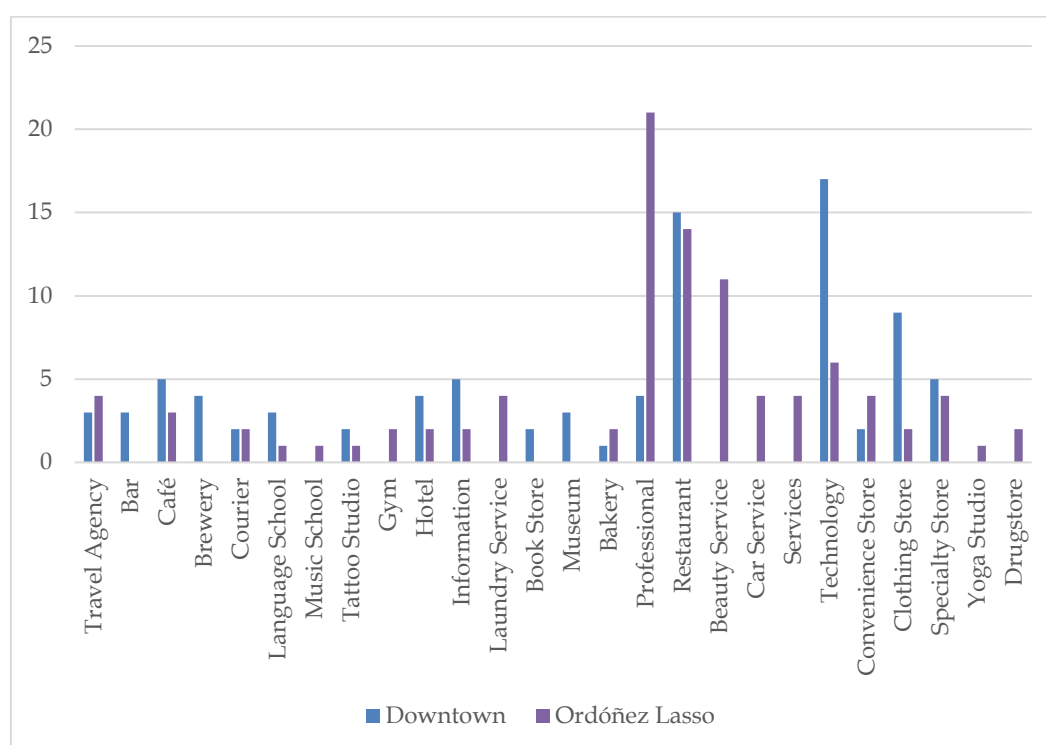
Figure 10: Business or service with signs in English by area of study

Even though this research does not focus specifically on the language analysis of the signs collected, it is necessary to highlight that the written English in signs is not always correct, as shown in Table 3. Furthermore, the types of errors observed are listed in Table 4 and sample photographs are provided in Figures 11 and 12.

Table 3. English signs with or without writing errors

	Number of signs	Percentage (%)
Without errors	154	82.80%
With errors	32	17.20%
Total	186	100%

Table 4. Type of Errors in English Signs

	Number of signs	Percentage (%)
Possessive	9	28,13
Spelling	7	21,88
Plural	5	15,63
Spanglish	5	15,63
Meaning	4	12,5
Word order	2	6,25
Total	32	100

Figure 11: Sign in English with error in meaning

Figure 12: Sign in Spanglish

6. Discussion

The results of this study reveal a diverse linguistic landscape in Cuenca, reflecting its multicultural environment shaped by tourism and an increasing number of foreign residents. Notably, English emerged as the predominant language, aligning with global trends reported by several researchers (Backhaus, 2006; Huebner, 2016; Gorter et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020). Comparatively, the prevalence of English in commercial and service signs mirrors findings in other cities (Lavender, 2020), highlighting the significance of linguistic landscapes in reflecting sociocultural dynamics.

Commercial and service signs are the most frequent, specifically those pertaining to technology services and restaurants in the Historic Center and professionals and restaurants on Ordóñez Lasso avenue. Comparable results are found in Lavender's study (2020) who reported that English is used mostly for business names. This similarity could be explained by the physical proximity of Cuenca and Azogues which is the focus of Lavender´s (2020) study. Furthermore, as indicated in Alm (2003), it seems the use of English in commercial signs increases commercial capital and a sense of socioeconomic power. The difference between

the type of signs in the two areas of this study, specifically in terms of professionals, confirms that the population of foreigners, especially English speakers, has settled residentially in this sector, leaving the Historic Center as a tourist and/or meeting landmark.

Moreover, the presence of errors in a small percentage of signs highlights the evolving attention to language use or potential foreign influence, aligning with discussions on language learning and societal development (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Gorter el al., 2021; Li et al., 2020). These findings contribute to the understanding of how linguistic landscapes impact urban identity, tourism, and economic activities (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Cenoz & Gorter, 2009; Dong et al., 2020; Hasni et al., 2022; Farfán Pacheco, 2020; Leeman & Modan, 2010; Li et al., 2020; Rola, 2019; Shohamy et al., 2010; Shohamy & Waksman, 2009;). The distinct distribution of businesses and services in different areas of the city further emphasizes the unique linguistic dynamics in Cuenca (García et al., 2017).

By integrating these comparisons and describing the implications of the findings for language education, urban development, and cultural diversity, this study underscores the novelty and significance of its contribution to understanding linguistic landscapes in Cuenca, Ecuador and its potential for English learning and teaching.

7. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that the linguistic landscape of the city of Cuenca in Ecuador, particularly in commercial signs, reflects a diverse array of languages, with English being predominant. The presence of English in commercial signage suggests its relevance for everyday activities, attracting foreign customers and indicating its practical and economic significance within the city. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of linguistic landscapes as a pedagogical tool for teaching English as a foreign language in Cuenca. Through exposure to various types of texts in English, language learners can gain insights into how the language is used in context and how it interacts with the community. Additionally, while some signs may contain errors, they also present valuable opportunities for analysis and learning. The implications of this research extend to educators and policymakers, providing insight into the role of linguistic landscapes in language education and cultural diversity promotion.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the impact of linguistic landscapes on Cuenca's image, tourism, and economy. A well-designed and maintained LL can enhance the cultural and linguistic identity of a space, making it more attractive to visitors and residents alike. LLs can communicate the city's openness and inclusiveness, potentially attracting a broader range of visitors and contributing to increased tourism revenue. By showcasing multiple languages and cultures, a LL communicates that the city is welcoming to people of different backgrounds.

8. Recommendations and Limitations

LLs can open up opportunities to better understand the current reality of a city. Knowing how Cuenca's physical environment has changed in terms of the presence of languages could guide informed decision-making for greater benefits

in the areas of tourism, economy, the physical and visual environment of the city, and for language teaching and learning.

Enriching the overall experience of tourists by exposing them to linguistic diversity could make them feel more comfortable and safe in the environment. In addition, linguistic landscapes could also become a tool for promoting tourism. The Ministry of Tourism and private travel agents could attract more visitors interested in experiencing new cultures and languages by highlighting Cuenca's linguistic and cultural diversity.

By promoting linguistic diversity, businesses can attract more customers who speak different languages. Increased tourism, thanks to the presence of languages, can generate higher revenues for local businesses and job creation in the tourism industry. LLs could also be used as a marketing and branding tool as businesses and organizations can differentiate themselves from their competitors to attract a wider range of customers. However, to communicate the message effectively, signs need to be well written and not open to misinterpretation, so city regulations should include a requirement to review the text to be included on the sign.

In terms of language learning, LLs can provide language learners and teachers with opportunities for real exposure. LLs could be used as tools to help students improve their language skills and gain a deeper understanding of language and cultures. They could be used to develop vocabulary and basic grammatical structures. Due to the evident presence of languages in Cuenca, specifically English, and its social juncture, language teachers could take advantage of its LLs as a resource to implement innovative methodologies and design pedagogical projects for the teaching and learning of English in Cuenca through the contact with the signs of the public space.

It is necessary to recognize the limited scope of this study due to its descriptive nature and the limited number of areas of the city that were studied. Further research could include other areas of the city and expand to other types of public signs. Despite these limitations, the study's findings shed light on the multifaceted roles of linguistic landscapes in Cuenca, underscoring their significance not only for language learning but also for the city's cultural identity, tourism, and economy. This study paves the way for future research aimed at delving deeper into the intricate dynamics of linguistic landscapes and their implications for language education and societal development of the city.

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