

Minority Languages in the Linguistic Landscapes of Chicago and Berlin

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Both Chicago and Berlin are cities which are home to many people of immigrant backgrounds who speak many different languages. These residents are well-established in their communities and, in particular, in local commercial enterprises. This research looks at a small segment of the multilingualism in these cities by examining the use of Spanish (instead of, alongside of, or mixed with English) in Chicago, and English and Turkish (instead of, alongside of, or mixed with German) in Berlin. Of particular interest is a comparison between the immigrant languages of Spanish in the USA and Turkish in Germany.

In Chicago, Spanish plays a prominent role in the linguistic landscapes in many Latin@ neighborhoods and enclaves, showing that the language is used to express ethnic identity and transnational belonging. Spanish is also commodified to appeal to the increasingly important Spanish-speaking consumer base, as well as make products appear authentically 'Latino' to appeal to consumers. Further, to some extent Spanish language use constructs Latin@s as low income and monolingual. This variety of uses and meanings reflects and reproduces both the heterogeneous nature of the Spanish-speaking population in Chicago as well as stereotypes of Latin@s.

In Berlin, English is everywhere – used as a lingua franca for people of all backgrounds, but also to add a certain *je ne sais quoi* to business names, labels for services or products, window displays or signs. Some English-origin words and terms have become common loanwords with specific meanings in the German context. Further, nonnative norms for English usage are developing. The linguistic landscape reproduces a mainstream population which has embraced English as a global language.

The use of Turkish is vastly different, and more similar to the use of Spanish in the USA. It is also commodified to construct authenticity around particular products (primarily food), and its use also constructs the target audience as unintegrated and monolingual. Less apparent is a construction of a transnational identity for Turkish-German bilinguals. However, a challenge to the ideology of Turks in Berlin as unintegrated can be found in the same types of uses of English, mixed with both German and Turkish, as are found in more 'mainstream' advertising and business names.

This comparison shows parallels in how Spanish and Turkish, as minority languages, are used to reproduce ideologies about their speakers. Differences in the uses of these two languages highlight differences in the history and socio-political position of these groups in their respective societies. English as a global language in Berlin does very different work, as it is rarely linked to a specific social group but instead constructs the consumers as globally oriented and multilingual.