Ethnographic Language Learning Projects Through the Linguistic Landscape

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Abstract Study of the linguistic landscape (LL) has significant pedagogical potential in additional language classrooms. This is particularly true in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings, where the perception is that the target language is remote and not immediately relevant to the everyday lived experiences of learners and teachers. Educators recognizing that environmental print in English provides more than incidental L2 exposure have looked at how to harness the LL as a pedagogical resource in EFL contexts (Rowland L. The pedagogical beneifts of a linguistic landscape project in Japan. Int J Biling Educ Biling, 16(4), 494–505. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2012.708319, 2013; Sayer P. Using the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical resource. ELT J 64(2): 143–154, 2010) by engaging students in community- and project-based learning. This chapter presents a framework for using the linguistic landscape as the basis for developing ethnographic language learning projects. These projects prompt students to become analysts of language use, paying careful attention to linguistic and cultural elements of the English used in environmental print.

Keywords Ethnography and L2 teaching · Linguistic landscape · Pedagogical resource · Environmental print · Literacy walk · Mexico · Social semiotics

1 Ethnographic Language Learning Projects

Ethnography can be described broadly as the study of a group's social and cultural practices from an insider's perspective. Ethnography is a basic method of anthropological fieldwork. It utilizes participant observation, the ethnographer's direct engagement with the people she is studying. The use of ethnography amongst language education scholars includes work on first and second language literacy (Heath

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and Street 2008; Grenfell et al. 2012), language policy (McCarty 2015), and in language teacher education (Sayer 2012). The hallmark of these ethnographies is the goal of understanding the social meanings people attach to activities in their everyday lives on their own terms, called the *emic perspective*.

Ethnography as second language (L2) pedagogy has been developed by Roberts et al. (2001), who emphasize the active role of students in formulating questions, and collecting and analyzing data from an (inter)cultural perspective (and cf. Barro et al. 1998). Building on this approach, this chapter will provide a framework for designing *ethnographic language learning projects* drawn from the linguistic landscape of students' communities. An ethnographic language learning project (ELLP) is defined as a collaborative, self-directed effort by a group of students which focuses on exploring some aspect of language use through a cultural lens and results in a tangible product.

The linguistic landscape (LL) of the students' own community provides a natural context for carrying out an ethnographic project for additional language (L2) learning. Blommaert and Maly (2014) argue that ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis allows us to study the dynamic and complex features of language diversity in a particular community. Within public spaces in global multilingual contexts, the display of English often indexes underlying social and cultural meanings (Hult 2009). In fact, Sayer (2010) argues that in many international contexts, the "intracultural" use of English in the LL amongst locals is actually more prevalent than its cross-cultural use intended for international tourist or expatriate audience. These local meanings of English may index a general cosmopolitan identity (Billings 2014) by referencing an ideological connection of English to fashion, sexual appeal, technology, or may give voice to social and political resistance. As individuals, L2 learners have various types of motivations or investments in learning English, and an ethnographic language learning project of the LL of their community prompts them to reflect on the broader implications of language learning, and the semiotic connection between linguistic forms and the cultural meanings they encode.

Two key dimensions of ethnographic language learning projects through the linguistic landscape are emphasized in this chapter, an analysis of *linguistic elements* and of *cultural elements*. On the one hand, they should engage students in describing and analyzing authentic L2 use (Gilmore 2007) and, on the other hand, through this analysis from an ethnographic perspective they should have an explicit focus on promoting students' awareness of the sociolinguistic purposes for English in their local communities. In this chapter, I will begin by reviewing some of the previous linguistic landscape-inspired work for teaching English. I will then present a heuristic model for organizing ethnographic language learning projects, and give five practical examples of how students can carry out their own projects based on my own work with English as foreign language (EFL) students in Mexico.

2 Language Learning Through the Linguistic Landscape: Pedagogical Approaches

Linguistic landscape as a lens through which to examine multilingual contexts has been developed quite recently (Gorter 2006), but scholars quickly recognized its pedagogical potential for L2 classrooms[1] (Gorter and Cenoz 2004). Malinowski (2010) observes that the conceptual shift to paying attention to texts in the surroundings by scholars in literacy studies predates the popularization of the term *linguistic landscape* in applied linguistics[2]: "Since at least the 1970s, literacy theorists and practitioners have recognized the importance of the 'environmental print' of billboards, food packages and street signs for the emergent reading skills of children and adults" (p. 201).

I will review several studies which focus on the aspects of LL as a source of L2 input, and others which leverage the LL as a means through which to engage students in the social and cultural aspects of language use. Both approaches harness the pedagogical possibilities of LL as a resource to extend L2 learning beyond the classroom. As well, both approaches – the LL as L2 input and LL as sociocultural practice – entail the crucial first step of keying students in to the ubiquity of English in the environmental print and training them to be keen observers of the LL around them (cf. Dageneis et al. 2009).

2.1 Linguistic Landscape as L2 Input for Language Awareness

The most apparent potential of the linguistic landscape for most English teachers is as an additional source of L2 input for their students. Cenoz and Gorter (2008) connect this approach to LL to research done in second language acquisition (SLA) on incidental L2 learning (cf. Hulstjin 2013). Although research on incidental learning in SLA has produced mixed results because many language forms are not salient enough for learners to notice, Cenoz and Gorter (2008) argue that LL for SLA should take an explicit approach to make learners aware of L2 features. They also stress that the LL provides input that is authentic and highly contextualized both because signage is *in situ* and is often evocative and multimodal. They identify three areas of SLA that are especially pertinent to LL: the development of pragmatic competence, the acquisition of literacy skills, and the development of multicompetence based on the ability to decode complex hybrid and multimodal texts.

[1] Although, surprisingly, two otherwise solid recent volumes on L2 learning beyond the classroom (Benson and Reinders 2011; Nunan and Richards 2015) do not include chapters on L2 learning through the linguistic landscape.

[2] My own "discovery" of the concept of linguistic landscape came from my early attempts to apply ideas of environmental print (Silvern and McGee 1986) to my teaching of EFL in Mexico.

An example of the use of LL for development of literacy skills comes from Chern and Dooley (2014). They describe an *English literacy walk* activity on the streets of Taipei, Taiwan. A literacy walk is a physical tour through the streets in order to catalog and describe the types of texts students encounter along the way. The approach they lay out is particularly appropriate for younger learners and beginner-level students, as its focus is on making students aware of basic aspects written language in a multilingual context where various writing systems, alphabetic, syllabic and ideographic, co-exist in the LL. While the focus is on building learners' awareness of L2 linguistic aspects, what it does share with the ELLP approach is that students must get out into the community and carefully document how language is being used in the public sphere.

2.2 Linguistic Landscape as Sociocultural Practice

The second approach to using LL in L2 teaching is to examine the cultural aspects and social functions of languages in the students' community. Dageneis et al. (2009) call this a "language awareness approach" to LL, and maintain that it "provides a promising avenue for teaching about language diversity and literacy practices from a critical perspective" (p. 266). Malinowski (2015) connects this approach to growing recognition in L2 teaching that language study should extend beyond the classroom and include the connection of cultural and linguistic practices, as acknowledged by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL 2006) standards of *connections, community,* and *cultures,* and the model of intercultural communicative competence (Baker 2012; Byram 1997).

One limitation of some early LL studies is that they were concerned mainly with a quantitative description of which languages were represented where and for what functions (Horner and Weber 2018). The LL as sociocultural practice approach, on the other hand, is highly interpretive.[3] Shohamy and Waksman (2009) argue that LL scholars should apply their work to language education, and that there is a "need for students to be aware and *notice* the multiple layers of meanings displayed in public spaces" (p. 326, emphasis in original). The premise here is that all language use, and perhaps most especially the production of public signage, is a form of sociocultural practice. These practices, in turn, make sense to us because they connect to, or *index,* commonly shared social meanings. This approach is therefore consistent with an ethnographic perspective, which foregrounds the creation and interpretation of meaning by local social actors.

This view of LL follows the language-as-practice (Pennycook 2010), languaging (Swain 2006), or social semiotic (Blommaert 2010; Horner and Weber 2018) turn in

[3] Blommaert (2018) refers to his related approach as *ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis*, and insists that linguistic landscape work must be theorized from the community in which is the signs are found, and therefore needs an ethnographic perspective in order to adequately locate the LL within the social context.

the field of applied linguistics. The 'practice turn' places less emphasis on language as a set of linguistic structures and instead highlights language as a semiotic means for mediating locally-situated social action. Curtin (2009), for example, explains that authorities in Taipei, Taiwan have taken steps to make the city more accessible to English speakers, and more bilingual signage has been created. Besides this official language policy enacted through the LL, however, she also describes how the unofficial use of English in Taipei indexes local meanings related to being fashionable, cool, and cosmopolitan. Huebner's (2006) study in Thailand found English use connected to tourism, but he goes on to consider what LL studies tell us about permeability of the boundaries of speech community, and the changing nature of Thai English amongst the younger generation.

A sociocultural or language-as-social-practice approach to LL, then, refers to a consideration of the local social meanings indexed through the choice of a particular language/code. This was exemplified in two EFL contexts with direct connections to pedagogy: Mexico (Sayer 2010) and Japan (Rowland 2013). The authors explain how this approach was used to engage students to explore the local meanings indexed through various types of language use in the linguistic landscape. Sayer (2010) explains that this "cast[s] the learners as language detectives" (p. 144), and illustrates six different local meanings that English indexes in a city in southern Mexico. Importantly, he distinguishes between the *intergroup* uses of English, such as bilingual signage for services for tourists, and *intragroup* uses, where Mexicans are using English with other Mexicans through advertising, mom-and-pop shop signs, graffiti, and even wrestling posters and slogans on car windshields. The meanings cataloged partially correspond to Curtin's (2009), suggesting that English indexes global culture, but also quite particular local meanings, such as for anti-American political statements or to suggest a shop owner's identity as a successful migrant returnee (see examples in Sect. 3.2 below).

Rowland (2013) follows the same students-as-language-detectives method with a group of university-aged EFL learners in Japan. His students likewise showed gains in several areas, including pragmatic competence and literacy skills. However, although Rowland's students were young adults with relatively high level of English proficiency, he points out several challenges he encountered in implementing LL as pedagogy. While his students were able to analyze English signage in Japan in a way that supported various aspects of L2 literacy and pragmatics, he found that it was much more difficult for them to engage with the "connotational aspects" of language (p. 501). He reported that besides identifying the link between English and "coolness", his students struggled to find other sorts of social meanings. Since he did not want to point his students towards the meaning but rather have them discover them on their own, he devised a list of questions as a heuristic to scaffold their attempts to do the type of qualitative content analysis of their photos described in Sayer (2010).

Dageneis et al. (2009) report on an action-research LL project carried out with fifth graders enrolled in French immersion programs in two schools in Canada. They solved the difficulty of having students step into the role of analysts, in part, by extending their project over 2 years and embedding it within the learning

objectives in other content areas (such as a mapping lesson for social studies). After a significant period of "data collection" where students collected photos of the LL from carefully organized areas of their respective cities (Montreal and Vancouver), they asked students to organize their photos. Through extended discussion, they guided the children to consider the geographical location, the social meaning, and the linguistic function of their photographs.

The key feature of the sociocultural approach to LL pedagogy is that it attempts to position the students as researchers with an ethnographic orientation to language use in the community (cf. Burwell and Lenters 2015). While the notion of language as a social semiotic for many students is fairly abstract and complex, the basic challenge is how to get students to become aware of linguistic forms and begin to think deeply about what cultural meanings and social identities are being enacted through those forms. The ethnographic perspective attempts to understand what local meanings are indexed through various types of language use. As we see from the studies cited above, the social meanings of English in international contexts are often both global (cool, fashionable, cosmopolitan) and local (migration, politics).

3 Pedagogical Dimensions

3.1 A Project-Based Approach to LL and L2 Learning

This section describes the organization of ethnographic language learning projects. As defined at the outset, an ELLP is a collaborative effort directed by the students themselves that explores the sociocultural aspects of language use in the linguistic landscape. ELLPs draw on the principles of project-based pedagogy in language learning. While assigning projects to students is common in L2 classrooms, project-based pedagogy derives from a constructivist or experiential theory of learning, the Deweyan notion that students learn best by doing (Kessler 1992). In K-12 settings, science fairs and history projects usually adopt this approach, and in higher education, project-based approaches are common in engineering and information technology, where collaborative problem-solving skills are valued. The movie *School of Rock* starring Jack Black[4] illustrates a project-based approach. In the film, a new teacher arrives and re-organizes the whole curriculum around the class becoming a rock-and-roll band and performing in a "battle of the bands" concert. The students' learning was organized around preparing for the music concert, and other subject areas (history, language arts) were connected to the goals of the project. Also, importantly, not all students were expected to learn the same thing. Each student's participation – hence learning – stemmed from her or his particular interests and role in the project, as one student was in charge of costume design, another was the manager, and other were in charge of setting up the technology.

[4] The name of Black's protagonist was Dewey, a nod to the American philosopher of education John Dewey (1859–1952), whose theory for inquiry-based learning was illustrated in the movie.

Similar approaches to L2 teaching have been articulated as *cooperative language learning* and *inquiry-based approach* (Richards and Rodgers 2014). They emphasize that learning should be student-centered, meaning that students have (to an age-appropriate degree) control over the decision-making process of the project, and that making decisions about how to develop the project is indeed an important part of the critical thinking and learning that derives from engagement in the project (Stoller 2002). Projects therefore naturally fit with strategies for differentiated instruction, and are appropriate for groups with mixed levels of proficiency. Likewise, learning will likely extend beyond the linguistic and cultural elements of the ELLP itself, for example, how to transfer pictures from a cell phone to a PowerPoint to create a poster. ELLPs are also aligned with the *funds of knowledge* pedagogy (González et al. 2005) which sees the everyday social practices of students' own families and communities as valuable resources for learning, and the starting point for developing inquiry units. Working with Mexican-American children in the U.S. Southwest, they state that "our claim is that capitalizing on household and other community resources, we can organize classroom instruction that far exceeds in quality the rote-like instruction these children commonly encounter in schools" (Moll et al. 1992, p. 132).

It should be noted that a project-based approach has certain limitations, especially in traditional L2 classrooms. As with other student-centered pedagogy, the approach requires the teacher to step back from her usual role as knower and explainer, and for the students to assume a higher degree of autonomy and responsibility for their learning (Stoller 2002). This may conflict with historically- and culturally-constructed roles for students and teachers in classrooms in some international settings (cf. Butler 2011 on the challenges implementing communicatively-oriented pedagogies in the Asia-Pacific region). Furthermore, projects are often time-consuming, as students will need extended periods to be able to collect data and prepare their final product. Also, as Cenoz and Gorter (2008) observe, the L2 learning that occurs within the context of LL study is generally incidental; like other sources of highly authentic L2 input, it is impossible to specify target forms or vocabulary. For these reasons, a project-based approach does not lend itself to use in a course that is highly structured or relies on a sequencing of textbook.

The main source of data for students should be the linguistic landscape. Students should go out onto the streets to take their own pictures. I encourage them where possible to take two photographs of each sign: one close-up where the words are clearly legible, and one wide-angle shot that captures as much of the physical context of the sign as possible. The number of photos and methodology for collecting is flexible. Dagenais et al.'s (2009) study was carefully coordinated so groups of students were given disposable cameras and each assigned a specific quadrant of the city radiating out from their school. In my own projects done with students in Mexico, I encourage them to collect at least 25 signs, and either focus on one area of town (e.g. their own neighborhood), or a comparison across two or more different areas (keeping careful track of where each photo is taken). These primary data can be combined with other sources of data. In ethnography, researchers will often combine interviews or community surveys with observational data (see Example 2 below).

The ethnographic language learning project should culminate in a tangible product. Ideally, the projects themselves should be multimodal, combining visual, written, and oral elements. Depending on age and proficiency levels, these can range from photos with simple written descriptions, to presentations from PowerPoints. One format I have used that was quite successful with university undergraduates is having them preparing research posters and organizing a small colloquium, where each group has 5–10 min to present their project. An example of the rubric used to evaluate these projects is included in the appendix. Barni et al. (2014) describe a multi-sited linguistic landscape language learning project across several countries which generated products using video story-telling, also called digital storytelling, where the final product is a short video, usually 3–7 min, that can be posted on YouTube.

In sum, the pedagogical dimensions of ethnographic language learning projects include:

Dimension 1: Students have (an age-appropriate amount of) control over the theme and content
Dimension 2: Students can have different roles and decide on their own ways of participating
Dimension 3: Focuses both on process (conceptualizing project, collecting data, analyzing data) and product (developing final presentation)
Dimension 4: Teacher's role is to set guidelines, model, provide guidance, and get out of the way
Dimension 5: Tangible product with visual, written and oral components

Figure 1 represents the general steps the teacher can follow to guide students through the project. In what follows, these dimensions and the application of the ELLP approach are illustrated through five examples of different types of ELLPs.

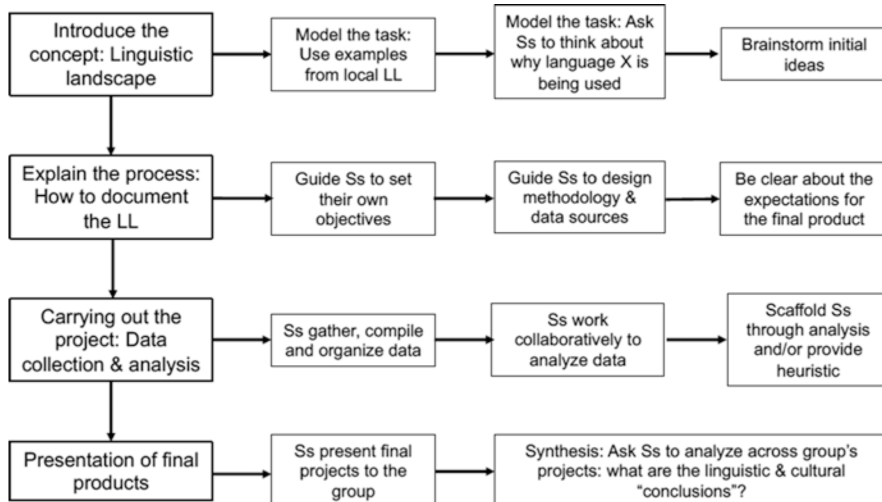

Fig. 1 Organization of ethnographic language learning projects

3.2 Examples of Ethnographic Language Learning Projects

The parameters of the ELLP should be as flexible as possible. However, for students not accustomed to doing self-directed project work, it may be challenging to figure out how to organize their project. By the same token, as Rowland (2013) observed, students will likely be unfamiliar with how to analyze the meanings of signs. Therefore, providing examples and modeling the activity is important, as well as working with each group to provide guidance with the qualitative analysis. Once they have collected enough photos, I ask students to look for the *themes*, and to use these themes to organize their dataset into *categories,* emphasizing that a single sign can belong to several categories, and can be related to particular features of the language (linguistic), social function (e.g., advertising, information for tourists), and sociocultural meanings. The sociocultural meanings are the most difficult for students to grasp, since it requires them to think through the semiotic purpose of the sign, which in turn is shaped by the local language ideologies. However, the teacher can scaffold this by asking them to start by talking concretely about how they interpret the sign (*"it's a business of a person [who] returns from United States"*) and then moving them to articulate the underlying meaning (*English indexes the migrant dream of success*).

To illustrate the possibilities of ELLPs, I provide five examples below. Example 1 was the general project that I started with (Sayer 2010) focused on the students' exploration of the social meanings of English in public spaces in Mexico. I show how the project is organized along the principles of the five dimensions listed above. The other projects are variations on this theme, generated by me (Examples 4 and 5) and my students (Examples 2 and 3).[5] Initially, I framed the project completely open-ended, but depending on the age or background of the students, presenting students with a "menu" of project options may help them get started. For older or more advanced students, scholarly articles such as Hult (2014) or Burwell and Lenters (2015) can be assigned prior to starting the project as background reading to familiarize students with the idea of how to carry out an LL project.

Example 1: The Social Meanings of English

The goal for this project is for students to analyze the linguistic, functional, and semiotic elements of signs. A main premise of linguistic landscape work is that public signage, like other language practices, reflects and constructs our social relationships and identities. This is a basic sociolinguistic insight, but one that most students have not had the opportunity to explore. As explained above, this entails complex thinking on their part, since language ideologies operate far below our

[5] I want to acknowledge and thank students at the Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca and the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla in Mexico for their contributions to my thinking about ethnographic language learning projects.

Fig. 2 Cell phone advertisement on billboard (Mexico)

consciousness, and they are essentially building a theory of local language practice based on the LL.

To start brainstorming about the project, I start with the question "What is English used for on signs here?" As mentioned above, it is important for the teacher to model the project and scaffold students to start thinking about the LL from an ethnographic perspective (Dimension 4).

Usually this question initially elicits more obvious answers: English is used on shops for tourists or to give information to foreigners. Then I prompt with a photo like Fig. 2.

Hopefully, this leads the discussion to the recognition that many of the uses of English have less to do with conveying information, and more with the sense or emotion that is meant to evoke. In other words, students begin to realize that sometimes *the medium is the message*, or what Sadeghi and Richards (2015) refer to as "the idea of English" (p. 419). The questions posed by Rowland (2013) to his students in Japan serve as a useful heuristic for pushing students' thinking towards the underlying social meanings and ideologies of the LL (adapted from Rowland 2013, p. 498):

- *Function:* What type of sign is it (e.g. advertisement, road sign, menu, etc.)?
- *Location:* Where is the sign located (e.g. residential area, near a train station, etc.)?
- *Producer:* Who made the sign (e.g. shop owner, the police, a private citizen, etc.)?
- *Audience:* Who is the intended audience of the sign?
- *Purpose of English:* Why do you think English is used on the sign?

- *Code choice:* Why do you think [language] is not used in place of English on the sign?

With one group of lower-intermediate level EFL students I did this project with in Mexico, after the concept of a "social meaning of language" was fairly clear, I tasked them with documenting the use of English in their local neighborhoods. Students were free to work individually or in groups, and decide how they would organize their data collection (Dimension 2). I emphasized that they should imagine that they were entering the community as an anthropologist, and seeing everything for the first time. The basic ethnographic questions that guided this project was *Why did the person use English here in this way? What does it mean to use English for this purpose?*

After collecting the photos for a week, the following class was a data organization session. Students brought their photos (most groups found that it was easier to organize using their laptops with photos set as thumbnail pics and organizing into folders labeled with themes), discussed how to categorize them into themes, and what they wanted their final product to look like (Dimension 3). Most groups chose to do a Powerpoint presentation (Dimension 5), and picked one or two exemplar photos to demonstrate the categories they chose. Having a guided discussion session while students are organizing their photos is important to help move from the concrete or descriptive level to the more abstract, interpretive level of the sociocultural meanings being indexed through English. As Rowland observes (2013), this is a challenging task for most students. Figure 3 illustrates a successful example of how one group of students (undergraduate TESOL majors at a public university in Mexico) eventually decided that the use of English on a sidewalk hamburger stand suggested that the owner of the stand had migrated to the U.S. and made enough money there to buy the stand:

> HAPPY BOY HAMBURGUESAS
>
> Function: Name of little restaurant *puesto* [food stall]
>
> Producer: Owner of *puesto*
>
> Audience: People who is hungry
>
> Code choice: Because uses Spanish can't show owner was lived in USA.
>
> Purpose of English: It's a *puesto* for to buy hamburgers near in front of the school on [Street name] near of the bus stop. It's says the name in English because the food hamburgers is from the USA. Also I think it is a bussiness of a person, he returns from the United States. I think this way because a lot of people does that, [they] works alot and save his money in USA and return to México and put a little bussiness sell something. So maybe the name of *puesto* HAPPY BOY is in English because to show he lived in USA but also because now he's a happy guy because he is home with his family and he has owner [his own] business.

The ethnographic perspective, therefore, attempts to understand what local meanings are indexed through various types of language use. The analysis of the photo acknowledges that hamburgers are typical American food (connection to big-C Culture, Byram 1997), but the student also recognizes the symbolic connection that English has in Mexico to migration to the U.S., and the dream that many

Fig. 3 ENGLISH = MIGRATION Happy Boy Hamburger Stand (Mexico)

working-class Mexicans have of going to the U.S. for several years, working to save money and learn English, and then coming back to Mexico to open a small shop and buy a car (Sayer 2012). The discovery of the category of "English and U.S. migration" led other students to re-analyze their photos, and to a discussion in class about why someone would want to use English to index their status as an emigrant returnee. While other students claimed that there is no way to know if the use of English on the hamburger stand was really connected to migration, this led to a productive discussion about how they could gather additional empirical evidence (e.g. interviewing the owner) or about the nature of interpretive work (e.g. maybe it doesn't matter if the owner was actually a migrant, because the use of English conveys the *idea* of being successful in the U.S.). Hence, the LL project provides an aperture for students to engage from an ethnographic perspective in thinking about how to link concrete language practices to the value placed on those practices by the community.

Example 2: Graffiti

Graffiti is a part of the linguistic landscape. Like other types of public signage, it is often multilingual and multimodal, creatively combining various linguistic and visual elements. While graffiti has been characterized as encompassing a range of artistic expressive forms, including publicly sanctioned street art and murals (Halsey

and Pederick 2010), this example focuses on graffiti as subversive speech or what Pennycook (2009) calls transgressive semiotics.

Subversive graffiti is often produced by those in marginalized positions who do not generally have the authority to produce the officially sanctioned texts that comprise most of the signage in the LL. For this reason, graffiti is a compelling locus of LL study, and one that lends itself to an ethnographic language learning project.

Like Example 1, general guiding questions orient the students' analysis, while still giving the students control of the content and development of ideas (Dimension 1):

- Where is the text located?
- Who produced this text?
- What is the social function of the graffiti?
- Why is English being used?

One of my students who analyzed graffiti in urban spaces in Mexico identified two distinct types of authors of graffiti. The first he called "taggers" and the second he called "resistance graffiti." The functions of the taggers' texts included identifying themselves as members of a gang, romantic expressions to a girlfriend, or just writing their own names. For taggers, the student interpreted the use of English to indicate coolness or toughness, and sometimes referenced well known gangs in the U.S. such as The Latin Kings of 18th Street Gang. The second type, as in Fig. 4, is stylistically different, often using stencil-art and incorporating an English slogan. This type of graffiti often had an anti-establishment political message. The use of stencils, he argued, echoed the work of British activist/graffiti artist Banksy, and the use of English in the slogans seemed to index broader international popular resistance movements. One student extended his ethnographic investigation by interviewing several famous local taggers and asking them to comment on the photos he'd taken (Dimension 2). Also, students noted that graffiti artists often use creative language forms, such as Fig. 5. On other locally-produced signs, students noted that there were frequently errors, mistakes with spelling and use of the possessive ['s] were common, whereas with graffiti it was done intentionally. One student said: "Maybe because the graffiti artists are non-conformists, they want to break the rules of the language too."

Example 3: T-Shirts

In many contexts, English is also ubiquitous on clothing. The notion of linguistic landscape can be extended to include the many expressions found on t-shirts, bags, and blouses. Clothing choices are quite individual, but can also convey many of the social meanings described in Example 1. Students may discover that many examples of English on t-shirts are brand names and slogans, but are also connected to international cities and places (New York City), global popular culture (such as Disney figures) and to a certain self-image the person wants to project. For example, Lawrence (2012) observes that English is prevalent on clothing in Korea, and often indexes the wearer's affinity with a Konglish identity. Caldwell (2017) locates language use on t-shirts within the social semiotic approach to linguistic landscape,

Fig. 4 Stencil art with a political message (Mexico)

Fig. 5 '4Ever' – creative English spellings in graffiti (Mexico)

and offers a detailed functional linguistic analysis of t-shirt messages. Students can be encouraged to think about the gender and age dimensions of English on clothing: Do women prefer English t-shirts more than men? How does English on clothing vary across children, adolescents, young adults, and older people?

Example 4: Environmental Print in the Home
The idea of LL can be stretched a little further, and the basic method of LL analysis applied to the household. Even in EFL contexts, modern homes are filled with electronic appliances, DVDs and video games, clothing, and innumerous product labels in English, and students will be surprised at the quantity of English in their houses (Fig. 6). This option can be especially appropriate for younger learners who may not be able to go out on the streets unsupervised, and provides an excellent opportunity for students to make an inventory of English words and taxonomy of what products they found. Because the use of English on household appliances is almost exclusively functional (e.g. ON/OFF button), this project does not lend itself to the same sort of analysis of social meanings and purposes such as in Example 1, but it can be an excellent awareness-raising task, and can serve as an introduction to the idea of examining environmental print in English.

Example 5: Virtual Linguistic Landscape Walks
As on-line mapping applications have improved, the potential for doing virtual linguistic landscape walks has opened up. The Google Maps street view allows any

Fig. 6 English on home electronics

student with an internet connection to explore the linguistic landscape of a city anywhere (see Fig. 7, a screen shot of downtown Puebla, Mexico). Here, the teacher can introduce the project by showing photos and asking the students to conjecture where it might be by looking at the clues. This will include what languages are represented, as well as other LL elements, such as the traffic signs (are distances in metric or standard?), car license plates, and other visual elements (what are people in the picture wearing?). Malinowski (2010) gives an example of the virtual linguistic cityscape project in Korea that was mediated through an on-line discussion board.

For older learners or students with strong computer or research skills, the LL analysis can be further enhanced with the use of advanced mapping software such as ArcGIS Online (http://www.arcgis.com/index.html). This allows students to create highly visual representations of their data by plotting locations of photos onto maps (Dimensions 4 and 5).

3.3 Discussion of Ethnographic Language Learning Projects

The process represented in Fig. 1 follows the basic steps of qualitative empirical research: students start with guiding questions, go out and collect data, analyze the data by organizing into themes, and then interpret by connecting back to the guiding questions. Although the projects are student-directed, with as much control given to students' decision-making throughout, the teacher's role is crucial along the way at

Fig. 7 A street view screenshot from Google Maps

the stages of introducing the concept of linguistic landscape sociocultural meanings of language by modeling, guiding the students as they figure out how to design their projects, and scaffolding discussion during the analysis and interpretation phase. Because self-directed nature of projects, students may bring ideas that do not match the teacher's idea of what LL should be. Examples 2 and 3 above came from the students setting their own goals; when one group said their goal was to look at English on t-shirts, I initially had to resist shutting down the idea because it didn't fit what I considered linguistic landscape, namely signage in public places. Likewise, there was sometimes heated disagreements within groups about aspects of how best to organize their projects. These disagreements, however, are productive when they evidence students' engagements with becoming aware of the multiple layers of meanings in the LL (Shohamy and Waksman 2009). Perhaps more to the point, they are also productive because students are engaging research problems as social scientists, and engaging with questions of language use as ethnographers and sociolinguists (Barro et al. 1998; Dageneis et al. 2009; Roberts et al. 2001). As emphasized at the outset, this constructivist view of learning – examining the world through the eyes of a discipline-area expert (here, ethnographer/sociolinguist) – is at the heart of project-based learning (Kessler 1992; Stoller 2002).

4 Conclusions

This chapter has proposed the use of the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical resource in English as an additional language classrooms. This approach conceptualizes L2 learning through LL as a project-based pedagogy drawing on ethnographic principles to engage learners to examine the linguistic and sociocultural elements of the language of public spaces. An ethnographic language learning project is defined as a self-directed effort carried out through collaboration by a group of students which focuses on exploring some aspect of language use through a cultural lens. Students follow the steps of qualitative empirical research to organize the project, collect and analyze data, and their work results in a tangible final product. ELLPs follow the interpretivist approach to LL study (Horner and Weber 2018), and challenge students to examine the social semiotics of multilingualism (Blommaert 2010) in their own communities. I have explained how this approach to LL is coherent with the principles of ethnographically-oriented project-based pedagogy. I also addressed the practical issues of implementing ELLPs in L2 education, including outlining the process and teacher's role, and have given examples that illustrate variations on ethnographic language learning projects through the linguistic landscape.

Appendix A

Rubric for evaluating ethnographic language learning projects

Criteria	5		3		0
Quality of project: Data collection	The quantity of photos is excellent. The quality of photos is excellent. The organization and labelling of photos is excellent. The methodology for collecting photos is good (choices of locations, etc.)	↔	The quantity of photos is somewhat insufficient. Some of the photos lack quality. The organization and labelling of photos can be improved. The methodology can be improved.	↔	The quantity of photos is somewhat unacceptable. Most of the photos lack quality. The organization and labelling of photos is poor. There was little thought given to the methodology for collecting photos.
Quality of project: Analysis of linguistic elements	The language functions are clearly identified. Linguistic features have been analyzed.	↔	Claims are somewhat supported by relevant research. Conclusions are somewhat clear and are logically connected to the development of the topic.	↔	Claims are not supported by relevant research. Conclusions are unclear and/or not logically connected to the development of the topic.
Quality of project: Analysis of sociocultural elements	Themes and categories have been identified and clearly explained. Claims are clearly supported by data.	↔	Some themes and categories have been identified and explained, but are somewhat unclear or unorganized. Claims are somewhat supported by data.	↔	Themes and categories have been not identified or are not explained. Claims are not supported by data.
Final product: Visual presentation	Title and topic clearly identified. Layout and visual elements (font, graphics, colors) are effective. The information is organized effectively. Sections are clearly identified. Data are clearly presented.	↔	Title and topic are unclear. Some layout and visual elements are lacking or less effective. Some information is unclear or not well organized. The presentation of data is confusing or data are absent.	↔	Presentation is disorganized, or basic information from the study is missing. Presentation lacks basic elements, or elements are not identified.
Final product: Oral presentation	Presenter explains study clearly (coherence, voice projection), including all elements of the research. Presentation conforms to time limit. Presenter answers questions effectively.	↔	Presenter has some problems explaining the study. Presenter is not audible. Presenter does not include all elements of the study in her/his explanation. Presenter does not respect time limit. Presenter does not answer questions well.	↔	No presentation, or presenter is completely unprepared.
Project meets guidelines	The project is completed on time. The project follows the format guidelines in the assignment description.	↔	The project is completed somewhat late. The project partially follows the format guidelines, lacking:	↔	The project is very late. The project does not follow guidelines, lacking:
Total points					

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