The Linguistic Landscape of Post-Soviet Bishkek

Ashley McDermott

A thesis submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Global Studies (Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies).

Chapel Hill
2017

Approved by:

Donald J. Raleigh

Graeme Robertson

Erica Johnson

ABSTRACT

Ashley McDermott: The Linguistic Landscape of Post-Soviet Bishkek
(Under the direction of Donald J. Raleigh)

This study analyzes the linguistic landscape of post-Soviet Bishkek in order to understand the relationship among Kyrgyz, Russian, and English, and society in the city. The linguistic landscape is the visible language on public and private signs in a given territory. In Bishkek, the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic, the linguistic landscape not only includes the two languages given elevated status through the state's official language policy, Russian and Kyrgyz, but also comprises the English language. My study is based on 104 photographed signs, 15 interviews with young residents of Bishkek, and 40 hours of participant observation. I argue that the status and function of Kyrgyz, Russian, and English in Bishkek society are closely tied to language ideologies resulting from globalization, social and linguistic hierarchies, and nationalistic and educational legacies of Soviet state-building. My findings have implications for the creation and adoption of multilingual nationalism in post-Soviet space.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIRGURES

1 INTRODUCTION

Although the Central Asian state of Kyrgyzstan has been independent for twenty-five years, one need only walk through the streets of Bishkek, the capital and the country's largest city, to glimpse traces of its Soviet past. Trolley buses with faded signs advertise their fare in rubles as they whir down center city streets lined with massive brutalist structures. Murals of Soviet men and women hard at work still adorn the sides of old buildings. A statue of Lenin, hidden behind the state historical museum, looms over a quiet park in his traditional pose, with one arm outstretched toward invisible proletarian masses.

Bishkek is a city in transition, and the changing face of Kyrgyzstan is also evident in its post-Soviet cityscape. A proliferation of Kyrgyz heroes such as Manas, the star of Kyrgyzstan's national epic poem; Chingiz Aitmatov, Kyrgyzstan's national author; and Kurmanjan Datka, a legendary leader of the Kyrgyz people, now join Communist monuments and memorials. Mercedes Sprinter vans act as *marshrutkas* (routed shared taxis) for crowds of daily commuters unwilling to wait for slower buses and street cars. Each corner is home to a Western-style fast-food restaurant, Turkish food stand, or coffee shop.

The linguistic aspects of the landscape further define the contemporary cityscape of Bishkek, a notable example of which is located in the district of Jal, on the old brick walls of a two-story house with a new corrugated metal roof. Facing the street, in the upper left corner, hangs a large blue plate with the street name in Kyrgyz "*Akhunbaev Kochosu*," while on the upper right corner is a worn white plate, giving the Russian street name of "*Oktiabr*'." The house in Jal represents just one example of the complex, sometimes contradictory, linguistic landscape

of Bishkek today. Many other streets have been renamed in Kyrgyz but still retain the physical markers of the old names in Russian, and some continue to be referred to by their old names. Whereas Kyrgyz and Russian are jointly visible on most official signs, private businesses, advertisements, and other texts present on Bishkek streets use varying mixtures of Russian, Kyrgyz, and now, with increasing frequency, English.

In this paper, I examine visible languages on public and commercial signs in Bishkek within the context of state language planning and policy to address the question: What does the linguistic landscape say about the relationship among Russian, English, and Kyrgyz and the society of post-Soviet Bishkek? I use linguistic landscape analysis as a "barometer of the relationship between language and society" to provide observable indicators of language ideologies, or "cultural system[s] of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Huebner 2009:84; Irvine 1989:255; Shohamy and Gorter 2009). In this way, linguistic landscapes provide insight into a region's social and linguistic hierarchies, individual and collective identities, language use, and ideas about language use (Shohamy and Gorter 2009).

In my inquiry, I also address the broader question of how representative the linguistic landscape is of the relationship between language and society in Bishkek, and especially how representative linguistic landscape is of language ideologies. I argue that linguistic landscape analysis is an important measure of the relationship between language and society in the city, but is an incomplete measure that must be complemented by additional methods. Following Spolsky's (2006) examination of the current methods of linguistic landscape research, I maintain that, by itself, linguistic landscape does not represent all of the language variety in an area. It over represents higher-status languages and is difficult to interpret without the context of

additional data. Moreover, at times rational business concerns or government regulation outweigh any symbolic function of the sign. These factors can determine the size and placement of the sign, language varieties included in a sign, or the size and placement of text on a sign in the linguistic landscape.

My paper is organized into five sections. First, to better understand the case of Bishkek, I give an overview of the literature on Soviet legacies, particularly the nationalities problem and Soviet state-building. I also provide a brief discussion of the background of language planning and policy in Bishkek from the Soviet era through the present. The second section surveys the current literature on the theory and methodologies of linguistic landscape and language planning and policy research. Next I analyze original data collected in Bishkek from June 2016 to August 2016, comprising 104 photographed signs collected from the center city, 15 interviews with young residents of Bishkek, and 40 hours of participant observation. I use spatial and linguistic analyses to examine the signage, and then situate the signs in the context of current language planning and policies recorded in government sources. I compare the findings from these analyses to themes pertaining to language ideologies found in the interviews and participant observation. In conclusion, I argue that the status and function of Kyrgyz, Russian, and English are closely tied to language ideologies resulting from globalization, social and linguistic hierarchies, and nationalistic and educational legacies of Soviet state-building. Ultimately, I find evidence for the creation and adoption of multilingual, Kyrgyz/Russian nationalism in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan based on the coexistence of language ideologies linking the Kyrgyz language to Kyrgyz nationalism and language ideologies regarding Russian as valuable economically.

The study provides a preliminary understanding of the relationship between language and society in Bishkek through linguistic landscape analysis and ethnographic research. I limit my

analysis to Bishkek, the current capital of Kyrgyzstan and the former capital of the Kyrgyz SSR which serves as a magnet, attracting people from smaller cities and rural areas in search of jobs or university education. I further limit my study to a 5-mile square area at the heart of Bishkek. The total sprawl of Bishkek is 49 square miles, but much of the territory is semi-rural or suburban and has few signs for analysis. Although the study considers the linguistic landscape only of central Bishkek, I argue it is a critical step toward understanding the linguistic landscape of all of Kyrgyzstan.

2 SOVIET LEGACIES

Kyrgyzstan was part of the Soviet Union for nearly seventy years. In 1925 Kyrgyzstan became an autonomous oblast of the young USSR, and was remade into the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1926. In 1936 the Soviet government gave the territory status as a constituent republic of the USSR. The long Soviet legacy in Kyrgyzstan cannot be overlooked when considering the linguistic landscape of Bishkek. Through language planning, Soviet ideologies of state-building and nationalism spread literacy in Central Asia, reshaped the Kyrgyz language, and led to the widespread use of Russian in urban areas and the use of Russian by minorities. The presence of both Kyrgyz and Russian, as well as the relative absence of minority languages in the linguistic landscape of Bishkek today, is due in part to these policies. Even twenty-five years after independence, the legacies of the Soviet past shape the way citizens of Bishkek use and perceive language.

2.1 Early National Policies (1922-1932)

By 1921 the Bolsheviks occupied most of the former territory of the Russian Empire, inheriting a vast, multiethnic state. In a post-World War I world consumed by the zeitgeist of nationalism, Soviet leaders were forced to address the issue of how to manage the plethora of

diverse peoples in the Union and create a united socialist society. After debate, the Soviet government accepted a qualified right of national determination within a federal structure (Smith 2008). With their own state-supported nationalism, Soviet authorities sought to negate the dangerous potential of nationalism to unite people in pursuit of nationalist goals, such as the creation of independent national states. They wanted to gain the trust of minorities who associated Russians and Russian culture with the oppression of the Russian Empire. Although Soviet authorities considered nationalism an unavoidable step on the path to modernization, they believed that by granting national autonomy, national culture would exhaust itself and allow socialist culture to flourish (Martin 2001). In time, the ideological underpinnings of the Soviet answer to the "nationalities question" and subsequent policies would shape the future of Soviet Central Asia.

The qualified right to self-determination became policy in 1923, when the Soviet Union resolved that the state would support all forms of nationhood that did not conflict with the unity of the central state (Martin 2001). Support of nations came in the form of *korenizatsiia,* or indigenization. *Korenizatsiia* included linguistic and cultural *korenizatsiia,* and "affirmative action," the training and promotion of national elites and positive discrimination in employment (Martin 2001). Linguistic and cultural *korenizatsiia* supported the development of titular languages and national culture in each national territory. Affirmative action provided resources to train and educate nationals and directed that local party, government, trade unions, and educational institutions preferentially employ representatives of the titular nationality of the republic (Martin 2001; Slezkine 1994; Smith 2008).

Korenizatsiia was executed differently in the East, which was considered to be less culturally developed, and focused initially more on affirmative action than linguistic

indigenization. Affirmative action caused ethnic tension in national territories and an influx of Russians in certain mid-level specialist positions. Managers hired nationals over Russians, on occasion even firing Russians to employ locals and meet their quotas, causing some Russians to resent the policies and non-Russian population (Martin 2001; Smith 2008). Despite preferential hiring, titular nationals tended to work in menial jobs or as elected officials, because both types of work required little education and the educational infrastructure in Central Asia was poor. Managers also hired Russians to fill these mid-level specialist positions, leading to the migration of Russians to the republics for work (Martin 2001).

Although at first Soviet authorities did not pursue linguistic *korenizatsiia* as enthusiastically as affirmative action in the East, language remained essential to how nationalities were delineated within the Soviet system. Soviet educators, ideologues, and ethnographers believed language to be the most reliable marker of nationality (Slezkine 1994). However, because Central Asian people spoke various Turkic dialects and identified primarily by religion or tribe, they did not fit into easily definable national categories. Thus, to make national languages distinct from one another, Soviet language planners "modernized" the languages through codification and standardization. The process entailed developing grammar, phonetics, and morphology; creating dictionaries; removing foreign words (especially Arabic and Persian borrowings); and switching alphabets from Arabic to Latin (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001; Slezkine 1994). The titular language of each national territory was made official, and all party business was to be conducted in it. Furthermore, as the population of Central Asia was mostly illiterate, Soviet literacy campaigns served as a way to spread the languages in their new varieties (Akiner 1990; Grenoble 2003; Fierman 1991).

2.2 Nationalities Policy During the Great Retreat (1933-1938)

In the 1930s, during a time known as the "The Great Retreat," nationalities policy shifted away from the active proliferation of nations and nationalism and moved toward ethnic consolidation. The Soviet authorities continued *korenizatsiia,* but it was considered of secondary importance. Linguistic *korenizatisiia,* in particular, became a lower priority. In addition, Soviet authorities "rehabilitated" the Russian nationality, which had not been promoted by the early nationalist policies in order to stem feelings of mistrust toward Russians (Martin 2001).

During this time, Stalin introduced the "Friendship of Peoples" trope to describe the relationship between the Russian nation and other nations in the Soviet Union. Party discourse linked the friendship of peoples to overcoming the distrust between nations, especially between the Russian nation and the Eastern nations. As a result of the "Friendship of Peoples" metaphor and the consequent rehabilitation of the Russian nation, Russian was elevated in status, the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) was made the official republic of the Russian nation, and the unifying role of Russian and Russian culture in the USSR was emphasized (Martin 2001).

New language reforms also reflected the importance of the Russian language and culture as a unifying tool. Within the regions, party communications shifted to Russian, and Russian was considered necessary for advancements in local party and government. In contrast to the policies of the 1920s, Soviet officials no longer prioritized the promotion of the Kyrgyz language, but rather stressed the importance of education for learning the Russian language (Pavlenko 2006). Not only did Russian become compulsory in primary schools as a second language as well as the language of higher education but the very script of Kyrgyz changed again, from Latin to Cyrillic, in part due to the belief that the shift would facilitate learning Russian. Some have speculated

that the alphabet reform may have also been to discourage pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism, as the government of Turkey under Atatürk had also adopted policy changing the Turkish alphabet from Arabic to Latin (Akiner 1990; Grenoble 2003; Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001).

2.3 Nations and Nationalism from Khrushchev to Gorbachev (1954-1991)

After Stalin died in 1953, nationalities policy continued to advance titular nationals within their national territory and make provisions for national languages, but emphasized Russian as a unifying culture and language. The balance shifted in the late 1970s, however, when republics began to demand national rights, including language rights. The results of these policies and ideologies influenced the languages the people of Kyrgyzstan spoke after independence, the structure of the Kyrgyzstani government, and the discourse surrounding the creation of post-Soviet language policy.

Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964) first employed pronationalist policies, but later shifted to a more assimilist tone. In the beginning, he promoted friends and colleagues from the republics and decentralized a number of ministries to gain local support and maintain his hold on power. He reversed many of these policies after consolidating power in 1957 when he adopted assimilist rhetoric with his preference of the phrase "merging of peoples" over the "Friendship of Peoples" metaphor. His 1958 theses on education let parents decide in which language their children would be instructed, and allowed republics to drop the teaching of a second language. This removed the requirement for minorities in a republic to learn the titular language (Smith 2008).

After Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev (1964-1982) reverted to the "Friendship of Peoples" trope and policies under his government leaned toward promotion of nationalism rather than ethnic consolidation. Unlike previous leaders, Brezhnev kept the same party and government

leaders in high office, a practice known as "stability of cadres." This allowed national leaders, especially in Central Asia, to make personal power bases centered on their own families or clans. In general, the patronage of national elites benefited non-Russians in the republics (Smith 2008). These types of political networks are still common in Central Asia today (Collins 2004).

Although non-Russians in general had a privileged position in their republics, this was not true in the Soviet Union as a whole. The best educational and career opportunities required mastery of Russian, and offensive references to non-Russian nationality were common. Despite the priority of Russian language learning, retention of local language prevailed even in republics where Russian language acquisition was high. This may be due to the existence of national administrative apparatuses, local language schools, and local cultural facilities that promoted national sentiments, especially in rural areas. These policies installed Russian as a lingua franca in urban areas, and also strengthened the position of titular nationalities in the Soviet Union (Rakowska-Harmstone 1974).

In the late 1980s under Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991), language policy took a decentralized, nationalist turn after the outpouring of nationalism in republics of the Soviet Union. In the nationalist fervor leading up to the fall of the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) passed the "Law on State Language" in 1989, which "celebrated the historical value of Kyrgyz, offered special measures for its protection, and guaranteed the free development of all national languages" (Orusbaev et al. 2008:209). The nationalist trend in language policy continued in 1990, when Kyrgyz was declared the only official language of Kyrgyzstan with no provision for Russian (Orusbaev et al. 2008).

3 POST-SOVIET LANGUAGE PLANNING AND POLICY

The post-Soviet era led to a shift in language policy from promoting Kyrgyz with nationalist intent to supporting the official use of both Kyrgyz and Russian. Some politicians and language activists promoted national language laws, worrying that Kyrgyz culture and language in Kyrgyzstan might disappear, while critics of "Kyrgyz-only" policies, inside the government and out, expressed fears of Russian emigration, weakening of economic ties with Russia, and the downgrading of the importance of Russian as the lingua franca of Central Asia. Over time the government has pursued a moderate path regarding language, changing positions from support of a nationalistic, monolingual ideal, to the acceptance and inclusion of national minority languages, to the promotion of Russian as a second official language but to the exclusion of other national minority languages. These changing policies continue to shape the linguistic landscape of Bishkek and influence the way people in the city use and perceive language.

3.1 Language Policy in the Kyrgyz Republic Under Akaev (1991-2005)

Under the presidency of Askar Akaev (1991-2005), Kyrgyz language policies promoted Kyrgyz, but also "protected" the status of Russian. Although Kyrgyz remained the official language of independent Kyrgyzstan, in 1996 Russian was given an elevated position as the official language of interethnic communication (Orusbaev et al. 2008). In 2000, the Jorgorku Kenesh, (the legislature) passed the "Program for the Development of the State Language of Kyrgyzstan 2000-2010," intended to revitalize and standardize the Kyrgyz language. Part of the program included efforts to introduce Kyrgyz as a language of government, and specifically required politicians to take and pass a Kyrgyz proficiency test before running for office, although politics continued to be conducted predominately in Russian (Orusbaev et al. 2008).

It soon became clear that many politicians, with Akaev as a notable exception, could not demonstrate proficiency in Kyrgyz. In 2000, amid renewed concerns about the emigration of Russians (making up approximately 10 percent of the population) from Kyrgyzstan to Russia as well as claims that the Kyrgyz proficiency test unduly favored Akaev and his network (because opposition politicians did not speak Kyrgyz well), legislation elevated Russian to the status of official language alongside Kyrgyz (Orusbaev et al. 2008). Today Kyrgyz remains the state language (*gosudarstvennyĭ iazyk*) of Kyrgyzstan, and Russian the official language (*ofitsialnyĭ iazyk*) of the country. The difference between the two terms is not defined in any official government document (Derbisheva 2009). However, the connotation of the word *gosudarstvennyĭ* implies that Kyrgyz is the language of the *gosudarstvo,* meaning state or government. The choice of *gosudarstvennyĭ iazyk* for Kyrgyz and *ofitsialnyĭ iazyk* for Russian may have been an attempt to relate Kyrgyz with the state and Kyrgyz nationalism.

In February 2004, the government of Kyrgyzstan passed the "Law on the State Language of the Kyrgyz Republic," reaffirming the official status of Kyrgyz and planning for a strengthened social role for the language. Unlike the earlier attempt in 2000 to provide for the implementation of Kyrgyz as a national language, the 2004 law included provisions for the execution of the law. The law called for the development of Kyrgyz-Russian bilingualism in the government and translations in both Kyrgyz and Russian of all official documentation (Orusbaev et al. 2008). However, the contemporary government continues to run primarily in Russian.

Despite this, specific policies regarding the naming of cities, streets, and squares took a more nationalistic tone. Part of the nationalist reaction to the dissolution of the Soviet Union included the changing of place names and street names. The city of Frunze, the capital of the Kyrgyz SSR, was renamed Bishkek, a modified version of its pre-Soviet name of Pishpek. The

major city square, Lenin Square, was renamed Ala-Too Square, after the nearby mountains. Some streets had their names changed entirely, as in the example in the introduction from Jal, where *Ulitsa Oktiabria* (October Street) became *Akhunbaev Kochosu* (Akhunbaev Street). A few streets kept their Soviet names but rendered them using Kyrgyz morphology, such as *Kievskaia Ulitsa* (Kiev Street) becoming *Kiev Kochosu*. Others retained Russian morphology, but dropped the word street in Russian "*ulitsa*" in favor of the Kyrgyz word "*kochos*" (Korth 2005).

3.2 Language Policy in the Kyrgyz Republic from Bakiev to Atambaev (2005-2016)

In 2005 the so-called Tulip Revolution occurred as mass protests against President Akaev escalated following accusations of corruption after the second round of parliamentary elections. Akaev fled and the parliament appointed opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiev as acting president. Under Bakiev, the new administration continued to promote bilingualism in Russian and Kyrgyz, and even demonstrated support for minority languages. Specifically, in 2007 the government resolved to promote multilingual competence in Kyrgyz, Russian, a foreign language, and a minority language (usually Uzbek or Dungan). This was codified in the 2007 constitution, which added that minorities had the right to preserve their mother tongue and that lack of facility in Kyrgyz or Russian would not lead to an infringement of any citizen's rights (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2012). As a result, in non-Kyrgyz medium schools, Kyrgyz became a required subject, and in schools with a language of instruction other than Russian, Russian became a required subject (Orusbaev et al. 2008).

A second "revolution" in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan occurred five years after the Tulip Revolution, in 2010, when opposition protests once again spread from northern Kyrgyzstan to the capital, this time removing President Bakiev from office. Following Bakiev's ousting, more than 800 people were killed in clashes between Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic communities in the

southern cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad (McGlinchey 2011). In the aftermath, a referendum

approved a new constitution reducing the powers of the presidency and turning Kyrgyzstan into a

parliamentary republic. In 2011, Almazbek Atambaev won the presidential election with more

than 60 percent of the vote, although Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

(OSCE) observers reported significant irregularities in the election. The Atambaev government

ruled that high school students in Kyrgyzstan may no longer take their exit exams in Uzbek or

any languages other than Kyrgyz or Russian (Radio Free Europe 2014).

3.3 Language Policy in Kyrgyzstan Today

Today in Northern Kyrgyzstan, Russian and Kyrgyz are primarily spoken. Kyrgyz is

widespread throughout the country, with approximately 3,830,000 speakers among the country's

total population of 5,727,553 (CIA 2016). According to the 2009 census, 482,000 people

reported Russian as their first language. Native Russian speakers are most concentrated around

Lake Issyk Kul (Ysyk-Kol) in northeastern Kyrgyzstan and Bishkek, but the use of Russian is

otherwise widespread throughout Kyrgyzstan, especially in urban areas (Ethnologue 2016).

The composition of the population of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan has shifted dramatically

since the fall of the Soviet Union. In 1990, the percentage of people identifying themselves as

Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan consisted of 52 percent of the population, and the number identifying as

Russian 21 percent. By 2008, the number of Kyrgyz grew to 69 percent, and the number of

Russians decreased to less than 9 percent. As of 2016, Kyrgyz are 73 percent of the population,

while Russians make up only 6 percent (Ivashchenko 2016, NSKKR 2016). This is due primarily

to the emigration of Russians after the collapse of the USSR and high birth rates among people

identifying as Kyrgyz (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2012). Today in Bishkek, with a population

of 865,000 as of 2015, approximately 66 percent of the inhabitants identify as Kyrgyz, 23

percent as Russians, and the remainder identify as different minority groups (Ferdinand and Komlosi 2015, NSKKR 2016).

The decrease in people considering themselves ethnic Russians, however, does not necessarily correspond to a decrease in the number of Russian speakers. The Russian government continues to influence Kyrgyzstan both indirectly and directly through economic opportunities for migrant workers in Russia, the presence of Russian media in Kyrgyzstan, and the promotion of Russian language and culture through language programs and academia. Staggeringly, in 2016 approximately 745,000 Kyrgyz citizens, about 13 percent of the population, worked abroad, mostly work in Russia (AKIpress 2016). In 2015 remittances to Kyrgyzstan were 1.688 billion, constituting 25.3 percent of the GDP in Kyrgyzstan (CIA 2016, World Bank 2015). Government-sponsored Russian media also reaches Kyrgyzstan, and remains extremely popular and influential. Russian-language TV, radio, and internet is often preferred to Kyrgyz because diversity and content is much greater in Russian than in Kyrgyz or Uzbek (Ethnologue 2016). The Russian media reaching Kyrgyzstan is supported by the Russian government: 85 percent of the Russian media received state subsidies in 2007 (Pavlenko 2012).

Russia directly influences the Russian language in Kyrgyzstan through state-supported language initiatives and the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University. The Russian government funds initiatives to support the Russian language in the "Near and Far Abroad" such as the Russian World Fund and the "Year of Russian Language" in 2007. The goal of these programs is to influence perception of Russian as the language of the globalized present instead of the language of the Soviet past (Pavlenko 2012). Russian prevails as the language of higher education due to universities such as the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, considered one of the top three universities in the country. The university was founded in 1993 in accordance to the Warsaw

Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation and is funded through the Yeltsin Foundation (KRSU 2015). The economic opportunities of working in Russia, and the presence of the language in media and higher education increase the perceived value of learning the Russian language. The direct and indirect influences of the Russian Federation on Kyrgyzstan are seen on the linguistic landscape of Bishkek and evidenced in the language ideologies of its citizens.

Figure 1: Map of Kyrgyzstan

2016 Central Intelligence Agency

4 LITERATURE

4.1 What are Linguistic Landscapes?

The linguistic landscape is the "visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" (Landry and Bourhis 1997:23). It is also referred to as linguistic cityscape, or multilingual cityscape, to differentiate it from language ecology, or "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment" (Haugen 1972:57; Gorter 2006). For decades, studies of multilingual areas and areas of linguistic conflict have

15

considered languages on signs. An important development for the field came through Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) work because it analyzed linguistic landscape within sociolinguistic and historical context to study the relationship between language and society. However, Landry and Bourhis's (1997) seminal paper finally addressed the analysis of linguistic landscapes as a study in its own right and coined the term "linguistic landscape." Since 1997 scholars from various disciplines have enriched the field of linguistic landscape analysis by developing their own approaches. Notably, Scollon and Scollon (2003) proposed a theory termed "geosemiotics" by combining several theories from sociology and linguistics, Ben-Rafael et al. (2004) demonstrated methodology for the large-scale study of language on signs in Israeli cities and towns, and Reh (2004) created a taxonomy for the analysis of text on multilingual signs.

In all such studies, the essential element of the linguistic landscape remains the sign. Researchers have proposed several interpretations of what constitutes a sign in the context of the linguistic landscape. Signs can be defined through function, as in Landry and Bourhis (1997:25), and include "public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings." Backhaus (2006:56) includes "any piece of written text within a definable frame," meaning text within borders. Here I use a combination of the premises of both definitions. I consider linguistic landscape and cityscape to mean written language on a sign with clear borders in outdoor public space, intended for public audiences, within a given territory. I do this to limit the scope of my study to include only signs (informal and formal, official and private) that are directed toward public audiences and deliberately placed in the linguistic landscape.

The linguistic landscape cannot be separated from its environment, as signs do not have meaning without place. In their theory of geosemiotics, Scollon and Scollon (2003) address the

concept of place specifically by considering visual semiotics and place semiotics. Visual semiotics addresses the placement of text and pictures on a bordered sign, and the sign's relationship with other signs. Place semiotics refers to the placement of the sign within the built environment and natural landscape (Scollon and Scollon 2003). In examining place, Scollon and Scollon (2003) use geosemiotic zones, or geographic units larger than signs (Scollon and Scollon 2003; Sloboda 2009). Geosemiotic zones include areas of a city with the same structure or function, and include, but are not limited to, squares, residential districts, and commercial districts (Sloboda 2009).

Linguistic landscape has two important functions: symbolic and informational (Landry and Bourhis 1997; Spolsky 2009). Its symbolic function is performed by using different language varieties to index places as belonging to different groups and to showcase the collective identity of the sign's creator or owner (here referred to as the principle or actor) (Gorter 2009; Ben-Rafael 2009). Placement of signs in the public sphere indicates the importance of the sign or the prestige of the group connected to the sign (Ben-Rafael 2009). The arrangement of language varieties on multilingual signs is indicative of collective identity, status of groups or languages, and in some cases, regional policies regulating language on signs (Gorter 2009; Cenoz and Gorter 2006). However, the linguistic landscape not only reflects ideologies and policies, but can also change the linguistic behavior of people: people interpret the visual information on the signs, which in turn can influence how they perceive the "status of different language and even affect their own linguistic behavior" by indicating which language is preferred in a space (Cenoz and Gorter 2006:68).

Linguistic landscape also provides descriptive information about spaces (Spolsky 2009). For example, signs describe businesses they adorn, or the type of product or service an

advertisement promotes. After reading a sign, people have an expectation about the type of space they are entering. Landry and Bourhis (1997) suggest that the language of the sign is assumed to match the language of service inside the establishment, and that people become frustrated when this is not so. Thus the informational property of signs influences people's perception of a place and how they interact with that space.

4.2 Interpreting the Linguistic Landscape

Linguistic landscapes, in their symbolic and informational roles, offer insight into local and global language ideologies or "the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities" (Irvine and Gal 2000:35). Principles and actors help construct the symbolic space of the linguistic landscapes by making choices about language use for their signs, and language ideologies influence these choices (Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2016). Language ideologies encompass the speaker's own ideas about language and discourse and how these influence social phenomena (Kroskrity 2000). As a cultural system, language ideologies are not only about the actor's or principle's individual ideas and perceptions, but also include "collective perceptions and cultural hegemonies" (Lanza and Woldemariam 2009:189) Language ideologies contribute to cultural hegemonies because they represent collective perceptions of language and discourse that rationalize institutions, policies, social structures, and linguistic practices that are in the interest of a specific social or cultural group (Kroskrity 2000; Lanza and Woldemariam 2009).

The linguistic landscape indicates ideas about the perceived status of language varieties and relationships between different groups through the choice of language, text size, and text placement on a sign and the location of the sign in the cityscape. Difference in location or size of signs can determine status. Signs at eye-level or larger signs are most visible, and may suggest

that the sign (and the text on the sign) carries more prestige. Difference in the positions or font size of text in different languages on the same sign, such as some text in a larger font size or more central position, may indicate preference of one language, or the perception of its higher status (Backhaus 2006; Ben-Rafael 2009; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Gorter 2006).

Language choice on a sign may allude to the principle's identity, and can indicate the boundaries of a place. Because language is a vehicle for the "construction, replication, and transmission of culture," it therefore is an integral part of collective identity (Schiffman 2006:121). Perceptions of the use of different linguistic resources (such as varieties, dialects, registers) index difference among speakers, and can construct perceptions of people speaking a certain language variety as belonging to one group, and those speaking a different language variety as "the other." Thus, the choice of one language variety over another for use on signs, or the prevalence of one language variety over another on a multilingual sign, can be a performance of identity by the sign's principle (Backhaus 2006; Ben-Rafael 2009; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Cenoz and Gorter 2006). When most public signs in an area share the same language preference, signs can also mark boundaries of communities sharing the same collective linguistic identity in a region (Landry and Bourhis 1997).

Regardless of the symbolic or indexical property of the sign, they are usually created with rational purpose: to be directed at a particular audience with the intent of influencing its behavior in a certain way (Spolsky 2006). For example, road signs are directed at drivers and meant to convey messages about how to use the roads safely. Signs are designed to attract attention, and take into consideration what combination of stylistic elements would most suit the sign's purpose (Huebner 2006; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006). Such rational decisions impact the size, placement, and content of sign and may outweigh the sign's symbolic functions.

The results of language planning and policy, as well as state language ideologies, also influence the linguistic landscape. The government not only produces its own official signs and public service announcements, but regulates private print language in the cityscape. However, much language planning is haphazard, uncoordinated, and does not consider language planning frameworks that would be most effective. When language policy is generated, there is little evidence that politicians understand the social significance of the policy they create, and they do not put in place the necessary frameworks for the policies to be enacted effectively (Cooper 1989; Tollefson 1991). Language planning also often reinforces existing social hierarchies by making the dominate group's linguistic practices standard (Lanza and Woldemariam 2009).

Globalization also informs language ideologies visible in the linguistic landscape, because it comprises multiple processes including "the worldwide expansion of agencies and institutions" and "unprecedented movements of populations" (Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2016:199). These processes sometimes result in the proliferation of Western standards and sociocultural heterogeneity. Imprints of the processes of globalization can be seen in the linguistic landscape, the most recognizable of which are manifestations of English.

Globalized economies affect the perceived "value" of language, and its frequency in the linguistic landscape. Heller and Duchene (2012) argue that in the new global economy, discourses treating language as valuable economically are beginning to displace discourses associating language with building the nation-state. Contributing to research on language valorization in the new economy, Pavlenko (2012) demonstrates that Russian has increased in value in post-Soviet states since the fall of the Soviet Union due to the economic comeback of Russia and the opportunity for citizens of former Soviet states to work in Russia, and the proliferation of Russian media in these countries. In Kyrgyzstan, both discourses of the

economic value of language and language's association with the nation-state have led to the perception of English and Russian as having economic value, and Kyrgyz as valuable through its connection to national identity.

In sum, linguistic landscape analysis reveals the relationship between language and society by offering a means to interpret the language ideologies in a place. Through language ideologies, one can better understand cultural and linguistic hegemonies, the perceived status of languages and cultures, the cultural and linguistic identity of people and places, and the effects of globalization on language.

4.3 Linguistic Landscape Analysis

In analyzing linguistic landscapes, the researcher must determine from where and how data will be collected. Next the visual data on the signs must be organized and signs categorized. Data from surveys, interviews, or other qualitative analysis must be included to give the signs sociocultural context if the relationship between language and the society in which the signs were created will be considered.

Many authors on linguistic landscapes organize the signs included in their data by the originator of the sign. A common distinction is between bottom-up produced signs that are commercial or private, such as advertisements, flyers, posters, and business signs, and top-down signs established by the government that include street-signs, safety notices, and signs adorning government buildings (Landry and Bourhis 1997; Spolsky 2009). The distinction is important to determine the purpose behind the sign's creation. Also, at times the language varieties seen on private signs differ from language varieties seen on government signs (Landry and Bourhis 1997).

Another problem encountered in linguistic landscape analysis is how to categorize the visual data on signs for analysis, especially in cases when more than one language variety is used on a sign. Reh (2004) has produced a typology consisting of four categories: "(1) duplicating; (2) fragmentary; (3) overlapping; and (4) complementary." The first three categories include languages with full or partial translations of each other. The fourth type has different content in different languages. Analysis of the types points to the sign's intended audience as multilingual or monolingual (Backhaus 2006:58). Text on signs can also be analyzed as a stylistic element, in which placement and size of the text are indicative of prestige (Spolsky 2009).

In the linguistic landscape, so-called big commercial names (BCNs), such as McDonalds or CocaCola, pose an interesting question of classification during analysis, because the audience interpreting the BCN cannot always understand the linguistic meaning of the name (Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2016). Tufi and Blackwood (2010) propose three methods of organization: regarding BCNs as trademarks, categorizing them by language of origin, or classifying them by symbolic associations. Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2016) consider them to be a new, nonlinguistic code resulting from globalization that points to English as a global lingua franca and contemporary consumer civilization.

In my analysis of the linguistic landscape of Bishkek, I consider elements from each of these approaches. I organize signs into categories of bottom-up and top-down, note the sign's principle and audience, address the content of language varieties on a sign, and examine BCNs in the landscape. I also use additional qualitative data to inform my analysis. By using elements from these approaches, I gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of linguistic landscape as a measure of the relationship between language and society.

5 METHODOLOGY

To determine the relationship between language and society in Bishkek, I analyze original data collected in the city from June 2016 to August 2016, comprising 15 interviews with young residents of Bishkek, and 40 hours of participant observation. I also consider 104 pictures of public signs in the city, gathered in randomly produced sampling points from Google Maps. I use spatial and linguistic analyses to examine the signs and then compare these findings to themes pertaining to language ideologies found in the interviews and participant observation.

To sample signs, I generated 20 points within 5 miles of the city center of Bishkek using a random point generator. When a point did not fall on a street, I chose the street within the closest distance from the point. From these points, I used Google StreetView images collected by Google in 2015 to take 104 photographs of signs. I understand a sign to be written language on a sign with clear borders in outdoor public space, intended for public audiences, within a given territory. Only signs that would be reasonably visible by a person standing in that location on the street were considered. If the sign would have been too far away to be legible, or was obstructed by an object, I did not use it.

I first categorize the signs by language into Russian, Kyrgyz, English, or other. On multilingual signs, I note which language occupies primary positions on the signs, and which language(s) occupy secondary positions. I consider primary positions to be the center of the sign or the largest font size. I also note if the information given in different languages on the sign are translations, if part of the text is translated, or none of the text is translated. I then study the sign's placement in the cityscape in relation to other signs and types of structures. Next, I classify the signs by the originator, into the categories of top-down and bottom-up. The data from these analyses will determine what languages occur most commonly in the linguistic

landscape, what languages occupy the most prominent spaces of the landscape, and in which spatial contexts languages are occurring most frequently.

I then analyze fifteen interviews from young residents of Bishkek between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. My interviewees have grown up entirely in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and under the policies of the Kyrgyz Republic. I asked them questions to elicit ideas about their personal linguistic backgrounds and their beliefs about language use. I also spent forty hours of participant observation with the interviewees and their friends in the city center. I coded the transcripts from interviews and field notes according to common themes, and compare these themes, and ideas about language, to the quantitative data collected from signs. The comparison shows the similarities and differences between language use in the linguistic landscape and what people report they think about language.

6 LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

6.1 *General Findings*

First, I considered the percent of occurrences of Kyrgyz, Russian, and English as the primary language on the sign in the entire sample of 104 signs. In the sample, I found that Russian occurs most frequently in primary positions in the landscape, and Kyrgyz and English are nearly equally the second most frequently occurring language. Russian and Kyrgyz tend to be used together, and include the same information in both languages. English is used primarily as the name of an establishment or as a brand name.

Although Russian dominates the linguistic landscape, it is frequently seen with Kyrgyz. Within all localities, Russian appears in the primary position or as the only language on the sign in 47 percent of all 104 signs sampled. Russian as the only language makes up nearly 72 percent of all cases in which Russian is the primary language. Signs with Russian and English account

for 10 percent of these. Kyrgyz occurs in the principle position or on its own in 28 percent of sampled signs. On the signs in which Kyrgyz is in the primary position, Kyrgyz is used with Russian 54 percent of the time. In 36 percent of cases Kyrgyz appears by itself as the only language on the sign. The remaining 10 percent of occurrences are with English. This suggests that though Kyrgyz and Russian are given nearly equal status in the city by language legislation, Russian is actually favored over Kyrgyz for language on signs.

The prominence of English is notable since there are few English speakers in Bishkek. Despite this, English is seen in a prominent position or on its own in 25 percent of all cases—nearly as frequently as Kyrgyz appears as the predominant language on a sign. Equally notable is the fact that it is the only language on the sign 73 percent of the time. English appears with Kyrgyz in 15 percent of occurrences, and with Russian in 12 percent of cases. This demonstrates that not only do a large number of signs contain English text, but the signs are not translated for a non-English speaking audience. This seems to imply that the prestige value of the English text alone is enough to attract the correct audience, or the sign is geared toward the small number of Bishkek residents who speak English (and this is unlikely).

Table 1: Primary Languages on Signs in the Linguistic Landscape

Primary language on sign	Total percent* of all sampled signs (n=104)	Percent* of occurrences with Kyrgyz as secondary language (or only Kyrgyz)	Percent* of occurrences with Russian as secondary language (or only Russian)	Percent* of occurrences with English as secondary language (or only English)
Russian	47	17 (n=49)	73 (n=49)	10 (n=49)
Kyrgyz	28	36 (n=29)	54 (n=29)	10 (n=29)
English	25	15 (n=26)	12 (n=26)	73 (n=26)

*All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

Usually the signs follow a pattern: description in first language; name of business, product, or service; description in second language. The pattern either contains a central focus on the principle language with a different language or languages in the margins (Figure 2), or the

pattern reads from top to bottom (Figure 3). In most signs with Kyrgyz as the primary language and with many Russian signs, they include a translation duplicating the information provided in each language in the margins and a central textual element.

In signs with English content, English is generally either the business name or a brand name. If a business name, a translation of the purpose of the business (for example, restaurant or café) is usually provided in Russian, Kyrgyz, or both Russian and Kyrgyz. This kind of duplicating information suggests that the sign is intended for an audience that may not understand all of the languages on the sign (Reh 2004).

Big commercial names account for a very small part of the linguistic landscape. Most of those found in the sample are repetitions of the name CocaCola, because the company has a bottling plant within the city. If a sign includes a big commercial name, it usually provides no description in a different language of what the product is. Lack of information in Russian or Kyrgyz indicates that people interpreting the sign already are familiar with the product, even if they have no special knowledge of English or the Latin alphabet.

English-language business names are found often in the linguistic landscape. Interestingly, many companies have adopted English-language names that the reader might confuse with multinational corporations, particularly fast food. There are no McDonalds, KFCs or Pizza Huts in Bishkek, but there are McDubai, Kyrgyz Fried Chicken, and Pizza Hot (figure 4). At first glance, it would seem that by using these names the business hopes to associate itself with the multinational corporation, or perhaps even pose as the multinational corporation, to gain business. With McDonald's, which is known to many through films and television, this may be the case. However, many older residents of Bishkek, and even some younger residents, are unfamiliar with the multinational corporation until being exposed to its copycat. In these

instances, it may be that the business is trying only to capitalize on the association with America or Europe. Copycat business names, and English-language business names in general, tend to occur as names for more expensive places to eat, drink, and shop.

Business signs in Kyrgyz and Russian often refer to the business's purpose. For example, a butcher will have a sign with "*Эт- Мясо,*" which reads "meat" first in Kyrgyz and then in Russian. Notaries, flower shops, dentists, travel agencies, and pharmacies also occur frequently and tend to have short names referring only to their function. Businesses with Kyrgyz and Russian names are found in the areas closest to the center, but also in residential areas.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

6.2 Linguistic Landscape Analysis by Region and Originator

In the following analysis, I first consider the sign's placement in the cityscape in relation to other signs and types of structures. Second, from the sign's context I assign the sign to a region: business, residential or industrial. Third, I categorize the signs by the originator into the categories of top-down and bottom-up. I find that the presence of English is heaviest in the business districts, while Russian is most prevalent in industrial and residential areas. From the originator, I determine that more signs are being produced from bottom-up sources under less regulation than top-down official signs.

Most of the signs in the sample are found in business districts, closest to the center of Bishkek. In business districts, English appears most frequently as the most prominent language on signs, making up 40 percent of signs. In the sample, the remaining prominent languages on signs are 30 percent Russian and 30 percent Kyrgyz. The strong presence of English in business districts near the city center suggests that the association of English with prestige or places

abroad outweighs any practical concern of the reader not being able to understand the signs'
content.

The two Turkish signs and two Chinese signs in the sample occur in business areas
(Table 2). These signs, although an insignificant portion of the sample, may suggest how the
city's linguistic landscape might change in the future. Turkey has long been involved in
establishing a relationship with Kyrgyzstan as part of the pan-Turkic community. The first state
to acknowledge Kyrgyzstan's independence, Turkey supports the Kyrgyz Turkish Manas
University and has multiple investments in the state. China is also investing heavily in
Kyrgyzstan, notably by funding the resurfacing of many of Bishkek's major streets. Turkey and
China may continue to strengthen their relationships with Kyrgyzstan, and this, in turn, might
lead to a greater presence of Turkish and Chinese on the linguistic landscape.

The remaining signs in the sample are nearly equally located in residential areas and
industrial areas. These areas are further from the center, but still within the 5-mile area sampled.
In residential areas, Russian is the predominant language, present on 50 percent of the signs.
Signs on which Kyrgyz is the principle language make up 36 percent of residential signs. The
remaining 14 percent are signs on which English is the principle language.

In industrial areas, Russian occurs 65 percent of the time in prominent locations on signs.
English is found as the principle language on 27 percent of industrial signs, though this mostly
consists of repetitions of the brand name CocaCola. Kyrgyz appears as the primary language on
only 8 percent of signs. The prevalence of Russian, in this case, may be due to small sample size,
as the fewest signs appeared in industrial regions. These regions are also the furthest from the
city center, and the signs in the industrial areas appear to be older. The large proportion of

Russian signs may be holdovers from the Soviet era and their replacement considered low priority.

Table 2: Primary Language on Signs by District

Area of city (by function)	Percent* of total signs with English as primary language	Percent* of total signs with Kyrgyz as primary language	Percent* of total signs with Russian as primary language	Percent* of total signs with Turkish as primary language	Percent* of total signs with Chinese as primary language
Business	40	30	30	<1	<1
Residential	14	36	50	0	0
Industrial	27	50	65	0	0

*All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

There are fewer top-down signs in the sample, which make up only 6 percent of all signs examined. Almost all top-down signs in the sample contain both Kyrgyz and Russian with duplicate translation, but, importantly, the Kyrgyz text occurs in a more prominent position on the sign. The top-down signs in the sample reflect the latest language policy governing official signs created in 2004, which mandates that all official texts have both a Kyrgyz and Russian translation. Only one official sign was found without a Kyrgyz translation, and it appeared to be an old road sign from the Soviet era.

Bottom-up signs, the majority of which are business signs and advertisements, have an overwhelming presence on the linguistic landscapes. Business names follow the patterns detailed above (Figure 2, Figure 3), where advertisements nearly always include duplicate translations of information on the sign. Some include English-language brand names. Private individuals hand make a large number of bottom-up signs in residential areas. The signs usually contain Russian-language text referencing selling or renting a house (Figure 5). This is unusual when considered in context with the commercial advertisements, which contain text in both Kyrgyz and Russian, presumably to reach the widest audience. Use of Russian-language text may be because the

author of the sign is more competent in Russian, or assumes that his/her audience will be Russian speakers.

Figure 5

6.3 Analysis of Interviews and Participant Observation

My interviewees share features with the majority of the post-Soviet Kyrgyz youth. All of my interviewees consider themselves to be ethnically Kyrgyz. They all speak Kyrgyz and Russian with varying competencies, and many know some English and some Turkish. They are university students, unmarried, and generally live with their parents, siblings, or extended family in the city of Bishkek. Many moved to Bishkek from rural parts of Kyrgyzstan, a common trend in the years after the fall of the Soviet Union.

My cohort overwhelmingly comprises women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Conservative gender ideologies remain pervasive in Kyrgyzstan. Women, including those I interviewed, are expected to marry at this age, and start their families. They are seen as responsible for taking care of the home and raising children. The women I interviewed had a clear idea of what languages they would speak at home and what languages they wanted their children to learn, because they expected to soon be married (many within the year) and have children.

When first asked what languages they speak and why, many responded that they speak Kyrgyz because it is their native language. Even if they admitted that they speak Russian better than Kyrgyz, or they speak Kyrgyz poorly, they believed that their "*rodnoĭ iazyk*" (native tongue) was Kyrgyz. Subjects felt shame if they did not believe they spoke Kyrgyz well. All wished to teach their children Kyrgyz, and most wanted to speak only Kyrgyz at home.

Most participants saw Russian as the language of Bishkek, and Kyrgyz as that of the countryside. This finding matched my own experiences of interacting with residents of Bishkek and rural areas around lake Issyk-Kul. One participant noted:

> I generally speak Russian because it is easier for me to speak than Kyrgyz. When I am visiting my family in the village I always speak Kyrgyz, because they all speak Kyrgyz, though they speak some Russian. It would be strange for me to speak Russian there. They would look at me and think, "You're a city girl."

The participant also spoke Kyrgyz in Bishkek, but only with older Kyrgyz adults. Usually these interactions took place in the bazaar or in stores. She spoke Kyrgyz with cashiers and shop owners so that they would identify her as Kyrgyz, and she could expect a better price or better service. The participants' reasons for knowing Kyrgyz and feeling shame for not knowing the language better are based on feelings of collective identity (in this case national identity) and desire to be associated with and part of a group.

Educational resources also influence the urban/rural Russian/Kyrgyz distinction. Participants who lived in the countryside and later moved to Bishkek stated that, before moving to Bishkek, they had little or no knowledge of Russian. When participants raised in rural areas outside of Bishkek were asked if they went to a Kyrgyz or Russian school in the countryside, they replied that there were no Russian schools in their home villages. This may be a result of Soviet educational policies that prioritized urban areas, or the post-Soviet government's inability to improve rural education.

Though the participants valued Kyrgyz as their "mother tongue," they also considered knowledge of Russian necessary for a good life. All of the interviewees wanted their children to know Russian. Many elaborated, adding that knowing Russian would give their children more opportunities or access to better jobs. A few wanted to send their children to Russian schools. In general, however, they considered knowledge of Kyrgyz more important, and that their children would learn Russian from exposure to the language in the city, on television, and on the radio. Whereas the participants associated Russian with a better standard of living, better jobs, better education, and living in the city, they saw Kyrgyz as more important as it indexes them as ethnically Kyrgyz.

All interviewees also wanted their children to learn English, what most called the "*mirovoĭ iazyk*," or world language. They believed that learning English would give their children more opportunities in life, particularly for work abroad in Europe or America. An interviewee espoused this view when she commented:

> I learned English because it is a very popular language. Everyone needs to learn English for a good quality of life. I want [my children] to learn English, because I think English is an … important language in the world. It makes it easier to find a job. In Kyrgyzstan Turkish, English, and Chinese are good to know, but English is better, because if you want to find work in the world more people know English.

Not only did she comment on her perceptions of the value of learning English for employment, but she also began to touch on the association of English with prestige when she describes English as a "popular" and "important" language. Other participants also related knowledge of English to prestige. Participants with wealthier parents reported going to special high schools where the courses were taught in English. Several students of the American University of Central Asia remarked that they were very proud to attend the university and that it is the "most expensive school in Kyrgyzstan." The interviewees associated English with wealth, better

opportunities, and connectedness with the rest of the world—in short, as the language of globalization.

7 CONCLUSIONS

What does the linguistic landscape of Bishkek reveal about the relationship between language and society? First, it demonstrates the overwhelming presence of Russian in the city. It occurs most frequently in the linguistic landscape and in residential and industrial areas. In the city, knowledge of Russian is commodified. Interviewees believed that Russian-language skills were necessary to live in the city of Bishkek and essential for a good job and a better life, especially in Central Asia and the former Soviet space. No knowledge of Russian was associated with life in the villages and countryside. The data from the linguistic landscape and from interviewees and participant observation give the impression that the standard language of Bishkek is, indeed, Russian, despite language laws implying the equality of Kyrgyz and Russian.

Second, the linguistic landscape displays the growing presence of English in the city and its value to the people of Bishkek as a "world language." English is used primarily in business districts in the heart of the city, marking the more prestigious and expensive establishments. Some of the names also invoke multinational corporations in an attempt to be associated with the wider world. The participants in the study confirmed the presumed "value" of English in the city, believing that knowledge of the language is necessary for the best life, success, and the potential to work abroad in Europe or America.

Although linguistic landscape represents an incomplete measure of the relationship between language and society in Bishkek, it coincides with the ideas about language expressed in interviews and participant observation. The interviews and participant observation, however, revealed ideas about language impossible to deduce from the signs alone. Specifically, the

linguistic landscape offered no evidence to indicate the importance the participants placed on Kyrgyz as a marker of national identity. Adamant that their children learn Kyrgyz, the interviewees claimed that it would be the only language spoken in their household. Yet, handmade signs in residential areas are rendered in Russian, and businesses almost never have a sign only in Kyrgyz without some translation. This leads me to conclude that these signs are made without thought to national identity and for other symbolic or informational purposes.

Based on the data from the linguistic landscape and participants, it seems likely that the presence of Russian in Bishkek will remain strong. It also appears that Kyrgyz will continue to be used. The strength of Russian is confirmed by the large presence in the linguistic landscape and the belief by the interviewees in its necessity. Despite debates in the media and government fearing that Kyrgyz will be lost, all of the interviewees thought that learning Kyrgyz was essential for their children and would be the language of their home. Many young Kyrgyz do not believe the Russian language is a threat to their identity as Kyrgyz, or that they have to choose either Russian or Kyrgyz for their families. They also included English in the languages they must teach their children. It is likely that this trend will only increase in the future, because the youth of Bishkek see a need for multilingualism in their country, and intend for their future children to learn Kyrgyz as part of their cultural heritage, Russian to be successful in Central Asia, and English to have global opportunities.

During the Kyrgyz Republic's twenty-five years as an independent state, language policy shifted from one with monolingual nationalist underpinnings immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, to the current laws that recognize Russian as a second official language. The strong position of Russian in the post-Soviet state has found legitimization in economic concerns regarding the relationship between the Russian Federation and Kyrgyz Republic. Kyrgyz also

remains important to the government in its role as a state-building tool, an ideology inherited from the Soviet past. The ideologies surrounding government language policies match the views of my interviewees, who learn Russian as a means of socioeconomic advancement and speak Kyrgyz because of its importance as a marker of their national identity. The moderate path of language policy and the ideologies of nationalism and commodification may signal that, in Kyrgyzstan, bilingualism in Russian and Kyrgyz is the ideal both for its citizens and government. This moves away from the one nation/one state/one language ideologies pervasive since the adoption of the modern concept of nation.

REFERENCES

Akiner, Shirin. 1990. "Uzbekistan: Republic of Many Tongues." Pp. 100-122 in *Language Planning in the Soviet Union,* edited by Michael Kirkwood. New York: St. Martin's Press.

AKIpress. 2016. "МИД уточнило, на заработках за границей находятся около 745 тыс. Кыргызстанцев (MID utochnilo na zarabotkakh za granitseĭ nakhodyatsia okolo 745 tys. Kyrgyzstantsev)." Retrieved Dec. 6, 2016 (http://kg.akipress.org/news:1330624).

Backhaus, Peter. 2006. "Multilingualism in Tokyo: A Look into the Linguistic Landscape." Pp. 52-66 in *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*, edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Ben-Rafael, Elizer, Elana Shohamy, Muhammad Hasan Amara, and Nira Trumper-Hecht. 2006. "Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction of the Public Space: The Case of Israel." Pp. 7-30 in *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*, edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Ben-Rafael, Elizer and Miriam Ben-Rafael. 2016. "Berlin's Linguistic Landscapes: Two Faces of Globalization." Pp. 197-214 in *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes*, edited by Robert Blackwood, Elizabeth Lanza, and Hiruit Woldemariam. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Cenoz, Jasone and Durk Gorter. 2006. "Linguistic Landscape and Minority Languages." Pp. 67-80 in *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*, edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

CIA World Factbook. 2016. "Kyrgyzstan." Retrieved Dec. 6, 2016 (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html).

Cooper, Robert L. 1989. *Language Planning and Social Change.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Collins, Kathleen. 2004. "The Logic of Clan Politics: Evidence from the Central Asian Trajectories." *World Politics,* 56(2), 224-261.

Derbisheva, Zamira. 2009. "Языковая политика и языковая ситуация в Кыргызстане (Iazyikovaia politika i iazikovaia situatsiia v Kirgizstane)." *Russian Language Journal*, 59, 49-58.

Ethnologue. 2016. "Kyrgyzstan." (https://www.ethnologue.com/country/KG) Retrieved Dec. 6, 2016).

Fierman, William. 1991. *Language Planning and National Development: The Uzbek Experience*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Gorter, Durk. 2009. "Further Possibilities for Linguistic Landscape Research." Pp. 68-81 in *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism,* edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Grenoble, Lenore. 2003. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Haugen, Einar. 1972. *The Ecology of Language.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Heller, Monica and Alexandre Duchene. 2012. "Pride and Profit: Changing Discourses of Language, Capital, and Nation-State." Pp. 1-21 in *Language in Late Capitalism: Pride and Profit,* edited by Monica Heller and Alexandre Duchene. London and New York: Routledge.

Huebner, Thom. 2006. "Bangkok's Linguistic Landscapes: Environmental Print, Codemixing and Language Change." Pp. 31-51 in *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*, edited by Durk Gorter. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.

Hult, Francis. 2009. "Language Ecology and Linguistic Landscape Analysis" Pp. 88-104 in *Linguistic Landscapes,* edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter. New York: Routledge.

Irvine, Judith T., and Susan Gal. 2000. "Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation," Pp. 35-84 in *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities,* edited by Paul V. Kroskrity. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Irvine, Judith. 1989. "When Talk Isn't Cheap: Language and Political Economy." *American Ethnologist,* 16(2), 248-267.

Ivashchenko, Ekaterina. 2016. "Где мой дом родной? Русские в Кыргызстане рассказывают о себе и своей жизни (Gde moĭ dom rodnoĭ? Russkie v Kyrgyzstane rasskazyvaiut o sebe i svoeĭ zhizni)." Retrieved Feb. 13, 2017 (http://www.fergananews.com/articles/9018).

Korth, Britta. 2005. *Language Attitudes Towards Kyrgyz and Russian: Discourse, Education, and Policy in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.* Bern: Peter Lang AG.

Kroskrity, Paul V. 2000. "Regimenting Language: Language Ideological Perspectives." Pp 1-34 in *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Polities, and Identities,* edited by Paul V. Kroskrity. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

KRSU. 2015. "История (Istoria)." Retrieved Feb. 10, 2017 (http://www.krsu.edu.kg).

Landau, Jacob and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele. 2012. *Language Politics in Contemporary Central Asia.* New York: I.B. Tauris.

Landau, Jacob and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele. 2001. *Politics of Language in ex-Soviet Muslim States.* Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Landry, Rodrigue and Richard Bourhis. 1997. "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology,* 16(23), 23-49.

Lanza, Elizabeth and Hirut Woldemariam. 2009. "Language Ideology and Linguistic Landscape: Language Policy and Globalization in a Regional Capital of Ethiopia." Pp. 189-205 in *Linguistic Landscapes,* edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter. New York: Routledge.

NSKKR. 2017. "Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики- Население (National'nyĭ statisticheskiĭ komitet Kyrgyzskoĭ Respubliki- Naselenie)." Retrieved Feb. 12, 2016 (http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie/).

Martin, Terry. 2001. *Affirmative Action Empire*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

McGlinchey, Eric. 2011. *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Orusbaev, Abdykadyr, Arto Mustajoki and Ekaterina Protasova. 2008. "Multilingualism, Russian Language and Education in Kyrgyzstan." Pp. 202-226 in *Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries,* edited by Aneta Pavlenko. Bristol: MPG Books.

Pavlenko, Aneta. 2012. "Commodification of Russian in post-1991 Europe." Pp. 27-43 in *Globalisierung, Migration, Fremdsprachenunterricht,* edited by Marcus Bär, Andreas Bonnet, Helene Decke-Cornill, Andreas Grünewald, and Adelheid Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Hohengehren.

Pavlenko, Aneta. 2006. "Russian as a Lingua Franca." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26, 78-99.

Radio Free Europe. 2014. "Kyrgyz Abandon Uzbek for Secondary-School Graduation Test.

Rakowska-Harmstone, Teresa. 1974. "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR." *Problems of Communism*, 23(3), 1-22.

Reh, Mechthild. 2004. "Multilingual Writing: A Reader-Oriented Typology with Examples from Lira Municipality (Uganda)." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language,* 170, 1-41.

Schiffman, Harold. 2006. "Language Policy and Linguistic Culture." Pp. 111-126 in *Language Policy: Theory and Method,* edited by Thomas Ricento. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Scollon, Ron and Suzie Wong Scollon. 2003. *Discourses in Place.* New York: Routledge.

Shohamy, Elana and Durk Gorter eds. 2009. *Linguistic Landscapes.* New York: Routledge.

Ferdinand, Siarl and Flora Komlosi. 2016. "Vitality of the Kyrgyz Language in Bishkek." *International Journal of Russian Studies,* 5(2), 210-226.

Slezkine, Yuri. 1994. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." *The Slavic Review,* 53(2), 414-452.

Smith, Jeremy. 2006. "Non-Russians in the Soviet Union and After." Pp. 495-521 in *The Cambridge History of Russia,* edited by Maureen Perrie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Spolsky, Bernard. 2009. "Prolegomena to a Sociolinguistic Theory of Public Signage." Pp. 25-39 in *Linguistic Landscapes,* edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter. New York: Routledge.

Spolsky, Bernard and Robert L. Cooper. 1991. *The Languages of Jerusalem.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sloboda, Marian. 2009. "State Ideology and Linguistic Landscapes." Pp. 173-188 in *Linguistic Landscapes,* edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter. New York: Routledge.

Tollefson, James. 1991. *Planning Language, Planning Inequality: Language Policy in the Community*. Harlow and New York: Longman.

Tufi, Stefania, and Robert Blackwood. 2010. "Trademarks in the Linguistic Landscape: Methodological and Theoretical Challenges in Qualifying Brand Names in the Public Space." *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 7(3), 197-210.

World Bank. 2015. "Kyrgyz Republic." Retrieved Dec. 6, 2016 (http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic).