

The Linguistic Landscape of Chicago's *La Villita*

In recent years an increasing number of researches have began to study the language text that are present in public space, specially on those locations where a situation of multilingualism or linguistic conflict exists. The main idea is to analyze languages in context by focusing on the written information that is available on language signs in a specific area. This perspective is known as the study of the linguistic landscape, which Landry & Bourhis (1997), in their seminal work on linguistic landscapes, defined as follows:

The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names. Commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25)

This study focuses on the multilingual linguistic landscape of the main shopping and commercial street in *La Villita* (Little Village), a thriving neighbourhood on the West side of Chicago that is home to one of the largest Mexican communities in the Midwest. The study is based on research conducted in 2013. The goal of this study is to determine what languages are displayed in the linguistic landscape of the area and what their relative weight is. This study also analyzes the contributions of official and non-official signs to the linguistic landscape, aiming to demonstrate that official and non-official signs in the area exhibit different characteristics with regard to the languages used. These differences between official and non-official languages will be analyzed using the sociolinguistic variables of 'power' and 'solidarity.'