

Schoolscaping in the third space: The case of the Language Introduction Programme in Sweden

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The aim of this paper is to trace students' multilingualism and agency in the schoolscape of the Language Introduction Programme (LIP) in one Swedish upper secondary school. Through linguistic schoolscaping, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of LIP. The schoolscape is analysed as reconstructions of photographs of displayed images, objects, symbols, and written language on walls and elsewhere in the school area. The photographs are analysed in terms of how they orient to time, place, and space; control behaviour; and shape discourses. Through the analysis, discourses of an organized, inclusive, and tolerant society appear, that simultaneously shape a discourse of behaviour: in this school (and in Sweden) we (want to) follow (the) rules. Students' multilingualism is nearly absent in the schoolscape, as is their agency. In line with Bhabha's concept third space, the schoolscape may be understood as a space for Swedishness, where inclusion demands mastery of Swedish. The in-betweenness of the LIP, as a transitional programme, appears as a space to escape otherness by changing language, which is the requirement for inclusion. Thus, in this case, the signage displayed in the schoolscape does not open up spaces for identity development related to multilingualism or multiculturalism. Opening space for students as agents in the schoolscape and making their diverse linguistic resources visible would also open up a third space for negotiation of norms, through contestation, resistance, and manifestation. Thus students' development of multiple identities would be enabled and their opportunities to be (co-)creators of their own futures widened.

Keywords: Language Introduction Programme, schoolscape, linguistic landscaping, recently arrived students, multilingualism

1 Introduction

The focus in this paper is on the significance of visually displayed images, objects, and texts in the linguistic landscape of one Swedish upper secondary school (*gymnasium*), Cherry School, and more specifically on the schoolscape hosting the Language Introduction Programme (LIP) for recently arrived students in the age range of 16 to 19 years. Linguistic landscape has been developed as an important tool for the analysis of material space (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Szabó 2015). Landry and Bourhis concluded in their foundational paper (1997) the symbolic

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function of linguistic landscape (LL) in opening and closing spaces for speakers of minoritized languages. According to Gorter and Cenoz (2015b), there are clear links between how minoritized languages are made visible in a school's linguistic landscape and how these languages are given space through language policies. The term *schoolscape* has been used among others by Menken et al. (2018) as a branch of LL, implying the linguistic mapping of the physical environment of schools. *Schoolscape* is defined by Brown (2012) as “the school-based environment where place and text, both written (graphic) and oral, constitute, reproduce, and transform language ideologies” (p. 282). As highlighted by Gorter and Cenoz (2015a) “studies of the signage in educational institutions can lead to a better understanding of what goes on inside the schools and as such can add to education research as well” (p. 151). Thus, schoolscaping offers tools to create important and interesting insights into spatial aspects of LIP by creating “understanding of the sociopolitical context in which the students live, understanding of attitudes toward diversity, viewing usefulness as an awareness-raising technique, and exploring the visual displays of the hidden curriculum with regard to language ideologies in education” (Amara, 2018, p. 2).

Young immigrants in Sweden, who arrive during adolescence, face a challenging situation where they need to fulfil the requirements to become accepted to mainstream programmes before the age of 19, something which is of course particularly challenging as it includes developing advanced levels of Swedish, which for most of them is a completely new language. Depending on the individual's earlier schooling, it may also mean acquiring new knowledge through that language in different school subjects. From the age of 16 and up, during the time it takes to fulfil the requirements, these students are generally placed in a LIP, where they receive teaching in Swedish as a second language and in different school subjects following individually made plans based on careful mapping procedures. According to official documents (SFS 2010:800; SNAE, 2011) and research (Baker, 2000; Cummins, 2000; García, 2009; Wedin, 2021), as a transitional programme at upper secondary school, the LIP should be a space where students' multilingualism is used as an important asset in their education, whilst they study to qualify for mainstream programmes.

The LIP is commonly organised parallel to mainstream programmes for upper secondary school, and the forms of separation or integration, have been a topic for debate and research (see for example Nilsson, 2015; Nilsson Folke, 2017). Here, LL in the form of linguistic schoolscaping will be used to analyse spaces constructed for the LIP in Cherry School. The use of schoolscaping enables an analysis of the LIP as a third space, in line with Bhabha (1994, 1999). The use of the metaphor *third space* avoids binary positions as separation/integration or exclusion/inclusion in favour of a both/and position, which according to Bhabha (1994) makes the structure of ambivalent processes visible in ways that challenge “our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People” (p. 54). By combining the third space metaphor with schoolscaping, through displayed images, objects, symbols, and written language in the space where the LIP is located, a study of the role of language in relation to space will be allowed, something which has commonly been ignored in theories concerning space (Hua et al., 2017). Schoolscaping thus enables the study of how the varied languages of recently arrived students in the LIP are represented in public spaces in the school and of issues of language hierarchy in Swedish education. According

to Hult (2012), Swedish is commonly given the highest status followed by English, whilst other languages that are represented among students are usually given low value (see also Andriyanti, 2019).

In this paper the school setting of LIP is interpreted as an educational institution, through the determination of the authorship of signs, and focusing on top-down and bottom-up processes. The main goal is to trace agency of the participants, mainly students, in the negotiation processes concerning the schoolscape, as it has been reconstructed from photographs of displayed images, objects, symbols, and written language on walls and in the school area to which LIP is referred. Through linguistic schoolscaping, the study aims at contributing to a deeper understanding of LIP.

The analysis will be carried out using the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are students' varied languages represented through literacy in public spaces in the school premises?
- 2) What kinds of activities, identities and interactions are made visible and promoted through the LLs at the school?
- 3) How are spaces opened and closed for students' identity development through the LL?

2 Theory and research background

Linguistic landscaping (LL) has become a tool for the analysis of material space (Blommaert, 2013; Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Szabó, 2015). As Landry and Bourhis (1997) have pointed out, the symbolic function of LL is strong when it comes to opening or closing spaces for identity development for speakers of minoritized languages. Gorter and Cenoz (2015a) argue that where language policies are favourable to minoritized languages, these will also be more strongly present in a school's visual LL. Further, Shohamy (2006, 2015) claims that ideologies and status of certain languages may be perpetuated by LL. Research on LL, both in schools and in other public settings, has mainly been concerned with how dominant languages have been privileged over others and how this is displayed through visible language, as Pakarinen and Björklund (2018) state: "[t]he focus of the previous studies has often been the balance between the majority and minority language(s)" (p. 5). Thus, as Menken et al. (2018) state: "a focus on LL in schools offers an entry point for efforts to contest monolingual schooling and language hegemony by promoting bi/multilingual education" (p. 105). As public institutions, schools are important spaces for the implementation, navigation, and contestation of language policies and ideologies. Schoolscaping has thus become an important complement in the study of what determines the public discourse of school settings, including the material environment of formal education, such as literacy displays in and out of classrooms.

Literacy in the form of inscriptions and cultural symbols displayed on the walls of the school buildings may be analysed as tools for orienting choices concerning cultural and linguistic values and ideologies (Szabó, 2015). Schools as public spaces are discursively constructed, negotiated and contested (Shohamy, 2012). Thus, according to Szabó (2015, p. 24), "the visual and spatial organization of public spaces indexes the co-construction of ideologies in school settings". Schoolscaping allows for multimodal perspectives and thus implies a theoretical and analytical shift in

research on multilingualism by extending the focus on language for meaning-making to include other media and modes, such as visual, kinaesthetic and artefact-related, in the communicative landscape (Lytra, 2012, p. 533).

Creating an understanding of the role and significance of LL in educational spaces also implies considering educational institutions as planned spaces that are loaded with socially, culturally, and historically situated interactions and rituals (Garvin & Eisenhower, 2016). This means that literacy objects in the LL play an important role in the dissemination of information and cultural reproduction, and at the same time constitute a powerful tool for social interaction that may offer possibilities for agency, collectively or individually. Blackwood (2011) showed how “a hierarchy of languages can be identified based on the positioning and styling of the items within a given multilingual sign” (p. 125). In their study of the use of standard French and non-standard local varieties, they found that typically the official standard appeared above and often in larger font compared to other varieties. The significance in Western cultures of what is presented left and in the top respectively to the right and at the bottom was highlighted in a study by Bruyél-Olmedo and Juan-Garau (2013 compare Backhaus, 2007).

To analyse language in the form of written language displayed in public spaces, combined with other semiotic signs, means shifting the focus to literacy as *situated*, and thus understood as a set of social practices (Barton et al., 2000). Written texts, labels, and signs of various kinds on walls, notice boards and tableaux display various cultural and linguistic norms, whilst what Pennycook (2009) calls *transgressive signs*, such as graffiti and scribbles, may be signs of contestation or manifestation.

According to Shohamy and Waksman (2009, p. 314), a linguistic landscape includes “verbal texts, images, objects, placement in time and space as well as human beings”. Brown (2012) has argued for the inclusion of oral language as part of a schoolscape. In this paper, however, schoolscaping will be restricted to images, objects, symbols, and written language; human beings and oral language will thus not be included. The school premises as space will be included in the analysis through third space theory (Bhabha, 1994). With a base in postcolonial theory, in third space theory, colonial discourse is understood as a system of power, where *the Other*, that is, persons with other ethnicities and from other cultural settings, are stereotyped and perceived as weaker. Bhabha uses *third space* to describe the space-in-between where two worlds meet. According to Bomström Aho (2018), this can be applied to the LIP in a Swedish school context where alienation may appear. Thus, the LIP may be perceived as a space for the individual to develop strategies for his or her development, and simultaneously create space for cooperation and contestation. This means that individual students who populate this space may be perceived as *the Other*, who differ from the dominant norm of Swedishness in Swedish schools (Bomström Aho, 2018), whilst simultaneously legally and organizationally being part of the same. Thus, in this space-in-between, a cultural hybridity is created (Bhabha, 1999, p. 286) where other positions are developed: “a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality” (1994, p. 19), which in turn may constitute a bridge between the two cultures. The subordinated *Other* may then create some space for action by taking advantage of the person in power through imitation. The hybridity thus means switching between what Bomström Aho calls “the desirable and the factual, pragmatic and realistic acting.”¹ (2018, p. 47).

In the analysis of the functions of signs, Amara (2018) distinguishes between informative and symbolic content, and he determines the authorship of signs. Likewise, Biró (2016) stresses the importance of identifying agents that set the norms for signs, such as sign makers, sign readers, and other significant participants, as well as authorities that set the rules for signs, on local, regional and national levels, to identify top-down policies and bottom-up ideologies. Thus, connections between LL and language ideologies may be made visible, such as hegemony of dominant languages and invisibility of minority languages (Laihonen & Tódor, 2017).

In schoolscaping, not only the physical landscape needs to be considered, but also the connections to pedagogy, programming and language policies (Menken et al., 2018). According to Scollon and Scollon (2003), signs and symbols in public spaces have three functions: 1) Orient to place and space, 2) Control behaviour, and 3) Shape discourse. In the analysis of the schoolscape of the LIP in Cherry School, the analysis will be based on these three functions, adding *time* to the first, as time is often an important component in signs and messages in public spaces in schools.

3 Methods and material

This study is part of a project on recently arrived students in Swedish upper secondary school². The aim of the project is to investigate several (inter)related research questions about these students' language development, disciplinary literacy, and social inclusion. Linguistic Ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015) is used as the methodological framework for the whole project, and here the material will be restricted to 168 photographs from Cherry School. The photographs were taken during two school years, which means that some represent artefacts that were only displayed for a shorter period, such as advertisements for activities in the local environment, whilst most of the signs were displayed during the whole time period, such as signs for different parts of the school premises. The photographs were taken with a digital camera and stored securely. Ethical issues were considered to ensure that no persons could be identified through the photos, and all representations that may be related to this specific school were blurred before publication.

In the first step of the analysis, Scollon and Scollon's three orientational functions of signs and symbols in public spaces (2003) will be used. Under each function the analysis will concern authorship (agents, readers), institutions, in/outside, roles ascribed to students and teachers, and what is displayed and what is not made visible. When analysing the functions of the signage, it is important to remember that there are no clear borders between the functions, and that one sign may have several functions. Following this, in the second step of the analysis, the research questions will be answered based on the findings in the first step.

4 Findings

Before the analysis, the setting will be presented briefly. Cherry School had about 300 students during the two academic years when data collection was carried out.

Of these, between 65 and 125³ were enrolled in the LIP. Apart from Swedish, many of the students in the LIP spoke Arabic, Dari or Somali, but the total linguistic repertoire represented in the LIP also included languages such as Amharic, English, Farsi, Swahili, Kurmanyi (Kurdish), Pashto, Thai, Tigrinya, Turkish, and Wolof.

In the school environment, the home classrooms of the LIP were located separately from those of the rest of the school, where the school also offered the Children and Leisure Programme, the Care and Nursing Programme as well as the Social Sciences Programme. The separation meant that the LIP home classrooms were physically separated from the rest of the school by closed corridors, with locked doors.

4.1 Orienting to time, place and space

In Cherry School, orientations to time, place and space were expressed through signage in many ways. The first sign to greet visitors, students and staff members was a large sign outside the school building, on the brick wall, identifying the school by its name and thus claiming the space for the school. At the beginning of the study, the outer doors were open, but from the second term they were locked with a key card system. Both staff and students held these cards, and visitors were asked to ring a bell for entrance or to call a specific telephone number. Inside, only staff could open the locked classroom doors, whilst LIP students held tags to open the doors to their specific corridor. Entering the building, the visitor was welcomed by a visual welcome sign, accompanied by a sign directing towards the reception. In the entrance hall, there was a digital message board that only functioned during the second year of the study, displaying information such as absent teachers, schedules, and some daily news. The verbal messages on the digital message board were thus changed regularly. All this was in Swedish only.

At the school, schematic plans over the premises were displayed on several walls, marking different offices, classrooms, and other localities as well as the location of fire extinguishers, emergency escape routes and exits. There were also separate signs identifying the exact locations themselves. The signs were most often signed, identifying the municipality, the architects, or some other authority as the author. There was variation as to what the emergency exit signs oriented towards and how: one consisted of a construction drawing whilst several others identified escape routes, either with arrows or by displaying a more formal evacuation plan with information about assembly points and explanations of symbols used (See picture 1). Other signs pointed out the locations of, for example, the library, principals' offices, and places for waste disposal. The classrooms were identified by signs with their numbers on the door and in some cases a schedule for the specific room or a specific class. Examples of the signs with orienting function in the school corridors are displayed in Picture 1.



Pictures 1a, b and c. Orienting function displayed in the entrance hall.

These signs and orientation maps represent permanent signage located in the public areas on the school premises and may be assumed to have been posted at the order of the school authorities, for example by the janitor, and to be directed towards anyone visiting or occupying the premises. All signage with an orienting function was in Swedish, which made the verbal messages less easy to understand for students enrolled in the LIP.

Cherry School had a centrally situated recreational area for all who spend time in the school. This area was accessible from all parts of the school and recognizable through the presence of shielding screens, tables and chairs, that is, artefacts rather than verbal or multimodal signs. There was also a cafeteria selling both sweet and savoury baked goods produced by the students at a nearby bakery programme. The recreational area and the school corridors host some permanently exhibited visual arts and examples of students' work.

Time and place were displayed through schedules, posted either on the classroom doors, close to them outside, or inside the classrooms. The schedules in Swedish were posted by the school staff and used abbreviations and codes for different classes and school subjects. Hence, the intended recipients were presumed to be insiders, that is, students who knew what the codes referred to and who were expected to read them and understand who should be in the designated space and time, and for what purpose. These schedules were replaced when changes in the schedules occurred.

There were not many orienting signs inside the classrooms. In a few cases, such signs displayed information about assistants supporting students in their other languages or time for mother tongue teaching (Picture 2). Such signs were less permanent in nature, some displayed only for a few days, and others for one or two semesters.

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| | Namn | Språk | Måndag | Tisdag | Onsdag | Torsdag | Fredag |
|---|--------|---------------|-------------|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | ██████ | Somaliska | | | 14.00-16.00 | 14.00-16.00 | |
| 2 | ██████ | Somaliska | 08.00-08.30 | | 08.00-08.30 | 08.00-08.30 | 08.00-08.30 |
| 3 | ██████ | Kurdiska | 14.00-16.00 | | | | 14.00-15.00 |
| 4 | ██████ | Arabiska | 14.00-16.00 | | | | 14.00-15.00 |
| 5 | ██████ | Som/Arab | | | 14.00-15.00 | | |
| 6 | ██████ | Arabi/Kurd mm | 14.40-16.00 | | 14.00-15.45 | | |
| 7 | ██████ | Somaliska | | | | 14.00-16.00 | |
| 8 | ██████ | Arabiska | 13.00-16.00 | | | | |
| 9 | ██████ | Tigrinja | 14.00-16.00 | | | 14.00-16.00 | 14.00-15.00 |

Picture 2. Orienting: Schedule of the assistants supporting through other languages.

In some classrooms there were also maps of Sweden, Europe, or the world. All maps had Swedish text and orientations in ways that are common in Swedish schools, where Sweden and Europe occupy a central position.

To summarize, the orienting function in Cherry School was visually displayed in terms of time, place, and space, such as in terms of directions to different parts of the school and escape routes in case of an emergency. The orienting signage, even when multimodal, was in Swedish only. This may be understood as establishing the LIP as a space for Swedish. The author (or in case of art, the one who has selected the piece of art) of these verbal or multimodal signs was typically an authority (e.g., a school representative or the municipality), and the expected recipients were teachers, students, and anyone entering the school space. Thus, the LIP was displayed as space for Swedish through signage with an orienting function.

4.2 Controlling behaviour

The function of controlling behaviour through signage appeared in various ways in the public spaces in Cherry School. Examples include signs that mark the school surroundings as a non-smoking and perfume-free area. These signs were directed to students, staff, and visitors and appealed to their benevolence (*Tack för att du visar hänsyn!*, 'Thank you for showing consideration!') in creating a space open to everybody (*Skolan är till för ALLA!*, 'The school is for EVERYBODY!', Picture 3a), understood as concern for example for people suffering from asthma and allergies. In the public areas, there were also some signs with instructions for behaviour. One example was close to the outer door, where readers were instructed to use their elbows to push a button placed on the wall near the window for entrance and exit (Picture 3b).



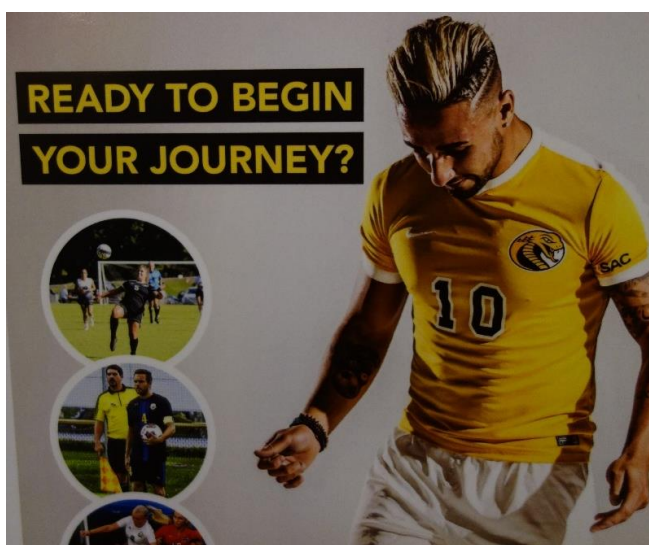
Pictures 3a and b. Controlling behaviour: 'A perfume-free zone!' and 'Use your elbow'.

Also, the escape route charts in case of an emergency already mentioned above, besides orienting and directing to assembly points, were designed to control the behaviour of people in case of an emergency. Other signage expressed control in relation to behaviour out of school. Rather than controlling behaviour, these signs may be understood as promoting certain kinds of conduct; such signs were common at the school. On the walls there were bulletin boards, and in the entrance hall, there were two large notice boards with advertisements announcing extracurricular activities such as sports and other leisure activities (Picture 4a, b, c and d).

4a



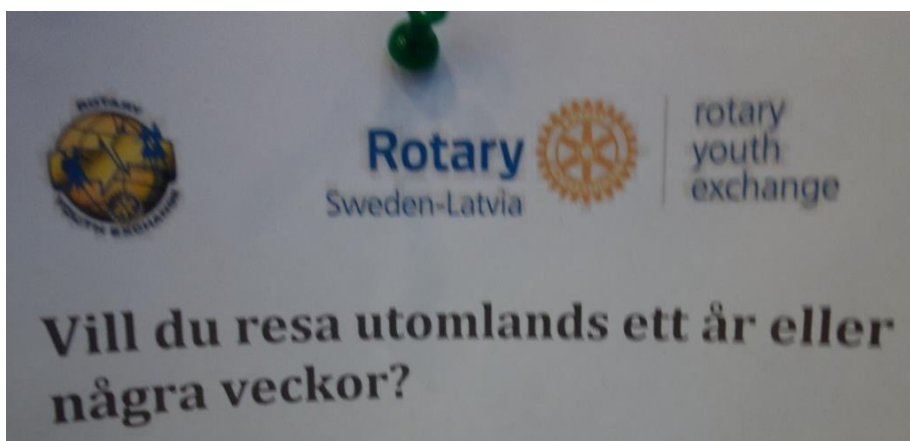
4b



4c



4d



Pictures 4a, b, c, and d. Controlling behaviour: Advertisements for extracurricular activities.

On these posters, in contrast to more permanent signs, not only Swedish but also English was used. As these posters were more informal in character and had a more youth-oriented approach, English thus became positioned as another language relevant for these contexts. In the sign from Rotary, calling for youth to sign up for a Swedish-Latvian exchange, only English was used in the letterhead, whilst the information was given in Swedish, following the same pattern with English as a language for international exchange. No other languages representing the students' linguistic repertoires in the schools were encountered in the signage with a controlling function. As the bulletin boards were controlled by the school as an institution through their representatives (teachers, school administrators, janitors, and other members of the staff), these activities are understood as recommended by the school and thus expressing authority, although most of them were placed there by people from the outside, such as representatives for various youth clubs. The mere presence of the adverts directed the students to certain kinds of accepted and promoted behaviour, both at school and outside.

A sign with the listing of the words *Concern, Equality, Honesty, Respect, Safety,* and *Responsibility* in Swedish, enclosed within an image of a heart, was displayed in the recreational area of the school (Picture 5).



Picture 5. Promoting certain kinds of conduct: A heart figure.

The words, that in Swedish construct the word *hjärta* (heart) through their initial letters, thus refer to behaviour more generally. In the Swedish school context, these signs can be interpreted as more or less explicitly positioning the students as the main recipients, whilst the agency is associated with the school as an institution.

In classrooms there were written instructions such as to turn off the light and to place chairs on top of the table upon exiting. In one classroom, there were also restrictions regarding the use of mobile phones. In this classroom, there was a basket with a mobile phone image attached, where the students were asked to put their phones during lessons. These signs seemed permanent in nature, and all were either multimodal or in Swedish only.

The authors displaying these images and texts may be understood as representing the school as an institution, through its representatives. An

individual was rarely named as the author. Thus, the school could be understood as the agent stating the norms for good conduct. The recipients, mainly students, and to some extent also staff and visitors, were expected to behave according to the displayed norms.

As images, objects, and symbols that serve a controlling function in the school are displayed by authorities of various types, students – and to a certain extent also teachers – are positioned as recipients, those who are controlled and positioned to follow the directives. At the same time, there was an impression of an inclusive “we” positioning the students as having agreed on this and thus expected to (willingly/wanting to) follow the rules according to regulations for inclusion in the Swedish-dominated space of school. Meanwhile, as these signs control or promote certain behaviour, they also contribute to shaping discourses: a discourse of inclusion, of “us”, was present in for example Picture 3a. A discourse of good conduct, a discourse of how “we” behave towards each other, was present in almost all the signage exemplified above, such as Pictures 3a and 5, and, as most of the signage is in Swedish, it promoted a discourse of Swedish.

4.3 Shaping discourses

Thus, much of the signage with functions of orienting and controlling/promoting behaviour in the schools simultaneously expressed discourses displaying the setting as organized (such as signs in Pictures 1 and 2), inclusive, and tolerant (Pictures 3a and 5). However, when focusing on language, two main discourses appear: one discourse of a modern and youth-oriented, bilingual English-Swedish-speaking society belonging to a global context and one discourse of a Swedish-only educational setting. The discourse of a bilingual, global society appears through the posters in the entrance and central halls, advertising for example sports and other leisure activities. One example of the youth orientation of this discourse is the advertisement for a local cultural organisation for young people in Picture 6.



Picture 6. Shaping discourses: Adda oss på Snap!

The advertisement gives an example of how “Swenglish” is used to attract adolescents, in this case by *Adda oss på Snap* (‘Add us on Snap’). Whilst “Snap” refers to Snapchat, *Adda* combines the English ‘add’ with the Swedish imperative verb suffix *-a*. These non-standard forms give an impression of casual talk in a way that may be perceived as youth jargon.



Picture 8. Shaping discourses: Allemansrätten.

These discourses, that to some extent are contradictory, make sense considering that the main purpose of the LIP programme is to teach students Swedish so that they can be enrolled in the mainstream programmes at upper secondary school. There is no contradiction between a barely visible discourse of an inclusive multilingual society, a global bilingual young discourse, and learning Swedish, the language of schooling.

To summarize, images, objects, and symbols represent discourses of an organized, inclusive, and tolerant society, to some extent of a discourse of a multilingual society, but mainly of a Swedish-only discourse with a Swedish lifestyle. The Swedish discourse may also be understood as a discourse of “we” who speak Swedish and behave accordingly, whilst the bi- and multilingual discourse is weak and more loosely connected to the school as an educational space. The general multimodal signs in Swedish identifying escape routes in case of emergency are both orienting and aiming to control actions whilst simultaneously shaping a discourse: in this school (and in Sweden) we (want to) follow (the) rules.

5 The LIP schoolscape

In the next step, the analysis of the schoolscape of LIP at Cherry School will be used to answer the research questions. Regarding the question of the visibility of students’ varied linguistic resources through signage at the school premises, the analysis shows that multilingualism is relatively absent. During the two years of the study, no LIP students had English or Swedish as a dominant language and the examples where their other linguistic resources were made visible were few. Thus, in line with Bhabha (1999), the schoolscape may be understood as a space for Swedish, where inclusion demands mastery of Swedish. The in-betweenness of the third space, here understood as the space for LIP, thus appears as a space to escape otherness by changing language, which is the requirement for inclusion in the “we”; to become like “us”.

When it comes to the second question – what kinds of activities, identities, and discursive interactions are made visible and promoted at these school premises – the schoolscape displays high expectations of behaviour, primarily in relation to students and studying, which may be expected in a secondary school, as well as expectations of engagement in voluntary activities after school, such as sports and other leisure activities. The latter appears through posters and advertisements

where identities as engaged youth appear and are promoted. However, as only very few examples of student agency were discovered, the signage may be understood as top-down. There were, for example, no examples found of transgressive signs (Pennycook 2009), such as graffiti or scribbles, nor were any posters or advertisements obviously posted by the students encountered. Overall, no examples of contestation or manifestation from the students were found. The absence of transgressive signs is in itself potentially meaningful, and with Karlander (2019, p. 213), “nonexistence, in semiotic terms, is a form of existence”. A picture emerges through the schoolscape of adolescents who want to travel and who thus are expected to use English, as a complement to their more or less implicitly preconceived Swedish proficiency. This is in line with the curriculum where Swedish and English are mandatory subjects, and thus proficiency in these languages is a requirement to be admitted to a mainstream programme. In line with Bhabha (1999), the schoolscape that appears is one of adaptation without space for students in LIP to negotiate conditions for inclusion, such as accepted linguistic repertoires. No space for contestation appears, whilst space for cooperation may be understood, with proficiency in the two dominant languages as gatekeepers. The linguistic hybridity made visible is limited to the cases with Swedish and English being used in parallel.

Thus, in this case, the signage displayed in the schoolscape does not open up spaces for identity development related to multilingualism or multiculturalism (research question three). The analysis of the schoolscape reveals a space that is relatively closed for any languages and identities other than Swedish, except to some extent English.

6 Discussion

The schoolscape of LIP at Cherry School appears as a space where students’ multilingual resources are made invisible. Thus, spaces are opened for the use of Swedish and, in relation to leisure time, also English, whilst students’ other linguistic resources are excluded. LIP as a third space is thus open for inclusion but closed as a space for students’ linguistic diversity. This is in accordance with earlier research on how languages are valued in Swedish schools (Andriyanti, 2019; Hult, 2012), with Swedish and English as the languages given high status and other languages devalued.

The in-betweenness of the LIP, as a transitional programme, does not here stand out as the multilingual space that it could be expected to be according to official documents (SFS 2010:800; SNAE, 2011) and research (Baker, 2000; Cummins, 2000; García, 2009; Wedin, 2021). The invisibility of students’ linguistic resources and the absence of their agency in the schools then becomes a problem. The LIP in this case, as a third space, becomes closed for multilingualism and multiculturalism, and is thus a space where inclusion becomes connected to assimilation through a Swedish-dominant discourse. The absence of agency and transgression (Pennycook, 2009) and of negotiation of the linguistic norms, shows that this schoolscape is closed not only for students’ linguistic resources but also for their initiatives. Opening space for students as agents in the schoolscape and making their diverse linguistic resources visible, would open up the third space for negotiation of norms, through contestation, resistance, and manifestation. Such space would then open up for students to develop multiple identities and widen their opportunities to be (co-)creators of their own futures.

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Endnotes

¹ Translation by the author.

² The project “Recently arrived students in Swedish upper secondary school – a multidisciplinary study on language development, disciplinary literacy and social inclusion”, 2018-2021.

³ The variation in numbers was due to changes in conditions for immigration to Sweden.

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