Representation of Languages in the Linguistic Landscape of the City of Yakutsk, Republic of Sakha

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Abstract: This article aims to determine the way languages are represented in the linguistic landscape of the city of Yakutsk, in particular, the representation of Sakha and ethnic (minority) languages: Even, Evenki, Yukaghir, Chukchi, and Dolgan. To meet this aim, the following objectives were completed: a systematic compilation of texts from outdoor signs available on two main streets of Yakutsk; field research on the linguistic landscape of the city; formation of a linguistic corpus of urban texts; and a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic landscape. This analysis solves two research questions: 1) What languages are represented in the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk and what is their share? 2) What are some of the characteristics of bilingual/multilingual signs?

Keywords: bilingualism, bilingual/multilingual signs, linguistic landscape, minority languages, Sakha language

At present in the Sakha Republic, bilingualism is enshrined at the legislative level: the Sakha and Russian languages, by law, have the status of state languages, and the indigenous peoples’ languages have the status of official languages in the areas where their speakers are concentrated. In the modern world, the field of research called “linguistic landscape” is very relevant, extremely complex, and multifaceted. However, according to Ivanova (2019), the functional status of the Sakha language differs from its state status. Therefore, the study of the linguistic landscape in the context of the ethnic (minority) languages used in the Sakha Republic allows one to see the real ratio of the use of the Sakha, Even, Evenki, and Yukaghir languages, and to determine the differences between official (top-down) signs and commercial (bottom-up) signs in their use of the Russian language as the...
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state language, as well as to find out the degree of representation of the English language as the language of international communication.

In this article, we present our research on the representation of ethnic languages in the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk, the central city and capital of the Sakha Republic. The novelty of this study is in its approach, which covers the territory of the two main streets in Yakutsk by applying the method of systematic (complete) data collection and using the outdoor sign as the unit of study. The empirical part of the research aimed to answer two questions: 1) What languages are represented in the linguistic landscape of the city of Yakutsk and what is their share of the signage? and 2) What is the character of bilingual/multilingual signs? In the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), an official mechanism for managing the linguistic landscape has been developed; however, in reality, the administrative commissions under the heads of municipalities do not properly monitor compliance with the Law on Languages in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) (Vasilieva 2020). Therefore, the results of our study could be used to adjust the language policy of the city and the Republic.

Research Methodology

This study focuses on the linguistic landscape of two main streets in the city of Yakutsk (Dzerzhinsky Street and Lenin Avenue). These are the central business and shopping streets of the city with many state agencies and organizations (i.e., official signs), as well as shopping centers, markets, and shops (i.e., unofficial signs). In the study of the city’s linguistic landscape, we used the sociolinguistic method of collecting and analyzing linguistic landscape texts, widely applicable in modern research. The main principle of this method is its representativeness, which we ensured by systematically collecting all texts (both large and small) on the two indicated streets.

Urban texts were collected using digital photography. The photographs were then placed in a corpus (database), where each photograph was marked with a code. The choice of the coding scheme for the analysis was based on the work of Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter, who studied the use of minority languages in the linguistic landscape of the Basque Country (Spain) and Friesland (The Netherlands) (Cenoz and Gorter 2006). They also relied on the work of Russian researchers who studied the methodology of linguistic landscape research (Golikova 2020). The coding scheme includes information about the types and
objects of signs (official, unofficial); the number of languages; the combination of languages; the presentation of bilingual/multilingual signs. The analysis of bilingual/multilingual signs from the point of view of the text presentation is divided into duplicative (identical texts in all languages), fragmentary (part of the text is translated), intersecting (there is a common part and a part with different information), and complementary (texts in different languages convey different information). Also, the character coding scheme for bilingual/multilingual characters includes information about which language comes first; the size of the text; and the type of font used. Using these codes, the symbolic functions of the linguistic landscape were analyzed to identify potential preference signals for certain languages.

In total, 1013 photographs were documented during 2021, but fewer were analyzed, since the sign served as the unit of analysis. By a sign, we mean the visual embodiment (text) of one entity (official or unofficial), including, if available, the sign on its façade, façade plates, business hours plates, announcements, and other small inscriptions. We did not consider each inscription as a separate sign, since if there was only one owner, it was assumed that owner would have a single policy for the formatting, language, and style of the entity’s signs. For example, it was considered as one sign if there were several types of visual information in the territory of one commercial institution, government agency, or other organization in the form of plates, signs with business hours, or even small temporary announcements or inscriptions. Large shopping or business centers with a main signboard showing business hours, announcements, and directional signs were also considered to be one sign; however, trade and business points located inside were considered separately, since the interest of other private owners with their own personal vision of using the language was shown. There are several bus stops in the photo bank, but they were counted as one sign, since they represent only one owner, which is the city municipality. For the same reason, address plaques and commemorative (memorial) plaques were also considered as one sign. In addition, one object was photographed several times from different angles. As a result, our corpus comprises 388 items for analysis.

During the initial analysis of the material, the types and objects of signs were identified, and signs were divided into official and unofficial (commercial). Unofficial signs turned out to constitute the majority (81 per cent), official ones much less (19 per cent). Official sites comprising state agencies included the reception of the President of the Russian Federation, the Office of the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural
Resources in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the Government building, the Ministry of Economy, the real estate agency “Tuymaada”, the building of the Mayor’s office of the City of Yakutsk, the State Committee for Pricing Policy - Regional Energy Commission of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the State Committee of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) for the regulation of the contract system in the field of procurement, the Prosecutor’s office, Yakutsk City Council (7 per cent); state-affiliated organizations included the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Cosmophysical Research and Aeronomy, the School of Innovation Management, an IT Park, one college, one high school, the Archive, the National Library of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the theater, the municipal pharmacy, and the post office (11 per cent). In addition, there was a regional branch of one political party (0.5 per cent) and one embassy of a neighboring country (0.5 per cent), which we also counted as official signs.

Unofficial signs comprised the following: a joint-stock company, a limited liability company, a private pharmacy, an optician, a pawnshop, a burger place, a cafe, a posnaia (a café with traditional Buryat food), a coffee shop, a canteen, a shopping center, a business center, a market, various small shops, a kiosk, a retail outlet, a retail store, a hairdresser, a barbershop, a cell phone salon, a beauty salon, a flower salon, a lender, a jewelry salon, a bar, a bank, a restaurant, a hotel, a confectionery, a bakery, a clinic, a medical office, a dentistry, a laboratory of medical analyses, a delivery service, a water-filling point, a dance studio, a sauna, an advertising agency, a gas station, a notary office, a management company, a printing house, a psychology center, an atelier, a real estate office, and the freight agency “Container Center “Sakhatranslogistic”.

Review of Scientific Literature on the Linguistic Landscape

Scientific literature on the study of the linguistic landscape argues that the study of the urban landscape from the language point of view began to develop from the 1960s to the 1980s, and today it has become one of the main interdisciplinary scientific fields that unites sociolinguists, linguists, translators, cultural researchers, psychologists, politicians, and sociologists. Internationally, “over the past twenty years, the study of linguistic landscapes has become an established discipline in modern sociolinguistics, with its own journal, Linguistic Landscape, regular conferences and methods of data collection and analysis” (Pavlenko 2017).
Among the first works on the analysis of the linguistic landscape were an article by Rodrigue Landry and Richard Y. Bourhis (1997), as well as three large collections by Durk Gorter (2006), Elana Shohamy and Gorter (2009), and Shohamy, Eliezer Ben-Rafael, and Monica Barni (2010). In 2015, Shohamy and Ben-Rafael introduced a new journal, *Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal* (Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015). In this first wave of works, there is a quantitative approach in the counting of signs and languages used, and consideration was given to the problems of prioritization in the case of several languages in one sign, the details of the display, and the manufacture of the sign. Then, based on the calculation of results, conclusions were made about the representation and vitality of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic groups in a particular territory. However, this approach revealed several taxonomic shortcomings, which become especially important when it comes to minority languages, which are rarely used in government signs. Secondly, there was a problem of size, delimitation, and intertextuality, since the main method was to photograph characters and enter them into a database, which excluded the interaction between signs. A new and more ethnographic approach was presented by ELLA (Ethnographic Linguistic Landscape Analysis), geosemiotics, and the trend towards “semiotic” rather than “linguistic” landscape (Scollon and Scollon 2003; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010).

W. Kelleher (Kelleher 2017) believes that geosemiotics analyzes the artifact (sign) of the linguistic landscape in four discursive “cycles.” Geosemiotics is a complete theory of the interpretation of artifacts (signs) of a linguistic landscape. It allows one to understand the artifact from the point of view of the performer, taking into consideration the norms existing in a given place, and to understand the artifact itself and its interaction with other artifacts. Geosemiotics requires time, practice, and perception (Kelleher 2017). On the one hand, there is the social actor who creates and perceives an artifact (sign), which leads to the conditions of production, but also to habitus and practices within the framework of these processes of perception and production. On the other hand, the artifact (sign) is analyzed according to three discursive cycles of visual semiotics, the semiotics of place, and their interaction in a “multimodal” grammar developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 2001). For the authors, any text whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code is multimodal. Three principles of composition apply to both single pictures and composite visuals (visuals which combine text and image):
(1) *Information value.* The placement of elements (participants and syntagms that relate them to each other and to the viewer) endows them with specific informational values attached to the various “zones” of the image: left and right, top and bottom, center and margin.

(2) *Salience.* The elements (participants as well as representational and interactive syntagms) are made to attract the viewer’s attention to different degrees, as realized by such factors as placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or color), or differences in sharpness.

(3) *Framing.* The presence or absence of framing devices (realized by elements which create dividing lines, or by actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996).

Semiotics of place considers semiotic spaces in the approach described by A. Jaworski and C. Thurlow (2010). Norms of presentation and display, policies adopted by organizations, laws, expectations for artifact making, normal reading direction, familiar alphabets, and so forth, form a complete base for the analysis of text and visual methods. As for interaction, the main works are by Erving Goffman (Goffman 1981, 1983), which take into account self-representation, body control, and expression of affect, which Goffman describes so well, but also the perception of time and space, and the interpersonal and tactile.

In Russian studies of the linguistic landscape, a different methodology has been developed, a detailed description of which can be found in separate review works, where the terminology is fully covered, as well as the object and subject, methods, and methodology of multidimensional research (Golikova 2020). Today, the linguistic landscape is one of the areas attracting the greatest attention of researchers interested in the globalization processes of the English language in different countries of the world. There are many works addressing the influence of the English language on Russian and other ethnic (minority) languages of the Russian Federation (Rivlina 2014).

Comparative analyses of the linguistic landscape of different cities of Russia aimed to identify the dominant languages of the linguistic landscape and determine the social, psychological, and political factors that govern the selection and arrangement of languages, which create the settings for the linguistic situation in the regions (Kozlova 2018). Of
great interest are those regions with various ethnic groups that have preserved their language and culture. Thus, the urban landscapes of the Republic of Tatarstan have been subjected to a detailed study (Alekseeva and Ismagilova 2020; Sabitova and Ismagilova 2020; Tovalovich 2018). Also, the linguistic landscape of the city of Ufa in the Republic of Bashkortostan was reviewed from different perspectives (Emelianova and Iakovleva 2006; Peshkova 2019; Saduov 2020). The communicative space of the modern Dagestan city of Makhachkala was studied in the context of onomastics (Gasanova and Shabanova 2019). The researcher Alòs i Font (2019), based on an analysis of 12,102 signs, studied the linguistic landscape of four cities of the Chuvash Republic: Cheboksary, Kanash, Tsivilsk, and Iadrin. Moscow has also become an object of scientific research (Kuptsova 2018; Sinekopova 2015).

Today, the linguistic landscape of cities is studied from the point of view of linguoecology, that is, the correspondence of the text of the urban landscape to the literary norms of the language, the culture of speech (Grachev 2017), and linguistic security. Diachronic studies in the field of the functioning of linguistic landscapes have also been successfully carried out in order to trace the history of changes in city signs; however, according to T. A. Golikova (2020), serious methodological developments have not yet been made. Of great interest is the study of the functioning of the Russian language in the linguistic landscape of other countries (Protasova 2013; Pavlenko 2017). Recently, linguistic landscape research has been considered in the context of the theory and practice of translation, which is reflected in the collection of abstracts from the international online conference “Linguistic Landscape as a Tool of Public Policy” held in 2020. In particular, the organizers and participants of the conference came to the conclusion that, despite the efforts of some translation organizations in Russia (the Union of Translators of Russia and the Toponymic Commission in St. Petersburg), the issues of translating the urban linguistic landscape require certain regulatory actions (Ivanova 2020; Mishchenko 2020), and that this applies not only to Russian-foreign or foreign-Russian translation but also to domestic translation from Russian into ethnic (minority) languages of the Russian Federation (Vasilieva 2020).

As for Yakutia, the work of N. I. Ivanova (2017) and a monographic study of a group of researchers studying the sociolinguistic aspect of visual information in the Yakutsk city center (Vasilieva et al. 2013) should be noted. Researchers come to the conclusion that today the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk “is formed on polylingual resources, a single Russian space predetermines the dominance of the Russian
language; recently, Yakut-language visual information has appeared more actively, as well as information in the languages of other ethnic groups from neighboring countries” (Ivanova 2017). In the monograph, as part of a comprehensive analysis of the ethno-linguistic situation in modern polyethnic Yakutia, the way students perceive the languages that form the linguistic landscape of the Republic is revealed.

Ferguson and Sidorova (2018) analyzed the representation of the Sakha language based on a review of the Yakutsk linguistic landscape in the period 2013–2015; on the basis of examples from the commercial sphere, they came to the conclusion that the Sakha language was becoming visible in the campaign of “ethnographic branding.” They wrote that, although Russian was the dominant language in the urban space of Yakutsk, the Sakha language was used to create a kind of “commodified” authenticity (Ferguson and Sidorova 2018), that is, there was a process of converting language into a commodity. In addition, an international group of researchers, based on the materials of a field study conducted in the Nizhnekolymskii district of the Sakha Republic, examined the features of the linguistic landscape of the Arctic village of Chersky (Sidorova et al. 2014).

Other researchers consider the linguistic landscape to be an effective way to study the dynamics of ethnic and cultural self-identification of groups inhabiting the polyethnic region of Yakutia (Filippova et al. 2020). They have studied the linguistic landscape of the two settlements of Saskylakh and Iuriung-Khaia of the Anabar district, whose ethnocultural specificity is due to the centuries-old coexistence of Dolgans, Evenki, Yakuts (Sakha), Russians, and others. The predominance of the Russian language was also noted here; the texts of signs with the names of local self-government bodies and state institutions were issued in Yakut and Russian, the state languages of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Although in the Anabar region the Yakut language was used as the language of communication (69.7 per cent), only two building plates were found in the Yakut language, as well as several posters and advertisements, and only one sign was in the Dolgan language. The researchers argued that the linguistic imbalance was partially compensated for by other visual ethno-information (Filippova et al. 2020).

**Analysis of the Informational Function of Signs**

The representation of languages on official and unofficial signs (see Table 1) allows us to draw the following conclusions: 1) bilingual signs
slightly prevailed over monolingual: 11 per cent of official signs and 37.7 per cent of unofficial ones, for a total of 48.7 per cent; 2) 6 per cent of official signs and 40 per cent of unofficial signs were monolingual, for a total of 46 per cent; and 3) only 5 per cent of signs used three languages, and 0.3 per cent of signs used four languages. The characteristics of these are disclosed in more detail in further analysis of the combination of languages. Thus, the monolingual signs comprised up to 46 per cent versus 54 per cent for the multilingual ones. The ratio of monolingual signs to multilingual signs allows us to speak of a norm in the use of multilingualism in the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk: in the minds of its inhabitants, multilingualism was perceived as the norm.

Table 1. Number of Languages per Sign

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign types</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
<th>1 language (%)</th>
<th>2 languages (%)</th>
<th>3 languages (%)</th>
<th>4 languages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unofficial</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the combination of languages on signs revealed the predominance of the Russian language over all other languages: 45.5 per cent of signs used only Russian and 54 per cent used Russian in combination with other languages represented in the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk (see Table 2). This 99.5 per cent preponderance of the Russian language is quite expected, as it is the state language of Russia, which has a legal right to be widespread throughout the territory of the Russian Federation (the law “On the state language of the Russian Federation”), and it is also the language of interethnic communication for peoples inhabiting the territory of the Russian Federation (Argunova 1994). In the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk, the Russian language was used in full on roof signs, building façades, address and memorial plaques, business hours signs, bus stops, navigation signs, road signs, announcements, and elsewhere. On official signs, it was used mostly in combination with the Yakut and English languages (about 11 per cent), while the percentage of official signs using only Russian was 6 per cent. This is indicative of the Republic’s language policy supporting the use of bilingualism. However, the linguistic practice of the region, presented on unofficial signs, reveals the dominance of the Russian language only in the linguistic landscape of the city (39.5 per cent).
In the linguistic landscape of the city of Yakutsk, the Sakha language, the second state language of the Sakha Republic, was not used alone; it was used only in combination with Russian (22 per cent) or another language (4.5 per cent). Consequently, we observed a significant difference in the functional status of the Sakha language from its official status as a state language: in total, the Sakha language was used in only 26.5 per cent of signs. Consequently, the Republic is not in compliance with the requirement prescribed in Article 35 of the “Law of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) on the State Languages” regarding the obligatory translation of the texts of signs, advertisements, and other media containing information in a visual form, that is, all significant and visible inscriptions on the street. This regulation requires all over-roof, façade inscriptions to be translated, including on government buildings. Doing so, albeit not by much, would raise the prestige of the Sakha language. Also, table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Official signs (%)</th>
<th>Unofficial signs (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monolingual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Russian only</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. English only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sakha only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. One of the Indigenous languages only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilingual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Russian and Sakha</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Russian and English</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Russian and other</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Russian and one of the Indigenous languages</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multilingual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Russian, Sakha, English</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Russian, English, other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Russian, Sakha, one of the Indigenous languages</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Russian, Sakha, English and other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time, analysis of the combination of languages shows that the Sakha language, the second state language of the Sakha Republic, was not used alone in the linguistic landscape of the city; it was used only in combination with Russian (22 per cent) or another language (4.5 per cent). Consequently, we observed a significant difference in the functional status of the Sakha language from its official status as a state language: in total, the Sakha language was used in only 26.5 per cent of signs. Consequently, the Republic is not in compliance with the requirement prescribed in Article 35 of the “Law of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) on the State Languages” regarding the obligatory translation of the texts of signs, advertisements, and other media containing information in a visual form, that is, all significant and visible inscriptions on the street. This regulation requires all over-roof, façade inscriptions to be translated, including on government buildings. Doing so, albeit not by much, would raise the prestige of the Sakha language. Also,
address plates, commemorative and memorial plaques, and road signs are utilized without being duplicated in the Sakha language.

It is disappointing that we did not find a single sign in the languages of the indigenous minority peoples of the North (Even, Evenki, Yukaghir languages), neither alone nor in combination with other languages (Table 2), although they are official languages of the Republic and by law they have the right to be used in places where their speakers are concentrated. Investigation by other scholars has confirmed that even in regions these ethnic groups are concentrated, these minority languages are seldom used (Sidorova et al. 2017). The researchers suggest the reason is that “these local languages are subsumed within a discourse that highlights the region’s belonging not only to the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), but to the Russian Federation as a whole” (Sidorova et al. 2017).

Examples of the use of Russian in combination with another language include the use of Korean, Japanese, and Italian in the name of a cafe and restaurant that offers these cuisines (Ferrace, Osterio Mario); a brand of tableware in German (KuchenLand Home); and a Latin transliteration of a Caucasian bakery (MeGobAri). Combining the Russian language with other languages indicates that these foreign brands belong, informing and guiding consumers in the service sector. In addition, they have a symbolic function, forming in the minds of consumers a positively marked connotation of modernity, high quality, and prestige. The use of another language along with Russian also has a targeting characteristic. Thus, at the Stolichnyi Market, where visiting traders from China were working, a fragment of an announcement was also given in Chinese, and the Kyrgyz language appeared on the front plate of the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic. Although English alone was used very rarely without duplication into another language (0.5 per cent), in the overall linguistic landscape of Yakutsk it ranks second after the Russian language.

Analysis of the Symbolic Function of Signs

Analysis of the First Language on Signs

The characteristics of the combination of languages reveals the predominant functioning of three languages in the urban space of Yakutsk; these are Russian, English, and Sakha languages. Also, when calculating, we took into account the representation of other languages, uniting
these under the general name “another language.” An analysis of the order of languages in bilingual/multilingual signs gives us additional information about the relative importance given to each language. We first look at the language used first on the sign, then at the text size of the languages, and finally at the type of fonts used on the sign.

The position of languages on signs is given in Table 3. The Sakha language was the first language in only 13 per cent of cases. Sakha sociolinguists argue that, in bilingual texts of official signs, the location of the Sakha text on the left or above is regulated, while the Russian text should be on the right or below (Ivanova 2017); that is, Sakha must be given the priority location. It is evident that this prescription was not observed on official signs, and even on unofficial signs, their makers either preferred the Russian language or simply did not know about the regulations regarding the location of languages in urban texts. English, as a language that carries the symbolic function of introducing a given ethnolinguistic community to the global English-speaking space, ranks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Official signs (%)</th>
<th>Unofficial signs (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monolingual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Russian only</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. English only</td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sakha only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. One of the Indigenous languages only</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bilingual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Russian and one of the Indigenous languages</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multilanguage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Russian, Sakha, English</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
first on 20 per cent of signs. This was mainly done where information is complementary; usually the name of a commercial establishment was given in English, and all related information was issued in another language (see Table 6). The first place on signs in 64 per cent of cases belongs, as expected, to the Russian language. This indicates the importance of the Russian language in the minds of the population of the Republic as the state language of the Russian Federation, as well as the linguistic nihilism of the Sakha ethnolinguistic community, by which we mean the presence of a negative attitude towards (and undervaluation of) the local languages, and a dismissal of the linguistic, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the people (Zherebilo 2010). The community is also not sufficiently informed about the regulations on the location of multilingual urban texts. Other languages as the first language on signs were very rare and amount to only 3 per cent.

**Analyzing the size of text**

The result of the analysis of text size on the signs is shown in Table 4. The font size of urban texts varies greatly: visually, the Russian language is more noticeable in the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk; its share is more than half of the characters (54 per cent). In 20 per cent of cases, multilingual characters have the same text size, and the share of English with a large font size is almost the same (19 per cent). Our material shows that large-size English texts are found in unofficial trademarks. But the Sakha language occupies a very modest place, only 5 per cent; this is slightly more than other languages, which make up 2 per cent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4. Text Size of Bilingual/Multilingual Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian is larger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is larger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakha is larger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other is larger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Font Type Analysis on Signs

When characterizing font type, the typeface, size, and color are taken into account. Since the Russian language occupies a dominant position in the urban space of Yakutsk (Tables 2, 3, and 4), we compare the font type in the Sakha and English languages with that of the Russian language.

Table 5. Font Type on Bilingual/Multilingual Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The same in Sakha and Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same in English and Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same in all languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of font type on bilingual/multilingual signs, presented in Table 5, reveals the predominance of the same font type on signs with the Sakha and Russian languages. In most cases, the same type of font was used on the façade plates of official signs and on sign plates showing the business hours of unofficial commercial entities. This analysis clearly shows the predominant use of the Sakha language in the linguistic landscape of the city. Consequently, the implementation of an equal language policy of the Republic is localized precisely in the indicated tablets, being regulated from the top-down. The font type on signs with English and Russian, on the contrary, is very different. A different font type on signs was usually found in English names, and these colorful designer fonts were aimed at attracting the attention of city residents. The use of a different type of font in English words indicates that, in the minds of the residents of Yakutsk, English is perceived not as a verbal unit, but as a symbol, a picture; the very system of presenting English word generates meanings (connotations) regardless of the content of the message. It is in this aspect that the decorative function of the English language is revealed especially clearly in the formation of the modern Russian linguistic landscape as “speech scenery” in the life of the townspeople (Kitaigorodskaya and Rozanova 2010).
Language Presentation in Bilingual/Multilingual Signs

We analyzed the language presentation profile on bilingual and polylingual signs by considering the information type contained in the signs. We divided the information type into four categories: 1) duplicative (completely identical information in both languages); 2) fragmentary (only part of the information is translated); 3) overlapping (there is a common part and part of the information in different languages); and 4) complementary (different information is given in different languages).

When analyzing the language presentation, we took into account not only full-fledged signs but also some parts of the signs, that is, ergonyms, links to websites or Instagram pages, or even one word; that is, if a sign contained at least one word or even transliteration in any language, this was considered as a representation of that language. Therefore, the functioning of the English language was quite broad (31.8 per cent). Today in Russian urban linguistics it is customary to consider English an instrument of economic, technical, and informational globalization (Rivlina 2014). The use of the English language in the official signs of Yakutsk is dictated not so much by the language policy of the region as by the theme of globalization of the English language in the linguistic landscape of Russian cities. Yakutia follows the emerging trend towards unification of languages in the era of globalization. It was included in the unified all-Russian system of navigation and orienting information for tourists, which is described as a separate item in the “Concept for the Development of Road Service Facilities in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), 2017–2019.” The international sports games “Children of Asia,” the annually expanding mass celebration of the summer meeting “Ysyakh,” the organization of Republic-wide and all-Russian sports events, and the development of inbound tourism accelerated the introduction of new Russian-Sakha-English signs (see Figure 1.). The use of English in official navigation signs, in the signs of hotels intended for tourists, and in the façade plates of state agencies and organizations was mostly duplicative and partly fragmentary; there were not many of them, only 5 per cent (touristic signs) and 7 per cent (official signs) of the total number of signs in English.

English, as an instrument of globalization, has not only an informative but also a symbolic function. First, the use of the English language indicates the entry of this ethnolinguistic community into the global English-speaking environment and symbolizes its internationalization, Westernization/Americanization, and the formation of an additional, global identity among its representatives. Thus, in the linguistic...
## Table 6. Presentation of English in Bilingual/Multilingual Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of information</th>
<th>Amount in %</th>
<th>Amount in %</th>
<th>English language presentation in total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duplicating multilingualism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentary multilingualism</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlapping multilingualism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary multilingualism</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 1. Guidepost in Three Languages
landscape of Yakutsk, English was represented mostly in the names of foreign brands and stores, preserved in a new environment due to the fact that it is part of a registered brand: KFC, Bosch, Royal Canin, Burger Club. Advertising slogans also retained their English spelling; for example, the airline company Aeroflot was part of the “Sky Team” alliance. A complementary type of sign in which languages supplement each other in the text is the most numerous (85 per cent)—for example, the name of an institution is given in English and the accompanying explanations are in Russian.

Second, in the process of worldwide expansion, English is subject to “glocalization,” that is, simultaneous globalization and localization (Rivlina 2014). Our examples show a simplified use of the English language so that the text is easily perceived even by consumers with a minimum level of English proficiency, as well as an adapted use of the English language in accordance with people’s own communicative needs and the characteristics of their native language and culture. In the signs of the complementary type that we collected, there are many examples of Russian-English code-switching: Pekarnia “Bakery Street” (Rus. pekarnia—“bakery”); Tovary dla zhivotnykh “Planeta ZOO” (Rus. tovary dla zhivotnykh—“goods for pets,” Rus. planeta—“planet”); Magazin “Original” (Rus. magazin—“store’’); Komissionnyi magazin “Pawn Shop” (Rus. komissionnyi magazin—“commission store”). There is considerable Russian-English code-mixing as seen in orthographic hybridization: combinations of Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, when English and Russian linguistic components, words, morphemes, or even separate graphemes are combined in one name deliberately, most often humorously, for example, a tobacco shop called Orжanka, where the Cyrillic “ж” (zh) is used along with the Latin letters. Other examples include a fitness club called Kachokgym (in vernacular language, Rus. kachok—“muscular person”); the beauty salon Hairisma; a custom-made furniture salon Mogymebel 14; the fast-food chain МясоRoob (the first part Rus. miaso—“meat” is written with Cyrillic letters and the second part Roob is written with Latin letters; Roob looks like an English word, but it is an abbreviation of the Russian verb rubat’ in double actualization of semantics: “1. To chop; 2. slang. To eat a lot”). Sometimes the English words are transliterated, as in Avtolait—auto lights and auto accessories. All these Russian-English combinations have a humorous connotation and were being used in order to attract customers, and as the examples show, Russian jargon and slang is used. In the realities of the urban space of Yakutsk, the Sakha language was also involved in a kind of linguistic game. Thus, there was also Sakha-English code
switching and mixing: the shop *Baai Room* (Sakha *baai*—“rich,” that is, this store is a rich room); the grocery store *Aartyk* (Sakha *aartyk*—“near, by the road, i.e., store by the road”); the instant printing shop *Kulun* (Sakha *kulun*—“foal”) (see Figure 2).

Third, in the linguistic landscape, as in many other domains, the influence of computer discourse on increasing the share of the English language is evident. Thus, many signs and billboards of both official and unofficial types included the English-language Internet addresses.
of the relevant enterprises and institutions. To simplify the search on the Internet, retailers and other business owners chose Internet addresses as their names, for example, “Compliment_ykt,” a flower shop.

The Sakha language in the linguistic landscape accounted for 26.5 per cent of all signage we collected (see Table 7). The duplicative type of information, when the Sakha part of the text duplicates information in Russian, is found both in official signs with the names of state authorities, local governments, state enterprises, institutions, and organizations, and in unofficial commercial signs (20 per cent). But still, there is a little more duplicative information in the official signs. This testifies in favor of the language policy of bilingualism in the Republic, which is also implemented through the translation of the names of state agencies. In 2020, the Department of Languages of the Sakha Republic, together with the Translation Department of the Administration of the Head and Government, translated the names of territorial bodies of state power, executive bodies of state power, and the names of municipalities of the Sakha Republic into the Sakha language and posted them on the official government website. Standardizing the translation of names undoubtedly simplifies their use and proper functioning in the linguistic space of the city; however, the examples we found indicate that the translation does not meet the accepted standards. Even more information would be duplicated if signs of establishments, together with the façade plates and business hours plates, were translated into the Sakha language. It should be noted that in our examples, not a single duplicative sign in the Sakha language was found, not counting the complementary type of text.

Based on our methodology, when we take a sign as a unit of analysis, which includes all texts belonging to one institution, including its signs, plaques, announcements, and so forth, we can assert that most of the urban texts with the Sakha language were of the fragmentary type.

Table 7. Presentation of the Sakha Language in Bilingual/Multilingual Signs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of information</th>
<th>Amount in %</th>
<th>Sakha language presentation in total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duplicating multilingualism</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentary multilingualism</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlapping multilingualism</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary multilingualism</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sibirica
(45 per cent). In other words, only part of the information contained in
the sign is translated from Russian into Sakha. The translation of some
of the information on the signs can be divided into the following types:
1) everything is translated except for the sign of the institution; 2) only
the front plate with the full name and the imprint of the institution is
translated (see Figure 3); 3) only the business hours plate is translated
(see Figure 4); 4) only some part of the business hours sign and/or front
plate is translated (see Figure 5). In 2015, the Department of Languages
under the Head of Yakutia decided to present the names of geographi-
cal objects on informational and road signs in the two official languages
of the Republic. In conformity with this decision, the names of the bus
stops were also translated. However, their translation is also fragmen-
tary; for example, the bus stop “Children and Youth Sports School No.1”
is translated as Sportivnaia oskuola (an assimilated transliteration from
Russian Sportivnaia shkola “Sports school”). Our analysis shows that
the fragmentary type of presentation of the Sakha language is typical
for front plates and business hours signs, rarely prohibiting announce-
ments like “No smoking”—tabahtaaman’, very rarely the inscription
“Open”—Ahagas (see Figure 6), “Push”—Beieitten, or “Pull”—Beien’
dieki (see Figure 7), but the signs of public places and various regulatory
texts are not translated at all.

Figure 3. Façade Plate in Two Languages
Figure 4. Façade Plate in Two Languages

Figure 5. Partial Translation

Figure 6. Plate in Three Languages
Figure 7a. Plate in Two Languages

Figure 7b. Plate in Two Languages
The complementary type of information (18 per cent), when different information is given in different languages, is mostly represented by onyms in the Sakha language, and the names of public places in the Sakha language are often presented without duplication in Russian as a registered brand or trademark, as with jewelry companies (see Figure 8). There are shopping centers with Sakha names; cafes and markets; and kindergartens (notably, two languages adorn the façade of the kindergarten “Northern Stars”—Hotugu sulustar. There are complex onyms made of several words, one of which is a borrowing from the Sakha language, often a verbal unit of Sakha. These names are quite large and colorful, are often accompanied by various cultural symbols in the form of drawings, patterns, color, and graphic design, and are very noticeable in the urban landscape. They consequently have the symbolic function of ethnic self-identification of a given ethnolinguistic community, forming the local identity of its representatives. Owners of businesses choose euphonious, semantic, and “speaking” words of the Sakha language as the names for their businesses; for example, the name of the shopping center Tetim means “movement, dynamics,” which is quite symbolic in our rapidly developing time, and all the names of jewelry companies are conceptually close to the meaning of “artistic.”

Overlapping information, when there is a common part and a part with different information in different languages, makes up a small percentage, only 17 per cent, and was mostly present in large shopping centers as Sakha names, as well as in advertising banners, where the Sakha language was used as a peculiar advertising slogan, for example, in the slogan of the BSmart thrift store D’iikei protsent suoh!!! (“There are no wild interests here!!!”). This example shows that, in the urban space, a non-normative layer of the Sakha language has begun to be used as a means to attract attention. In this case, a Sakha slang word has been

Figure 8. Complementary Type of Information in the Sakha and Russian Languages.
borrowed from the Russian word *dikii* (“wild”), meaning something out of the ordinary, not appropriate; it is widely used in the Sakha ethnolinguistic community, thanks to various social networks.

**Conclusions**

In the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk, the functioning of the multilingual signage slightly exceeds the monolingual, but the Russian language occupies a dominant position. Analysis of the combination of languages on signs we collected reveals the predominant use of three languages: Russian, English, and Sakha. The predominance of the Russian language over all other languages in our data is very significant: 45.5 per cent single-use of the Russian language and 54 per cent in combination with other languages. The Russian language is used in full and everywhere. In official signs, it is used for the most part in combination with the Sakha and English languages, which indicates that the language policy of the region is aimed at using bilingualism. However, the linguistic practice of the region, presented in unofficial signs, reveals the dominance of the Russian language in the linguistic landscape of the city. The second place in terms of representation after Russian is occupied by English, although its sole use is a tiny percentage.

The second official language of the Republic, the Sakha language, is not used alone, but always in combination with Russian or another language. Consequently, the functional status of the Sakha language differs significantly from its official status, which is legally regulated. In total, the percentage of Sakha language use in the linguistic landscape of Yakutsk is only 26.5 per cent. Not a single sign was found in the languages of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (Even, Evenki, Yukaghir languages), neither by itself nor in combination with other languages. This analysis allows us to assert that the Republic does not fulfill the requirement set forth in the law “On languages in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia),” which prescribes the use of the Sakha language in all spheres of public life in the Republic, and the use of the languages of the Indigenous Peoples of the North as the official languages of the Republic in places where their speakers are concentrated. There may be several reasons for the lack of representation of the languages of the Indigenous Peoples of the North in the linguistic landscape of the central city of Yakutia. First, this is the result of the colonial policy of tsarist and Soviet Russia, which for several centuries tried to assimilate the indigenous peoples. Second, the influence of the Russian language on the
Even, Evenki, and Yukaghir languages has always been greater than the influence of the Sakha language on these languages. Therefore, as the authors of the article “Signs of Non-Recognition: Colonized Linguistic Landscapes and Indigenous Peoples in Chersky, Northeastern Siberia” rightly argue, these languages are involved in the discourse not only of Yakutia, but of the whole of Russia (Sidorova et al. 2017). Third, modern realities do not support the need for the use of these languages in the Republic of Sakha. The analysis of the first language on signs reveals a violation of regulations for the placement of languages on multilingual signs: in the Sakha-Russian bilingual texts, the Sakha language should be located on the left or on the top, that is, in the first position, and our analysis reveals that this prescription is observed only in 13 per cent of the cases. The largest percentage of functioning as the first language on a sign belongs to the Russian language (64 per cent), while English occupies 20 per cent. The font size of Russian-language texts also turned out to be the largest (54 per cent). The Sakha language occupies a very modest place at 5 per cent, while English is at 19 per cent, and the same font size is found in all languages in 20 per cent of cases. All this shows the leading position of the Russian language as the state language of Russia and its preference as the language of interethnic communication; and all this also points to the lack of recognition of the value of an ethnic language. Also, it shows that the Sakha ethnolinguistic community is insufficiently informed about the rules for the location and design of multilingual urban texts.

In the Russian-Sakha bilingual texts we collected, the same type of font is used on the front plates of the official signs and on the business hours plates of unofficial commercial signs. This analysis clearly shows that the equal language policy of the Republic, a top-down policy, is locally relevant but not ubiquitous. The predominance of the fragmentary type of information in Russian-Sakha texts, when only part of the information on the sign is translated, indicates the insufficient implementation of the language policy in the Republic, aimed at popularizing the two official languages of the Republic. The use of the Sakha language in bilingual signs is not merely informative (the information can also be obtained in Russian), but carries symbolic function, indexing the national identity of the Sakha ethnolinguistic community. Recently, in the urban space, ethnicity has also been conveyed through non-verbal information. A small percentage of signs use the Sakha language to attract the attention of potential buyers. The type of font in texts with English and Russian is very different. The use of different types of fonts in Russian-English texts indicates the decorative function
of the English language, where the language is perceived not as a verbal unit, but as a kind of picture of a city landscape. In Yakutsk, the English language has more of a symbolic function than an informative one. On signs with English, the complementary type of information prevails, which indicates a wide linguistic practice of using English as a kind of picture or speech decoration, and a kind of language game. And the informative function of the English language is intended mostly for tourists, but there are very few of them.

This analysis allows us to assert that purposeful and systematic work needs to be aimed at expanding the scope of the functioning of the Yakut language, as the second state language of the Republic, and the languages of the Indigenous Peoples of the North, as the official languages of the Republic, in the urban space. The following measures can be taken:

1) Organize monitoring with photographic fixation of the current state of the linguistic landscapes of the city of Yakutsk and other settlements of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia);
2) Carry out work on high-quality translation of all official and unofficial façade inscriptions and road signs;
3) Recruit social activists, language activists, and students to popularize the use of minority languages in the linguistic landscape of the city in social networks and through educational work.

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Note


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