

## The Englishization of Materiality in the Linguistic Landscape of a Southern Jordanian City

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### Abstract

This article investigates the interrelationship between English used on signs and materiality in the linguistic landscape (LL) of a touristic Jordanian town, Petra. Its aim is to analyze how the materials that signs are made of reflect recurrent practices of identity formation and numerous socio-cultural norms in the Jordanian tourism context. The signs were first coded according to language, and then categorized within the framework of material practices enacted by sign designers. The results show that signs written on stone and metal surfaces often displaying English in uppercase letters and replicating governmental practices convey a sense of quality, continuity and permanence within economic and tourism-centered ideologies and policies; the visibility of English painted on wooden board signs is evidence of the creativity further manifested in block capitals to denote a sense of freshness and newness; signs printed and hand-written on paper often appearing in uppercase letters manifest the dynamic nature of the LL, ensuring the flow of special offers and even linguistic and non-linguistic changes; most remarkably, monolingual English signs painted inside sand bottles symbolize important environmental, historical, and cultural information on the ancient city of Petra, which contributes significantly to the popularity of Petra as a worldwide tourist destination among members of the tourist population, particularly the international visitors.

**Key words:** English, linguistic and paralinguistic practices, linguistic landscape, materiality, Petra

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## 1. Introduction

While many research trends in general linguistics have fundamentally built on Saussure's (1983) assumption that the ways of inscription have no influence on the linguistic system, that is, "Whether I write in black or white, in incised characters or in relief, with a pen or a chisel"—none of that is of any importance for the signs' meanings (1983, p. 118), the other pole of research noticeably examines language in its real-world situations and has drawn a close connection between the material type of signs and the capability of reflecting different underlying meanings recognized by some process of semiotic investigation (see Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Scollon & Scollon, 2003). As a starting point for establishing a linguistic background for the present study, we will build on the link between the materialistic nature of signs and the meanings conceived in Jordan tourist attractions within a specific theoretical framework of social semiotics. It is no question that the written language is deeply entwined with the iconic aspects of materials on which displays of written language are put up by sign designers, which in turn constitutes a distinguishing characteristic of this subfield of LL (see Backhaus, 2007; Stroud & Mpendukana, 2009; Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010). The materiality of written signs is believed to be a useful device of uncovering social practices through the potential semiotic meanings for portraying the community's different cultural norms and ideologies (see Keane, 2003; Danesi, 2004).

### 1.1 Linguistic landscape and tourism

This study is conducted within the general guidelines of LL: "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the LL of a given territory" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997, p. 25). Although LL is most typically approached from different linguistic perspectives including language policy (Spolsky, 2009; Backhaus, 2009), discourse analysis (Shohamy & Waksman, 2009; Kallen, 2010), and semiotics and multimodality (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Sebba, 2012; Peck & Felix, 2014), it transcends the boundaries of such pure linguistic analysis to embrace multiple other areas. Therefore, there is a high likelihood of that interplay between LL signs and tourism as a vital economic ideology that has been investigated in some territories worldwide (Kallen, 2009; Torkington, 2014; Koschade, 2016). While these studies in touristic areas mainly consider the valuable usage of local languages taken as a national symbol of authenticity, others maintain the significance of the English interaction with other languages in tourist destinations and how it functions as the lingua franca of international communication, as in the Spanish resort of Mallorca (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau, 2009) and in some Russian Baltic States (Marten et al., 2012). English, in this study, will not be analyzed as a lingua franca in the Jordanian LL of Petra; rather it is aimed to explore farther-reaching linguistic aspects of signs, in particular, the materials of which the textual signs are made in conjunctions with tourism issue for offering potential innovative social meanings.

### 1.2 Materiality of signage

LL research studies (e.g. Backhaus, 2007; Gorter, 2006; Kallen, 2010) have focused on a wide range of issues, as in the case of multilingualism to scrutinize various languages visible on signs in public space, in addition to monolingualism and bilingualism. It might be assumed that we have to some extent moved away from the major focus of the LL in order to examine the signs in terms of their materiality and the written texts as potential resources of socio-cultural meanings. Thus, the analysis of the signs' interior components is deliberately considered as much to do with the

issues of materiality and script themselves as to do with specific areas of multimodal social semiotics.

However, it is very important to review and summarize the relevant empirical literature on the material aspects nurtured in different philosophic views and frameworks, which will allow us to define and outline the theoretical principles modelled in the current study. For example, Backhaus (2007) argues that the sign receives a more material meaning in case it is engraved in such a manner as “an inscribed surface displayed in a public space to convey a message” (Backhaus, 2007, p. 4-5). Stroud & Mpendukana (2009) maintain the material significance of sign constructions based on the luxury, necessity, or implosion characteristics of the sites of items advertised. Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996, p. 232) classify the material aspects into three types: the material outward aspect on which texts are made, such as paper or stone; the material tool of which the texts are made, such as paint, ink, or chalk; and the instrument of writing by which the texts are made, such as pen, marker and highlighter, and chisel. In this respect, Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) emphasize the symmetric work of these elements to replicate the forces and meanings of signs’ schemes. Scollon & Scollon (2003, p. 135-136) build upon Kress & Van Leeuwen’s (1996) “visual semiotic framework”, and state that meanings of signs can be transmitted through three aspects: “medium of inscription” such as pen, or brush; “material of the sign itself”, including wood, plastic, or paper; and “freshness of installation” as wet paint or shiny surfaces.

This study has made materiality the focus of interest on the grounds that the semiotic analysis can open up new implications and meanings, given the different socio-semiotic practices that are more likely to tailor particular messages to meet the needs of the readers are strongly determined by the nature of materials used in making signs. Our aim is to shed light on what signs’ materials may tell us about social, cultural, and historical dimensions and facts associated with the Jordanian visual context in general and visual touristic Petra in particular. From these vantage points of view, two-fold crucial research questions emerge:

1. Does English with non-linguistic resources (e.g. materiality, font size, and vertical and horizontal placement) used on signs contribute to the formation of identities and convey an overwhelming sense of geography, culture, history, and social norms in accordance with the Jordanian tourism context?
2. What can the paralinguistic practices of written English texts add to the understanding of the dynamics that contribute to the symbolic construction of visual touristic Jordan?

In order to tackle such questions around the nature of sign materials in touristic spaces such as Petra, we build here upon Scollon & Scollon’s (2003) theory of the three meanings of materials: permanence or durability, temporality or newness, and quality. The essence of the theory is based on the notion that, “the materials out of which an object is made signal much about how we are to take its meaning” (Scollon & Scollon 2003, p. 135). For instance, the signs which are made of high quality and durable material informs that the texts made here are to last longer than those made of low quality and temporary material. To this end, the potential sets of materials in the Jordanian LL will be tested against the above socially semiotic meanings so as to suggest that language is variable according to the social context where the viewer plays a significant role in the interpretation of the social semiotics of materiality together with scripts displayed on signs.

If, going one step further, we intend to analyze the texts in terms of paralinguistic practices, in particular, images, writings, and layouts being taken as social sources of meaning-makings with significant effect (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). According to Cook (2001), such practices refer to the social activities or behavior that accompanies language meanings that are reflected through

choice of typeface and letter sizes, too (Cruse, 2004). In their social semiotics theory, Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) focus on the visual meanings of signs through color divergence, the use of uppercase and lowercase letters, and font types in written texts. Equally important, the sign meanings are largely confined to their modes of writing, including the capitalized and lower-case letters, typefaces, spellings, punctuations, directions, typography, amongst others.

## 2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Petra in two major streets: Petra Central and Tourist Street. Petra Central constitutes the major street in Petra and includes different tourist and local establishments and shops such as hotels, clothes shops, pharmacies, coffee shops, bazaars, souvenir shops, restaurants, tourist service offices, bakeries, and supermarkets. Tourist street, which extends about nine Km from the city center area to *Al-Beyda*, an area also known as “little Petra”, is quite significant for achieving the objectives of the study adequately in line with the interrelationship between English signs and non-linguistic resources such as materiality and font sizes. As far as the unit of analysis is concerned, the definition of signs surveyed is based on the definition enumerated by Backhaus (2007, p. 66) who suggests that “a sign was considered to be any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame [...] including anything from the small handwritten sticker attached to a lamp-post to huge commercial billboards.” We, therefore, took pictures of all visible signs within a 900-metre stretch of each street on both sides in a persistent attempt to deeply understand various communication practices with respect to linguistic, textual, and visual modes commonplace in the LL of Petra.

The study would envisage that all monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs make a significant contribution to the understanding of the social semiotics of materiality. In addition to the categorization of signs according to language, we coded the signs surveyed in the streets according to the materials of which signs were made. We also explored the issues of signs materiality within the ethnographic approach with an objective to mitigating the framework that we have adopted for this study. For this reason, we had to make different special visits to the survey streets for obtaining quantitative and qualitative data. Our observations and the personal communications with some store owners in their real-life environments made it necessary to conduct more interviews with local business owners. As the ethnographic research is a significant medium of seeking local people’s perceptions of an existing phenomenon in their contexts (Brewer, 2000; Garvin, 2010; Lanza & Woldemariam, 2014; Al-Naimat, 2015), this method demanded us to collect and examine twenty three interviews with people of varied demographic information, including hotel administrators, bath business owners, shop owners, restaurant owners, coffee shop owners, and the owners of bazaars (see Table 1). We, therefore, seek to pursue the participants’ personal thoughts and views about the nature of sign materials in connection with their signs at the moment of seeing them on their establishments or businesses.

**Table 1. Demographic information on the shop owners participating in the interviews**

No.	Occupation	Gender	Age	Education	Nationality
1	Hotel administrator	Male	45	BA degree	Jordanian
2	Hotel administrator	Male	55	Diploma	Jordanian

3	PDTRA <sup>1</sup> employer	Male	40	School	Jordanian
4	PDTRA employer	Male	35	BA degree	Jordanian
5	PDTRA employer	Male	29	BA degree	Jordanian
6	PDTRA employer	Male	44	Diploma	Jordanian
7	Hotel administrator	Male	58	School	Jordanian
8	Hotel administrator	Male	43	MA degree	Jordanian
9	Hotel administrator	Male	30	MA degree	Jordanian
10	Tourist office owner	Male	51	BA degree	Jordanian
11	Tourist office owner	Male	31	BA degree	Jordanian
12	Tourist office owner	Male	42	Diploma	Jordanian
13	Restaurant owner	Male	46	School	Jordanian
14	Restaurant owner	Male	52	BA degree	Jordanian
15	Owner of bazar	Male	33	School	Jordanian
16	Owner of bazar	Male	28	BA degree	Jordanian
17	Gift shop owner	Male	47	School	Jordanian
18	Gift shop owner	Male	27	School	Jordanian
19	Shopkeeper	Male	26	BA degree	Jordanian
20	Bookseller	Male	38	BA degree	Jordanian
21	Souvenir owner	Male	40	BA degree	Jordanian
22	Souvenir owner	Male	29	School	Jordanian
23	Souvenir owner	Male	49	School	Jordanian

Even though all the signs in the survey streets were photographed and categorized according to material types (i.e. metal, stone, wood, paper, glass, and sand), the on-site interviews that generated a wide range of individual responses enhanced and enriched the study with ethnographic evidence that aims at interpreting the mutual relationship existing between the English words and phrases, on the one hand, and materiality, on the other hand.

### 3. Data analysis

#### 3.1 The quantitative data analysis

As Figure 1 illustrates, four major monolingual and bi-/multilingual trends emerge from all the signs photographed, amongst of which include permanent hotel signs, institutional inscriptions, and semi-permanent and transient signs. The highest proportion of signs (72%) relates to English-only signs (Figure 1). This means that the sign originators tend to select English words and phrases rather than Arabic or any other language to advertise for services and products in a worldwide touristic destination such as Petra (see Alomoush & Al-Naimat, 2018).

<sup>1</sup> Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority.

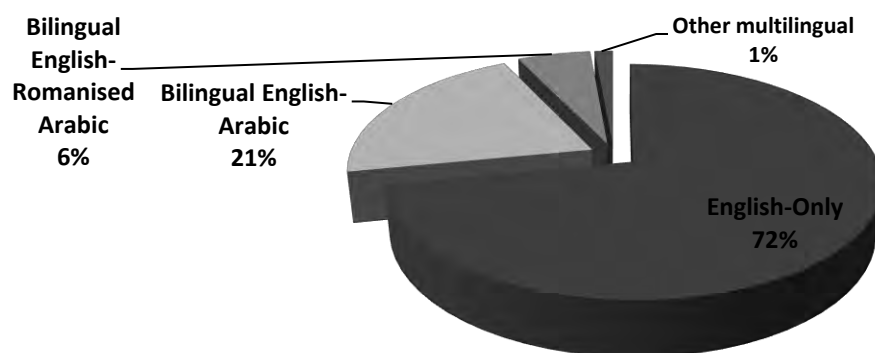


Figure 1. Major language patterns in the LL of Petra

Other trends in the LL indicate that approximately every one in five signs (21%) is a bilingual English-Arabic sign, while other patterns occasionally appear in the LL (approximately 7%); nevertheless, their visibility is seemingly emblematic rather than communicative as members of the touristic population are proficient in English. In the forthcoming data analysis, we will highlight the presence of English according to their materiality.

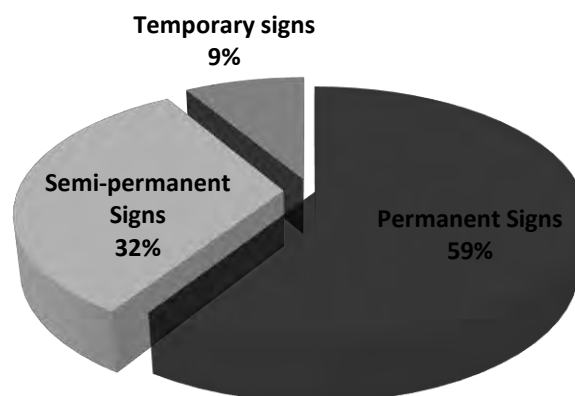


Figure 2. Proportions of material types in the LL

As Figure 2 shows, the labeling of signs based on their materials has resulted in: permanent signs that are written on stone and metal surfaces; semi-permanent signs that are painted on wooden boards; and temporary signs that are written on paper and painted inside sand glasses.

### 3.2. The analysis of the sign originators' perspectives

A total of 23 officials and shopkeepers were asked why they used English with particular materials. As Table 2 shows, the respondents with different social backgrounds (see Table 2) mentioned several reasons that can provide explanations for the Englishization of particular materials in the LL of Petra.

**Table 2. Major reasons for the Englishization of particular materials (i.e. metal, wood, paper, glass, and sand)**

- a. Symbolism (Metal).
- b. Visibility, beauty, and emblematic significance (wood).
- c. Enhancing the durability of English against the harsh environmental circumstances (Metal & stone).
- d. Metal complements the role of the global and commercial role of English as continuous and permanent materials.
- e. Sand is a symbol of the desert, reminding the tourists of Petra and its culture.
- f. The city's policy requires the use of metallic foam and stainless steel during the process of sign installing.
- g. Steel and metal as an enhancer of the role of English as a global language
- h. Beauty (glass).
- i. Sand stone alongside English as a representation of the simplicity of the place as being an ancient civilization
- j. Reflection of traditional cuisine, Jordanian cultural norms and traditions (wood).
- k. The idea of selling some simple and traditional gifts like the rags, carpets, wooden camels which can all remind the visitors of their visit to Petra.
- l. An indicator of high quality of services offered inside the hotel, as well as being the global way of designing the hotel name.

### 3.2.1 Responses to stoning and metalling signs

To provide evidence from the advertisers' views while discussing the quantitative data gathered from the LL, nine respondents were asked whether there was any relationship between English and stoning and metalling signs. Returning to Table 1, we notice that the reasons range from the enhancement of the role of English as a global language, visibility, beauty, to the rules and the instructions controlling municipal signs in Petra.

The language practices in visual Jordan are indicative of public bilingualism, but some monolingual practices seem to be challenging to the status quo (see Figure 3). In Petra, the monolingual ideology demonstrated in the persistent use of English is governed and controlled by economic and tourism interests in the commercial streets. Stoning and metaling signs, which comprise names of hotels such as Mövenpick, Petra Guest House Hotel, Sunset Hotel, Edom Hotel, and Candles Hotel, amongst others (see Figures 3 & 4), suggest particular metadiscursive practices apparently provide physical evidence for a socially semiotic meaning.



Figure 3. An example of hotel names displayed on stone

The sign in Figure 3 is a typical example of hotel signs around the world, where the English language is the lingua franca of touristic destinations. Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau (2009, p. 388) look at English in such touristic districts as a “foreign language that most visitors share, making those able to decipher English in the LL a ‘dominant language group’ in the resort.” In combination with topographic features (e.g. font size and placement), both classes of monolingual English signs (Figure 3) and bilingual Arabic-English signs (Figure 4) are positioned in strategic places in the Tourist Street in order to be visible to the tourists.

The sign group exemplified in Figure 3 is made on stone surfaces, whereas the one represented in Figure 4 is written on metal surfaces, usually, though by no means always, made of either stainless steel or metallic foam. The Arabic texts in the hotel sign (Figure 4) are displayed on metal materials in an attempt to attract more international tourists (e.g. American, British, French, Russian, Italian, and Spanish tourists) (For a full discussion, refer to Alomoush & Al-Naimat, 2018). English in block capitals appears to be inscribed in a larger font size, so the space that it occupies on the metal background is broader than the one occupied by Arabic in order to convey a sense of “modernity and cosmopolitanism” (Hult & Kelly-Holmes, 2018, p.3).



Figure 4. An example of hotel signs displayed on metal

These signs, however, designate other referential meanings as to tailor particular semiotic messages to the visitors. The block capitals of letterforms used appear to be more readable and appealing to the visitors. By all means, “PETRA”, which is now internationally recognized as one of the seven wonders in the world, is written in a semiotic manner to be a signifier of a popular tourist attraction for locals and non-domestic visitors alike. In relation to this, Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996, p. 41) argue that a text does not only acquire much significance from the material surface on which the sign is written, but it is also linked to the semiotic modes of how the language is written with “letters formed as types of font, influenced by aesthetic, psychological, pragmatic and other considerations.” Being so, it is noted, through our ethnographic visits, that hotel names and name of “PETRA” are normally written in block capitals for featuring the significance of these establishments and resorts, and therefore constituting places of attention for the international tourists. The letterform and typeface of “PETRA Guest House Hotel” are in a robust harmony with all other hotels’ letterforms and typefaces, including, amongst others “Mövenpick”, “CROWNE PLAZA”, and “PETRA MOON HOTEL”.

As mentioned above, the material surface is associated with its denotation. The sign frames in question, namely metal and stone, are sometimes installed by government-related agencies (e.g.



Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority PDTRA) (see Figure 5). Scollon & Scollon's (2003: 2) conviction that signs in the public space "take a major part of their meaning from how and where they are placed" suggests that the languages (i.e. English and Arabic) in signs with their physical emplacement in the streets of Petra are clearly symbolic and indexical of shared language ideologies and economic policies. The nature of these materials shows uniform circumstances regarding the meanings of texts, in which all the signs are in the heart of tourism domains. Services and facilities provided by local government authorities, Tourism Police and Petra Visitor Centre are all written on metal and stone frames. Paralinguistic practices (here referring to the metalling of sign carriers and font typefaces in bold) are apparently as important as the visibility of Arabic and English alike and also meant to emphasize Jordan's official bilingual linguistic landscaping.



Figure 5. An English-Arabic government-sign displayed on stone

The modern topographic designs that help the text to be clear and readable to the visitors are motivated by economic ideologies. In order to reveal and maintain the globally permanent status of Petra as a magnet for both domestic and non-domestic visitors and travelers, both Arabic and English are painted on metal carriers to promote the government's economic policy. Apart from the stone materials, the letterforms in Figure 5 show Arabic and English lettering made of metallic materials placed at various positions on the stone building entrance and façade respectively. The metal displays a distinct consistency through using the same size of both the English and Arabic texts, though the latter is assumed to gain more visibility in an Arabic-speaking context.

Furthermore, the stone governmental signs, as appeared from their surface, display great degrees of quality. As such, the metaling and stoning connotations of signs have provided great evidence of how the sign producers are completely aware of many promising meanings related to the services and utilities displayed within materials.

The overall practices on metal and stone surfaces have a hinged policy of color selection, which is generally black-this has been reflected in the majority of the current data set (see Figures 4 & 5). Such a semiotic feature contributes to the language ideology associated with the materials in question, where hotels, and governmental institutions tend largely to use permanent signs with some formality considerations in an endeavor to indicate that the tourist services provided by each are still very much in demand.

### 3.2.2. Responses to wooden boarding signs

Seven businessmen were asked whether there was a relationship between English displayed on their storefronts and wood on which English words and phrases were painted. As Table 1 shows,

the responses focused on reasons related to aesthetic beauty, visibility, and representations of traditional cuisine and cultural norms.

Signs made on wooden boards or any other identical materials constitute a noteworthy proportion of all other materials. The wood of which a board is made characterizes this type of paralinguistic practices on the part of sign designers; other materials such as paper and paint are more likely to be employed in designing the text. The texts written on boards appeared to be somewhat recessed or hand-painted.

Linguistic boards were categorized into two groups: business name and advertisement boards. The sign in Figure 6 is a prime example of wooden boards on which the Roman script of the Arabic word *Al-Hayat* [meaning *life* in Arabic] is designed in such a way to stimulate many meanings of talent and art, in particular, the ostensible beautiful annotations within all the typefaces of letter (A) that mark a distinct identity to the sign. This conspicuous linguistic layout could communicate the message of the bazaar itself where items, products, gifts, and foods are likely to be made by skilled staff, and therefore, the letterforms are serving as an amazing way of attracting more customers to the shop. Still, the examination of most boards with restaurants, shops, or bazaar domains shows the appealing aspect, where the signs are designed with texts displaying Roman scripts, or English capitalized letterforms.



Figure 6. A wooden board showing Al-Hayat Bazaar

Medium-size advertising poster boards are often hand-painted and present a unique and impressionistic style. As demonstrated in Figure 7, the sign designer seems to fully engage the readers, presumably foreign tourists coming from different parts of the world, including Chinese visitors, in the arrangement of tours to different tourist attractions in Jordan. Linguistic creativity and innovation are manifested in texts portrayed as portraits rather than linguistic texts meeting the conventional grammatical rules of a language, as in the case of violating the conventional rules of English in respect of punctuation such as the absence of full stops and commas, and the use of noun phrases instead of whole sentences (see Figure 7). This has been mentioned by the office owner that, “the use of English here is just for communicating the aim of the office [...] we do not much follow the English rules.” A relatively similar matter is induced in the display of the text in red at the bottom of the advertising poster board, which is a signal denoting significant information regarding this advertisement, at the same time, it assists the sign maker’s employment of two different colors for probably constructing some personal appealing channels for purely economic and commercial purposes.



Figure 7. An English-Chinese wooden board showing Jordan Tours



Figure 8. An English-Arabic wooden board showing Jordan Tours

The texts on the board in Figure 8 also show some other personal semiotic designs as to spot itself a place of exoticness and uniqueness. The major semiotic feature here is the duplication process of the advertisement (Why Jordan Tours) in such an odd writing mode. The three words have some influential visible properties. While the word (why) below is painted with some ornamental font and extended strokes pointing to the question mark occupying and cutting some parts of the image of Petra, the words (Jordan) and (Tours) are both displayed with capitalized-letters. According to Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996), the upper part of the visual writings represents the ideal and general essence of the information, whereas the lower part represents the real and more information. This suggests that the upper English part in this sign is for achieving the readership on the part of tourists for whom the tours are primarily arranged, rather than the local people who are assumed to first read the Arabic lower part information.

As far as Scollon & Scollons' (2003) meanings of materiality are concerned, the board material features greatly go with the temporality and newness connotations, where the materials allow the texts to be removed, modified, or repainted. In this context, what enhances the temporality is the sign advertisers' placement of boards in different areas; for example, some signs appeared to be fixed on the streets in front of its business (see Figure 7), or they are sometimes fixed above its intended businesses (see Figure 8). In addition, the temporariness of board is reflected in the new and distinct personal layouts with the careful selection of striking colors, in particular, red use against all other words in black (see Figure 7) that also suggest meanings of modernity, newness, and progression. The multimodal practices (see Figure 8) and the semiotic personal ways of inscribing signs in bazaar (see Figure 6) contribute to the fact that the individuals

chose the boards along with these semiotic linguistic ideologies as personal conduits to approach the tourists with services offered. The locals' use of painted English on such boards may be more appealing to tourists because they represent personal attempts to contact them, unlike the formal writing modes used in metaling and stoning, in which the block capitals and capitalized lettering with use of one color reveal how the services and utilities are formally revealed to the tourists.

### 3.2.3 Responses to glass-papering and wall-papering signs

Four shop keepers responded to the question if there was a connection between English and the material (i.e. glass and paper) used for displaying the English words and phrases. According to their own perspectives, the reasons were simply related to a range of reasons: (a) presumably allowing better mobility (paper), (b) adding more aesthetic beauty to the English wording, (c) and consequently attracting the attention of the visitors, especially the international ones.

Paper is typically known as white material often used for writing. Signs of paper comprise two equal materials: the A 4 sized papers which are affixed inside the glass surfaces of some businesses; and the paperboards which refer to the heavy paper-like materials, and are often displayed above some items outside the businesses, or stuck to some other items. The overall signs which include no large announcements made on boards or signage appeared to be printed or hand-written. Hand-written texts on paper serve as a means of informing tourists some commercial notices concerning the prices of items, offers, or general information about opening and closing times. For example, the small paperboards in the monolingual English sign used for promoting an antique carpet (see Figure 9) appears to be hand-written in black ink with relatively capital letters for showing the significance of items advertised. The use of red color here clearly suggests special price reductions on the products advertised.

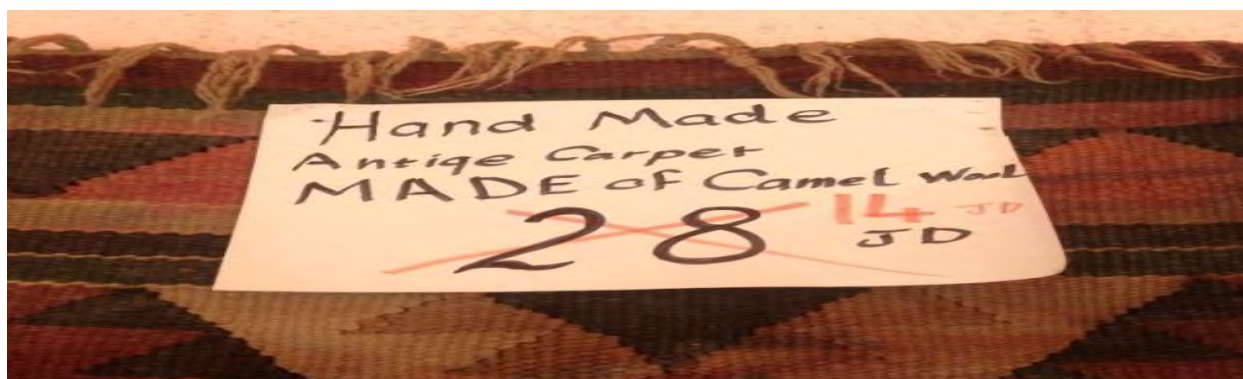


Figure 9. A monolingual English paper sign promoting an antique carpet

The commercial advertisements on fronts of souvenir shops are, as the business owner reported, "...aimed to publicize the Jordanian culture via some simple means outside the shops and to entail great popularity with international visitors". With this in mind, meanings of newness and temporariness seem to lend themselves to transient materials implied in the use of papering in the Jordanian touristic LL. Such meanings conform to paper material signs, where the majority tells the visitors about the temporary state of the commercial offers, prices, and other relevant information. The languages used in paper material constitute linguistic practices having the potential to transfigure transient and temporal advertisements.

Even though such signs are not kept safe, their text transience acquires much relevance of their language significance. The momentary texts within such a tourist sphere would probably cause shifting to the nature of the English language used (Sebba, 2010). English here can address the processes of commodification of advertised language products to be viewed as a circulating and ephemeral language. Being so, looking beyond the temporary signage of papering to advertise language for commodification of the intended products necessitates recognizing the process of language circulation within recent global forces. Equally important, the language displayed seems to play a great role in circulating the socio-cultural meanings of the handmade antique carpet as an indispensable part of Jordanian cultural life in both rural and desert areas, which can be understood as emblems of Jordan's cultural and social life, i.e. camel and carpet are respectively seen as a nomadic herding life style and Bedouin and rural woven objects, both of which are used in the handwritten advertising poster made of paper. These joint circumstances have demanded understanding the language as inherently associated with commercial contexts of products that allow English to function as a trigger of tourism and economic domains.

The papering of signs seems to gain more linguistic significance in case of contrasting the handwritten with printed languages. Accordingly, the owner of the business in Figure 10 manifested a special viewpoint that his printed paper sign is more convincing to the tourists than the handwritten ones in terms of making a better commercial message and incorporating a formal mode of writing for addressing foreign visitors.



Figure 10. A temporary paper sign displaying a big discount

A claim can reasonably be made about papering choice, the texts in black word-initial capital letters in “Big Discount” and block capitals painted in a bold black color as displayed on the wording of “Closing Down” could be a place of respect and regard on the part of viewers, and a further compensation for the less durability of papering.

### 3.2.4. Responses to artful sand painting in bottles

Three shopkeepers responded to the question if there is a connection between English and sand used to form English words. The responses were closely related to the assumption that both serve as a multimodal reminder of Petra's ancient civilization, cultural life, desert environment and its herding nomadic lifestyle, and the like.

Such sign materials are prevalent in the corpus, though they do not occupy a great percentage of all the data. Different writing tools and surfaces were employed for conveying the meanings of the signs. Multimodality, which involves linguistic texts and visual and other semiotic material, is extensively employed. In Figure 11, the sign designer decided to place stickers on glass in order

to possibly reflect the business owner's professional craft of writing the guests' names inside the sand bottle, which is a common practice in Petra. Much to the amusement and persuasiveness of passers-by is displayed in the creation of words by placing sticky letters on the glass seemingly characterized by hardness, transparency or translucence, and fragility.



*Figure 11. Sand bottle*

Sand painting in bottles has been used as a prime example of the practices that can encourage economic profitability and familiarize international visitors with the desert life of Jordan as displayed on the paintings of the sand bottle in Figure 12: camels, desert, sand dunes, palm trees, marvelous sunshine, and mountains, all of which raise important questions about the role of multimodality in conveying historical and socio-cultural information about the LL.

Basing the analysis of this multimodal sign on Kress & Van Leeuwen's semiotic frame (1996), it can be said that the meanings of the language relate to the informative purpose of the text grounded on the belief that, "the placement of elements endows them with the specific informational values attached to the various 'zones' of the image" Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996: 177). This unveils that both images of the camel and Petra represent the most illuminating cultural values in the Jordanian tourism context-such visual elements are displayed in the center of the sign.

These non-linguistic practices are not designed for marketing Petra as a desolate place offering discomfort and hardship, but as a wonderland of historical sites presenting a great amount of comfort and relaxation and therefore identifying the socio-cultural roles of the sign designer. As displayed, such multimodal signs show a great deal of visual creativity and innovation used as a vehicle for visual communication and interaction between the sign designer and the visitors.



*Figure 12. A prime example of sand painting in bottles*

As far as materiality is concerned, the multimodal role of sand bottles seem to represent Scollon & Scollon's (2003) material meanings in which the temporary and newness aspects served as innovative ways of writing empowered by the bottle designer's choice of sand colors to represent the Jordanian geographic culture. This further related to language mobility which demands designers to use the language resources in unpredictable ways so as to make the linguistic messages mobilize worldwide. English can be seen as having a dynamic global function in these souvenir bottles, as the lingua franca of international tourists, permitting several ways of accessibility and mobility (Moriarty, 2014, Blommaert, 2010). This omnipresence of English on signs undoubtedly underlines the role of English as a worldwide medium of tourism, mobility, and marketing.

#### **4. The Englishization of permanent, semi-permanent, and temporary signs in visual touristic Jordan**

The current LL research is relevant to the study of worldwide English varieties, as it tackles the Englishization of the public space in touristic destinations and closely-related cultural processes such as globalization and glocalization. Englishization is not only possible to be regarded "as a savage indictment of globalization leading to unidirectional homogenization and perceived destruction of the local," but it may also be perceived "as a driving force of localization, contributing to the complexity and diversity of the local linguistic landscape" (Selvi, 2016, p.38). This suggests that the Englishization of sign materials are driven by a number of motivations and trends, including global mobility and accessibility, social prestige and symbolic significance, better tourism, and marketability.

#### **Enhancing the role of English as an index of official and communal ideologies and policies**

The division of signs according to materiality indirectly reflects the ideologies that govern and control the sign actors, pointing to the close relationship between the linguistic component, the material itself, and the social context in which we live. This means that the understanding of signs from a materialistic perspective transcends the traditional conception of a sign not going beyond the theoretical dimension. Some researchers (e.g. James, 2014) build upon Halliday's (1994) three parameters of field, tenor, and mode, as here adapted to fully understand the meanings conveyed in the visual marketplace. The ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings would be employed to identify who has created the linguistic text and what it is all about (field); how it addresses the viewers and is the language used formal or informal (tenor); and how the text is structured. Meanwhile, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is very important to understand how language is negotiated and constructed in the social context (see Fairclough, 1989; 1995; James, 2014).

There is no question that metal and stainless steel emphasize the role of English as having important instrumental, regulatory and innovative functions in the Jordanian context. An official PDTRA employer (participant 5) comments on that:

I think that most bilingual Arabic-English governmental signs associated with Jordan Tourism Police and Petra Visitor Centre are most likely to be displayed on metal or stone backgrounds for reasons of high quality. It is true that English itself can achieve that role, but the material can enrich and enhance the distinctiveness of English as a language having significant functions domestically and internationally (Our own Translation).

This excerpt emphasizes the role of paralinguistic features in understanding the position of English in an Arab Middle Eastern country. This is evident in the inscription of Arabic and English on metal and stone backgrounds. The same applies to hotels that tend toward the use of English-only signs and other bilingual signs on permanent materials.

### **English as a driving force toward better tourism**

It seems that retailers and commercial companies have a little economic interest in very much displaying the Arabic language. Instead, English adds a great deal of prestige to the businesses in the commercial streets of Petra. Thus, on the basis of what has been examined in the fieldwork, materiality enhances the role of English as a global language. From the perspective of the approach of “translanguaging”, non-linguistic resources (e.g. materiality, font size, and so forth) contribute to the semiotic construction of the LL.

In comparison with other approaches applied in LL research studies, the current research has attempted to highlight why sign designers select particular linguistic resources, English in particular, and nonlinguistic devices, especially materiality. This has been evident in applying the approach of “translanguaging” to LL research studies; for example, Gorter & Cenoz (2015) have examined individual languages instead of highlighting that communication should transcend words and phraseology to include non-linguistic resources (Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2017). Thus, on the basis of what has been stated by Alomoush & Al-Naimat (2018), the generation and promotion of tourism play a vital role in the economy of Jordan in general and Petra in particular. An owner of bazaar (participant 16) comments on this assumption:

I really preferred to design English texts on the front of my bazaar by using a wooden board as just to make the tourists get the idea of selling some simple and traditional gifts like rags, carpets, wooden camels which can all remind the visitors of their visits to Petra.

It seems that business owners attempt to attract the attention of the international tourists through the employment of different non-linguistic resources to boost and increase their own benefits.

### **English alongside materiality as an index of socio-symbolic meanings**

It is quite normal that everyone travelling to a foreign country should be familiar with English. As a result, there is no question that English is the most commonly used foreign language in Jordanian touristic destinations (see Alomoush & Al-Naimat, 2018). However, English has a symbolic function. To maintain the English words and phrases for a long period of time and to show an air of authority, stainless steel and metal may be used as planned by the sign designers (Participant 3):

For me as an employee in Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority, the English wording is more likely to last for long if it is displayed on metal or stone backgrounds. This material helps English remain and continue to exist in spite of the harsh environmental circumstances, and consequently enhances the value of English in the public space (Our Own Translation).

English words and phrases are also used on other materials to symbolize the city’s cultural life, ancient history, and even Jordanian traditional cuisine.



## 5. Conclusions

It seems that English as well as non-linguistic resources (sign materials, font size, color, and so forth) plays a significant role in the historical, cultural globalization of the city. The interconnection between sign materials and their textual content is so significant that they are designed to perform particular semiotic functions (e.g. political, authoritative, social, historical, environmental, and so forth). Solidity, durability, and continuity that characterize some sign materials, particularly metal and stone surfaces, convey an air of authority, socio-economic/political power, wealth, and social distinctiveness, as illustrated on the signs placed on stone hotel buildings, tourist service offices, and signs placed on metal surfaces installed by governmental and municipal institutions.

It is no question that such materials are an apparent representation of governmental establishments and local authorities' real actions to make the intended signs look durable and of high quality in the eyes of visitors. The wooden board signs made by the local residents seem to convey some semiotic layouts in order to play a key role at the stage of the semiotic construction of the visual marketplace of Petra. Meanings of newness and temporality apparently prevail in the wooden materials, whose semiotic meanings can be visually read on the wooden boards with the use of typefaces often in block capitals displayed on the fronts of restaurants, bazaars, shops, and so forth. Paralinguistic devices such as the production of different letterforms and the use of non-textual modes (e.g. the image of Petra) complement the role of materials in the interpretation of the semiotic LL. Paper is a prime example of transient, ephemeral materials often appearing in uppercase letters; this might be accompanied by the employment of some materials taken from the Jordanian culture such as the antique carpets made by Jordanian Bedouins known for the weaving of carpets, as innovative ways of displaying more cultural meanings related to the Jordanian desert life. These cultural elements establish themselves as mobilized artefacts seen in the drawings of Petra with Jordanian reflection of real colors and views to gain the worldwide image with tourists.

Apparently, there is a parallel trend to use materiality forms in connection with the type of language ideology for reflecting the significance of tourism and economic services provided in Petra. While English use molded on metal and stone surfaces has shown official representations of the authorities of governmental institutions in the ever-growing importance of the services offered, the local individuals established other linguistic and non-linguistic implications via painting, writing, or inscribing English letters on temporary materials (e.g. wood, paper, and sand bottle) as ways of conjoining their own personal semiotic layout and multimodal practices as individual approaches and strategies of opening up amenable ways with tourists for exhibiting Petra as a mobile tourist province.

In addition to the semiotic analysis of signs, we had interviews with 23 officials and shopkeepers to understand more deeply if there was a relationship between the use of English and materiality. The semiotics of materials, sign designs, script, often Roman script, and color selection apparently exhibits communication strategies to market Jordan's most popular tourist attraction, Petra. Unlike the previous studies such as Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) and Scollon & Scollon (2003), the present study establishes links between the nature of materials, on the one hand, and socially semiotic functions beyond linguistic texts, on the other hand. It should be mentioned that linguistic practices are very important in the profound understanding of some semiotic meanings attached to materials.

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