Language Use in the Linguistic Landscape of Wolkite

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Abstract

The purpose of this article was to provide a descriptive account of language use in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite town, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia. It specifically uncovered how signs on buildings and roadsides in a multilingual setting are used to express different meanings and identities (linguistic, religious, and ethnic) in addition to their market value, that is. to attract clients. The study also showed language use patterns in the linguistic landscape. The research approach adopted was qualitative; labels and signs were collected and then thematically analyzed. The data were collected from signs on the right and left sides of the main asphalt road on the way from Addis Ababa to Jimma. The findings showed that Guragina, which is not used in any official settings in the Zone, is highly used in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite. Although dialect variation within Gurage was reflected in a few cases, the Chaha variety was more visible. Pragmatically, the signs used showed wishes, ambitions, success, surprises, dilemmas, and religious affiliations. The signs used were a mix of English, Amharic, and Guragina. The code-mixing is not random but systematic. The first word, if ever used, was Guragina and the second word was Amharic. English was used both as a mixed code and to provide gloss for the Guragina and Amharic versions of the signs.

Keywords: Identity, language use, linguistic landscape, code-mixing, multilingualism

Introduction

Wolkite is the administrative capital of the Gurage Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Regional State. It is located southwest of Addis Ababa at about 150 kilometers. Most of the people of Gurage are farmers producing different crops such as Enset, *Enset Ventricosum*, wheat, barley, pea, maize, and they also rear animals such as cows, horses, sheep, etc. The people are also renowned traders who engage in businesses in many parts of Ethiopia. Wolkite town is home and the main business center for many Gurage people and their neighbors.

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The Gurage Zone is characterized as a multilingual area with a language mix and language use patterns. We find 12 Guragina varieties, namely Chaha, Dobbi, Endegagn, Ezha, Gyeto, Gumer, Gura, Inor, Kistane, Mesqan, Muher and Wolane. There are two Cushitic languages, Qabena and Libitisso, also named Mareqo, spoken in the Zone. What is more, Amharic is the language of mass media, instruction in lower primary schools (grades 1-4), and administration. Kambata, Hadiyya, and Amharic are also spoken by pockets of Kambata, Hadiyya, and Amhara people, respectively, who came to Gurage Zone and settled in Abeshge district around Wolkite through the resettlement programs during the Dergue regime (1974-1991). A further linguistic novelty comes from the linguistic contact among Guragina varieties and the neighboring languages that surround the Gurage land, namely Afan Oromo and Hadiyya (Cushitic languages), Yemsa (an Omotic language) and Silte (a Semitic language closely related to Guragina varieties (see Figure1). The speakers of these diverse languages live in Wolkite town. Thus, the linguistic landscape in the town is multilingual. The multilingual setting reflects linguistic assimilation, different degrees of power relations and code-mixing and different layers of identities.

Figure 1: Gurage linguistic landscape
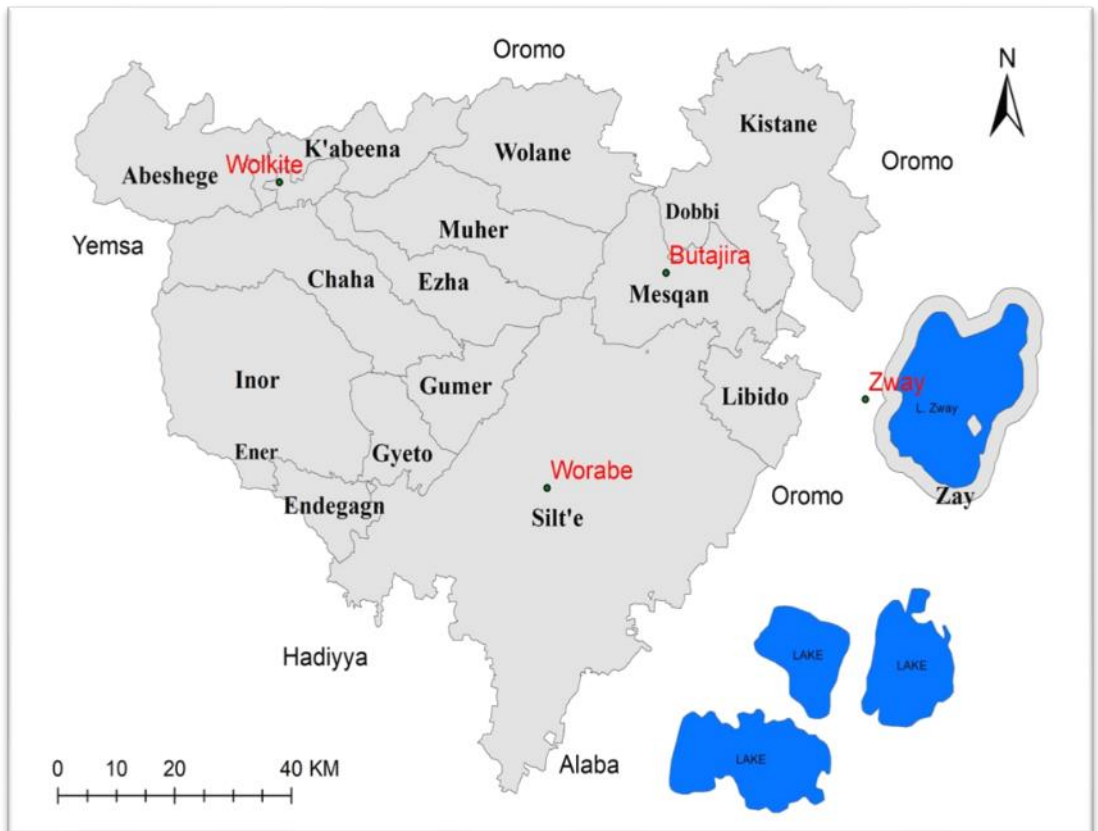
Source: Fekede (forthcoming)

Though Wolkite is the melting point of several languages and language varieties, dominantly spoken languages are Amharic, Qabena, Wolane, Muher, Ezha and Chaha. It is important to note that Silte, which is part of Gurage on the map, is in a different Zone, the Silte Zone since 2001(Fekede 2015: 6).

The objective of the study

The general objective of the study is to provide a descriptive account of language use in the multilingual linguistic landscape of Wolkite town of the Gurage Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia. It specifically aims to describe:

i.   The way signs on buildings and roadsides in a multilingual setting are used to express identity (linguistic, religious, and ethnic), power relations and other layers of meanings.

ii.   The language use patterns in the multilingual linguistic landscape of Wolkite.

Significance

The study will be significant in that its findings will help plan and implement language use policy in the linguistic landscape of the town, understand how language users informally plan language use based on their language use need, aspiration, and their identity (religious, cultural, and ethnic) and understand language use patterns such as code-mixing in a multilingual urban setting.

Methodology

The methodology used is a qualitative description with a cross-sectional descriptive design. Wolkite town has an asphalt road on the way from Addis Ababa to Jimma, and another road that splits at the south exit of Wolkite town leading to Gubre, which recently is considered part of Wolkite town. The present study is conducted on the asphalt road before it split into Jimma and Gubre. We took pictures of shops, buildings, and posters at about seven meters intervals both at the right and left sides of the road. The interval was required to make the pictures random rather than purposive. Regarding transcription, we wrote the signs as they appeared in the linguistic landscape, then transcribed them with IPA symbols which are then glossed morpheme-by-morpheme following Leipzig glossing rules, and finally provided transliteration and explanations about the forms and their meanings.

Literature Review

We have reviewed two important concepts relevant to this study:
linguistic landscape and code-mixing.

Linguistic landscape is defined as "the visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 23). More specifically, it is "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 25).

As the term landscape has a double meaning referring to both scenery (tract of land) and representation of the landscape (pictorial or symbolic

depiction), and because most linguistic landscapes are more common in cities rather than in rural areas, Gorter (2006: 83) suggests the use of cityscape. He adds that, because linguistic signs used in cities are often written in more than one language or script, multilingual cityscape better fits the field of study.

The linguistic landscape has also been defined as "any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or a private business in a given geographical location" (Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: 14). In this article, we shall follow Landry & Bourhis'S (1997) definition of linguistic landscape and limit the scope to signs on shops, hotels, and billboards in Wolkite as displayed in public spaces outside the shops, hotels and on roadsides, hence excluding signs for instance on cars and traffic lights.

Though the phrase 'multilingual cityscape' seems more appropriate to a multilingual country like Ethiopia in general and the linguistic situation in Wolkite in particular, we prefer to maintain the phrase linguistic landscape (LL), for we find such landscapes in rural areas and small towns on one hand, and signs are displayed with a single language (monolingual labels) in some big cities on the other.

Code-mixing, the mixing of code within a word or a complete utterance, is a common phenomenon in a multilingual society and in most towns where people from different linguistic backgrounds meet. People who have a good command of more than one language are sensitive to differences and may use language mixing or shifting with another language depending on the sociocultural contexts of communication (Meyerhof, 2006: 115-116). Code is mixed due to several reasons: in learning a second language, to catch attention in commercial signs, to mark identity, etc. (Spice 2018).

Although linguistic landscape is a recent field of study, much research has been conducted, and research conferences are held annually. We also find articles and masters' theses on the linguistic landscape of different cities and towns in Ethiopia. Some of these studies which may shed light on the present investigation are reviewed here. Lanza & Hirut (2009) investigated multilingual signage of Mekele town against language ideology and found that the linguistic landscape reflects federalism ideology yet Amharic is still dominantly represented. Amanuel (2012) studied the placard and posters inscribers' attitude towards Afan Oromo in the linguistic landscape of Jimma town, and he discovered that the inscribers have a negative attitude towards the language. Samrawit (2012) studied the visibility of Ethiopian languages in the linguistic landscape of

Bole and Merkato areas in Addis Ababa, and she found that English dominated language use due to the international significance of English and the presence of different international organizations. Alemayehu and Takele (2016) investigated the linguistic vitality of languages in Adama, Jimma and Sabata using linguistic landscape and interviews about the landscapes, and they found that Amharic had high vitality and communication function while Afan Oromo is used for symbolic function. Abdu (2022) studied the linguistic landscape of Asella Town in Oromiya in which he tried to describe linguistic representations on private and public buildings, linguistic dominance, people's language choice and the practice in the linguistic landscape and problems in translation and writing signage and placards. He took pictures with a digital camera and made key informant interviews regarding the pictures. He found that government buildings used dominantly monolingual signage while private buildings have bi- (tri-) lingual signage or placards. In multilingual signs, translations are literal word-for-word in some cases and conceptual in others. Most signs on privately owned buildings have an English version which is transliterated to Afan Oromo. According to the author, most of the signs have spelling errors that may mislead readers.

Definition of terms

The following terms used in linguistic landscape share meanings, and their boundary is fluid. They are sometimes used interchangeably and other times with some boundaries.

✧ A trademark is any visual symbol that may include a label, a name, sign, logo, devices, signature, numerals, colors, shape of goods, etc. used to show a trade connection between goods and services and the person using them.

✧ A label is a text and maybe with some additional signs placed on objects (packages, buildings, fences), etc. to describe the entity and the contents of a given package. The following are some examples: explosive, fragile, dangerous, toxic, etc. Products also have labels such as Walya Beer, Dashen Beer, and Habesha Beer.

✧ A sign is anything to which a meaning is assigned. It is sometimes used in place of a code such as in road signs. In semiotics, signs include indexes, symbols, and codes.

- ✧ A logo is a graphically created and easily recognizable symbol used by people to communicate their company or product quickly and easily.

- ✧ A placard is a small card, sign, or plaque often installed in a public space, or hung from buildings, vehicles, etc. It can also be paperboard or card used by complaining demonstrators.

- ✧ A symbol is a mark, sign, or word that signifies or represents an object, idea, or relationship. It can be linguistic (words and sounds) or non-linguistic (paralinguistic) such as signs.

- ✧ A poster is textual, graphic, or both textual and graphic elements posted in public space for a temporary promotion of ideas, events, and products.

Results

We have thematically grouped the presentation into four sub-sections. The first part (2.1) presents a linguistic representation of the languages used as first language (mother tongue) in Gurage Zone, namely Mareqo and Qabena (Cushitic languages), Guragina with several clusters, and Amharic is used as both first and second language (Semitic) and English used as a foreign language (Indo-European). The second sub-section 2.2 describes language and layers of identity represented on the linguistic landscape, 2.3 summarizes the structural patterns of language including code and script mixing, and the last section (2.4) concludes the study with discussion and conclusion.

Language Representation in a Linguistic Landscape

Mareqo and Qabena

Mareqo people reside relatively far away from Wolkite. We did not come across a linguistic landscape posted, inscribed, or labeled in Mareqo language from our samples on the main street of Wolkite town. Contrary to Mareqo, Qabena people live around Wolkite and the administrative capital of the Qabena district is Wolkite. The language of Qabena is taught as a subject in lower primary schools, that is, grades 1-4. There seems to be a script use dilemma as the people opted to use Latin script initially but have shifted back to Ethiopic script use.

Concerning the linguistic representation of Qabena in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite, we came across only one sign (Example 1), from all our samples, which was standing at the main gate of Qabena district's administration office. It is written both with Ethiopic script in Amharic

(first line in Example 1) and Latin script, i.e., in Qabena language (second line in Example 1); the third and fourth lines provide the IPA transcription of the Qabena text and the literal translation, respectively. The fifth line is the transliteration of the content.

(1)   በጉራጌ ዞን የቀቤና ወረዳ አስተዳደር ጽ/ቤት

Guraage Zonin   Woradi Gashiti Mini

gura:ge zon-LOC[2] woradi gaʃiti   mini

Gurage zone-in   district   administrative house

'In the Gurage Zone, the administrative office of Qabena'

Why don't we find many signs and posters in the Qabena language though Wolkite is the administrative district town of Qabena? One reason is that Qabena is spoken by a small number of people (less than 51,415; CSA, 2007:75) compared to Guragina varieties spoken by the majority (1,030,621; CSA, 2007:75-76). Therefore, using signs and trademarks on shops and hotels with the Qabena language has less importance in terms of attracting clients. Therefore, Qabena people use Amharic signs for business but Qabena for symbolic functions as in Example 1.

Guragina

The signs in Guragina can be found elsewhere in hotels, cafeterias, shops, office buildings and other business centers. In fact, most of the samples collected are hotel and cafeteria names. We shall begin our description with signs related to businesses such as drugstores, kiosks, supermarkets, and other service-providing centers that begin with or contain at least one Guragina word. We selected sample signs with Guragina on garages, stores, shops, supermarkets, office buildings and hotels to avoid redundancy.

Let us begin our discussion with the Gurage term *Wegush*, which is used for a garage name, but is often used by Gurage people when they get surprised while listening to something astonishing, strange, or

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[2] Abbreviations used in this article are provided here:

 CON=conjunction,   COP=Copula,   CSA=Central   statistics   Authority,   FOC=Focus, GEN=Genitive, IFUT=Imperfect future, INS=Instrument, LOC=Locative, M=Masculine, MAL-malefactive NEG=Negation, O=Object, PL=Plural, PRES=Present, PST=Past, SG=Singular

unbelievable. The term has been used as a name for driver's training center as in (2).

(2)   *ወጉሽ ያሽከርካሪዎች   ማሰልጠኛ   ተቋም*

wəguʃ   jə-aʃkərkari-woʧ   ma-səlt'ə-ɲa   tək'ʷam

Surprise GEN-driver-PL   INS-train-INS   institute

'Wegush driver's training institute'

It seems that the owner who gave the name *Wegush* to the training center has been surprised, though it is not known why she/he gave that name to his business center. It is worth mentioning that the only Guragina word in the whole label is *Wegush*; the other three words of the phrase are Amharic. That is, the actual name of the institute is given in Guragina but the words that describe or explain what the institute is doing are in Amharic. The noun *weg* 'surprise' itself is inflected: *weg-u-sh* (surprise-COP.3SGM-FOC) 'it is a surprise'. Why the owner chose the Guragina term *wegush* while there is an equivalent Amharic term *gud nəw* (surprise COP.PRES 'It is a surprise'). We can suggest two possibilities: a linguistic identity and an economy of words. First, since the sign was used in a Gurage speaking community mixing Guragina, hence identifying himself and his business with Guragina, with Amharic forms can attract clients. Second, the Amharic equivalent for *wegush* consists of two words, *gud* 'surprise' and *nəw* 'is', hence, the naming is not economical. In Example 3, one finds another sign with a headword: *Tiglu*:

(3)   *ትግሉ*   ጠቅላላ   የፊኒሺንግ   ስራ

tɨgl-u   t'ək'llala   jə-finiʃiŋ   sira

struggle-COP.PRES general   GEN-completing   work

'Tiglu general finishing work'

Here, the word *tɨglu*[3] 'the struggle' is Guragina. The word: *t'ək'llala* 'general' is Amharic whereas *finiʃiŋ* 'completing' is an English word. The genitive marker *jə-* 'of', which is prefixed to *finiʃiŋ* is either Guragina or Amharic as both languages use this prefix as a genitive possessive marker. Finally, the word *sɨra* 'work' is from Amharic. Thus, here we find Guragina as the main business name whereas

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[3] Tiglu as a name may be used in Amharic, but in Amharic it assumes the forms tagel 'struggle' than the Gurage copulative form tiglu'it is struggle'. Its equivalent in Amharic is tɨgl-nəw (struggle-COP 'it is struggle').

Amharic and English words are complements or descriptions of the business name.

The placard in (4) uses Guragina-English code-mixing:

(4) የ ህ ም ዳ ር   አ ድ ዮ   ቪ ድ ዮ   ሴ ን ተ ር

 jə-hɨm-darb   ɔ:dou   vidiəu sentə:
 GEN-that-up.to audio   video   center

 'Yehimdar Audio and video center'

The Guragina word *jəhɨmdar* is a time adverb with the meaning 'temporarily' or 'for the time being'. It is a combination of *jə-* 'of,' *hɨm* 'that also' and *dar* 'up to'. As was the case in Examples 2 and 3 above, *jəhɨmdar* is the only Guragina term, and all the other words describing the headword are English but written in Ethiopic script. Pragmatically, '*jəhɨmdar* audio video center' implies that the owner of the business has the intention to own another business and that the current business is only temporary, which may be abandoned when the dream business begins.

The placard in (5) was taken from a rural drugstore:

(5)   ኣ ፍ ያ መ ድ ሀ ኒ ት   መ ደ ብ ር

 afja   mədhanit   mədəbɨr
 afja   drəg   stɔ:r

 'Afya drugstore'

The name of the drugstore is *Afya* 'health' and the modifiers are *mədhanit* 'drug' and *mədəbɨr* 'store'. *Afya* is the only Guragina, which in fact is a loan from Arabic. The native word for health is *fenət*. The words *mədhanit* and *mədəbɨr* are Amharic words. Pragmatically, *Afya drugstore* refers to 'a store that sells health'. 'Medicine' is metaphorically replaced by 'health'. The term *Afya* is intentionally used to advertise the organization as different from any other drugstore. The assumption behind this is that drugs bought from *Afya* drugstore cure better than those bought from other drug vendors.

(6)   ዮ ድ   የ ሴ ቾ ች   ሽ ሩ ባ   እ ን ስ ራ ለ ን

 jə-od   jə-setoʧ   ʃɨrubba   ɨn-səra-llə-n
 3SG-tell GEN-girls hair-dress 1PL-do-PRES-1PLO

 'Let it tell women's hair dressing'

Yod is a combination of jə- 'third person singular jussive marker' and the verb *od* 'tell'. *Yod* literally means 'let him (it) tell'. The term is used as a label for beauty salons. The assumed pragmatic meaning transfered to the expected consumers is 'let the hair we dress witness our quality in hair dressing'. Syntactically, *yod* occurs initially as a head of the whole phrase. It is also the only Guragina term in the whole phrase as all the remaining words are Amharic.

The verb '*od*' is also found with other combinations in the landscape as in Example 7 below:

(7) ሀሮድ   ስታይል 365 ቀን   ቅናሽ

harɔd   stail   365   k'ən   k'ɨnaʃ

Knowing(telling) style 365-day discount
'Harod style 365 days discount'

Harod is a name given to a boutique in Wolkite town. In Chaha or Ezha Guragina varieties, the word is a blend of two verbs *har* 'know' and *od* 'tell,' hence *harod* means 'know and then tell'. In the Inor variety, however, *harod,* which is equivalent to *harot* in Chaha, refers to 'knowing'. The word ስታይል [stail] 'style' is a loan from English and written in the Ethiopic script; 365 is an Arabic number and *k'ən* 'day' and *k'ɨnnaʃ* 'discount' are Amharic words. *Harod* is, thus, the only Guragina term in the whole phrase and the meaning of the phrase is '*know about the style and then tell which style is good or bad*' in the context of Chaha but simply 'knowing a style' in terms of Inor. The shop is said to be open 365 days of the year and there is a discount every day.

(8) ይስሬሽ የ ሀንፃ   መሳሪያና   ሸቀጣሸቀጥ

ji-sre-ʃə jə-hɨns'a   məssarija-na   ʃək'ət'aʃək'ət'

3SG-reach-IFUT GEN-building material-CON commodity.PL

'One shall be at a level of others building materials & commodities'

The term *jɨsreʃə* is a Guragina word, which is used to encourage people with low income. It provides hope in the sense that if one works harder, his or her dream may come true. All the other words, except *jɨsreʃə* are Amharic.

(9)

(10) አ ታዞ   የ ቤትና   የ ቢሮ   እ ቃ   መሸ ጫ

     a-tazo   jə-bet-na   jə-biro   ik'a   məʃəʧ'a

     NEG-see GEN-house-CON GEN-office   utensils sells.shop

     'Do not you see; home and office furniture sales shop'

Atazo is the only Guragina term used in (9); all the other words are Amharic. The term has the meaning '*Don't you see!*' It is advertising with the implication '*see and judge the quality of our product*'. *Atazo* also refers to a place name in the Gyeto district in Gurage Zone, where the third conference of *Great Gogot*, an assembly held to unite Gurage people, took place (cf. Dinberu et al., 1987: 218).

(11)   ምር ግግ   ል ኳን ዳ   +

        mɨrgɨg   lɨkwanda

        neat   the butcher's

        'Neat butchery'

The word *mɨrgɨg* 'neat' is Guragina whereas *lɨkwanda* 'the butchery seems Amharic word. The Guragina equivalent for *lɨkwanda* is *bəsər-bet* 'meat house'. In fact, it is not known if *lɨkwanda* is an Amharic native term as we have another Amharic version *sɨga-bet* 'meat house'. We witnessed however that *lɨkwanda* is a very common name in Addis Ababa as well referring to the butchery. In fact, there is a neighborhood called *lɨkwanda* in Addis Ababa. The question one may ask is why such a language mix? The answer to this is the need for linguistic identity and client attraction. The Guragina terms here and in the other examples used in the placards help the persons using them to identify themselves and to be identified as a member of the Gurage community. The Amharic terms which are understood by the majority are required for non-Gurage clients. Ethnic business names have these days become symbols of the qualities of different materials and food items in Ethiopia. *Gurage Kitfo bet* 'Gurage minced meat house' has generally become means of advertising Ethiopian traditional food 'kitfo'. *Yemareqo berbere* ('jə-mareqo bərbəre 'pepper of Mareqo') is a mark of quality for pepper where Mareqo is the source of the pepper and an ethnic group producing the same.

The sign + following the phrase ምር ግግ ል ኳን ዳ in (10) shows a cross which pragmatically signifies the meat sold in that shop is meant to be eaten by religious Christian followers.

(12)   ን ማጀ   ሱቅ

          nimadʒə   suk'

          love   shop

          'Love Shop'

(13)   ኤ መነ   ሱቅ

          emənə   suk'

          traveler   shop

          'Travelers/ passersby shop'

Both *nimadʒə* 'love' and *emənə* 'traveler' shops are adjacent to one another. They are found around the busiest center of Wolkite where travelers traveling from Addis Ababa to Jimma and Gurage districts have lunch and window shop. Thus, *emənə suk'* gets its name for the travelers who shop there, but *nimadʒə suk* may have the meaning a *'shop in which you buy things for your loved ones'* or it may mean '*you buy love when you are buying things in our shop'*. As *suk* is a loan word in Amharic as well as in Guragina; probably its origin is Arabic. Both *emənə* and *nimadʒə* are Guragina terms.

(14)   ኤ ቺ   ፋሽን

          e-ʧi   faʃin

          NEG-abandon   fashion

          Not-abandon   fashion

          'Ever fashion'

The term *eʧi* 'never abandoned' is Guragina while fashion is a loan from English. The word *eʧi* advertises clothing in two ways. First, it implies that the clothes are so attractive as a result one cannot go away without buying them. Second, it refers to the meaning 'ever fashion' hence the clothes are classic and one will not worry that the clothes will not be outdated. The term ኤ ቺ must have been chosen for its expressive power in addition to its linguistic, thereby ethnic identity marking.

(15)   ያባንዳ   ሆቴል

        jə-aba-nda   həUtel

        GEN-father-1PL   hotel

        'The Hotel of our father'

The name *abanda* 'our father' and the prefix jə- 'of' are Guragina words forming a complex word *jabanda* 'our father's'. As is the case in all other labels we have discussed so far, the Guragina word begins the trade name, and the English word 'hotel,' which is also a loan word in Amharic which functions as a complement of the headword. There is phonological evidence that the term 'hotel' is not Guragina. This evidence comes from the sound 'l' of a hotel. The Chaha variety of Guragina uses 'r' not 'l', for 'l' is rare in the language. The expected Guragina form is thus 'hoter' but not a 'hotel'.

(16)   ሳረንደም   ሆቴል

        sar-əndə-m   həUtel

        delight-2PL-PST hotel

        'We are delighted Hotel'

Sarəndəm is a type-three verb (cf. Fekede, 2002) used as a noun. The verb contains grammatical information about the subject, such as the person 'we' and number 'plural'. The verb is also inflected for tense, which is past and shown with –*m*. The word is almost a sentence with a subject and complement. The Guragina word as usual begins the business name and the English word functions as a complement.

We came to identify some high standard hotels that use signs written in Ethiopic script, which could be written with code-mixing and another layer of the same name written in Latin script. Some examples are provided here and in the subsequent sub-sections.

(17)   Ethiopic Script   Latin Script

        ሶሬሳ ሆቴል   **Soressa Hotel**

        Soresa həUtel   soressa həUtel
        'The brave Hotel'

Here, there is a personification of the hotel in offering it a name that is often given to people who are heroes or brave. The name is given to the building probably because it is one of the tallest hotels in Wolkite; an analogy of brave men who stand above all others. The label *soressa* does not refer to the owner of the hotel; had it represented the owner, it could have been labeled as *jəsoressa həUtel* 'a hero's hotel'.

As to the structure of the labels, *soressa*, the first word, is Guragina while the complement 'hotel' is English. We can also guess that the Guragina variety used is not Chaha because the Latin version of the hotel has its last consonant geminated *soressa*. This type of lexical gemination is common for *Ezha*, *Muher* and Mesqan all Occidental Guragina varieties.

The other sign on a hotel with similar Ethiopic and Latin script is given in (17) which pragmatically shows competition with other people in the same business in the town:

(18)	Ethiopic Script	Latin Script
	ስ ራ ኖ ሆቴል	SIRANO HOTEL
	Sira-no həUtel	sɨra-no həUtel
	reach-3PL	reach-3PL
	'Reach them Hotel'	

Sirano is a word used to express competition; it could be a competition for the market or a status. It implies that the hotel is below other hotels either in the quality of the building or in the earnings it brings to the owner of the hotel. There is a personification here for the hotel to compete against the others (buildings or their owners). Structurally, *Sirano* is the only Guragina in the phrase and it consists of morphemes *sira* 'reach (imperative) and –*no* 'third person plural object - them'.

Under Section 2.1, we have seen the linguistic representations in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite. We found that Mareqo was not represented and Qabena was found only on one occasion among the samples. Guragina was used as the head of most signs with the complements being either Amharic or English. The Guragina terms expressed wishes (see Examples 4 *jəhɨmdar,* and 8 *jɨsreʃə*), ambitions (see Examples *3 tɨglu, 4 jəhɨmdarb* and 17 *sɨrano*), success/happiness (Example 15 *sarəndəm)*, surprises (Example 2 *wəguʃ*) and pride (example 14 jə-*aba-nda həute*l and 16 *soressa həutel*).

Language and Identity

Language is often used to communicate layers of identities such as linguistic, group, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious to mention a few among others.

Sociocultural identity

Based on the data from the signs collected, we grouped the identities reflected into two: sociocultural and religious. The socio-cultural section discussed in-group identification with signs used such as ethnicity, a particular language or dialect, cultural names and objects used as signs.

A) Group identity marking with signs

The same word with a different inflectional affix is used in another business name below:

(19)   ሳፈም   ልዩ   የ ጉራጌ   ከትፎ ቤት

       Sarem   lɨju   jə-gurage   kɨtfo bet

       delight.1SG.PST special GEN-Gurage   kitfo house

       'I am delighted a special Gurage Kitfo House'

Kitfo is a special Gurage dish made of minced meat, butter, and other spices. In fact, it can be made of cabbage or lentil in the absence of meat. The word is *kitfʷə* in Occidental Guragina but *kitfo* is used by Amharic speakers and speakers of a few Guragina varieties, such as Kistane. Its name is *wəllanda* in Mesk'an. *Wəllanda* in Occidental Gurage is a variety of *Kitfo* with a small amount of butter in it.

The only Guragina term in this business name is *sarem* 'I am delighted' and the remaining words are all Amharic. In fact, *bet* 'house' has the same form in Amharic and Guragina, but here it should be an Amharic word because so far, we have seen that the mixing pattern seems not to allow a Guragina term to come at the end of the labels.

A few hotels of high standard use both local languages such as Guragina and Amharic, and an international language such as English. Some of such hotel names are discussed below. The first, the name of a high standard hotel in Wolkite is given in (19).

(20)   ***Label in Ethiopic***   ***Label in Latin***

ye ʤ ካ የ ተ ን ቢ ሆቴል   Yejoka Hote

jə-əʤ-oka jətənbi həUtel   jəʤoka həUtel

GEN-hand-stabbed welcome Hotel   'Yejoka Hotel'

'Yejoka Welcome Hotel'

Yejoka is a place where Gurage people meet to settle sociopolitical problems with their own traditional court. It is in situated in the Chaha district. The place got its name from a big oak tree of which one of its branches has bent down hence touching the ground. Tree branches in Guragina have a parallel name with the human hand: əʤ 'hand'. *Wəka* literally means 'stabbed,' but it can also mean 'to put branches or roots of a plant down'. Thus, it seems that the hotel's name *Yejoka* is used as a means of reflecting cultural identity on one hand and to attract clients on the assumption that they may gather to dine in the hotel as they do gather to solve varieties of social problems in *Yejoka*.

Unlike other linguistic landscapes we have seen so far, *Yejoka Hotel* has two Guragina words but only one is English. *Yejoka* is the actual name of the hotel but it also adds a welcoming message *jətənbi* 'welcome' between *Yejoka* and 'Hotel', which is English. Yet, the second Guragina word *jətənbi* 'welcome' is omitted in the English translation version hence conforming to code missing the pattern.

(21)   ***Label in Ethiopic***   ***Label in Latin***

የ ብሳ ቢ   ሆቴል   YEBSABI HOTEL

 jə-bsa-bi həUtel   jə-bsa-bi həUtel

 3SG-come-MAL hotel   3SG-come-MAL hotel

  'Let it come to my disadvantage (self-cursing[4])'

        'Welcome Hotel'

Yebsabi is the same term we have seen as a second word in 'Yejoka ***yetenbi*** Hotel'. It means 'Welcome' in Muher and Dobbi Guragina varieties. Here, we observe not only market competitions but also ethno-

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[4] See details on self-cursing in Fekede 2018: 147-149,

linguistic vitalization where the different Guragina variety speakers are trying to reflect their linguistic identity within Gurage with language use.

B) **Use of title names for cultural identity**

We also came across hotel names having human title names discussed in (21) and (22) below.

(21)　　　ዳሞ አጋታ ካ ፌና　ምግብ ቤት

Damo agata kafe-na　mɨgɨb-bet

Damo Agata Cafe-CON restaurant

'Damo Agata Café and Restaurant'

The word damo is used as a title often for noblemen and tribal kings. Agata is a proper name meaning 'It is a heyday for him'. The Damo Agata cafe and restaurant makes a tantalizing promise that the business center shall make one a noble. In fact, it can also be a label named after the name with the title of the owner of the hotel.

Structurally, the first and the second words (title-proper name) are Guragina; the third word 'café' is English but with Amharic coordinating conjunction marker –na 'and'; and finally, mɨgɨb-bet 'food-house' or 'restaurant' is an Amharic compound word. Thus, the linguistic sign consists of word mixes from Guragina, English, and Amharic. In fact, a mix of a free morpheme, 'café', and a bound morpheme –na is also made.

The other business center with the title name is Shakach Migib-bet shown in (22) below:

(22)　　　ሻካች ምግብ ቤት

ʃakaʧ mɨgɨb-bet

'Shakach Restaurant'

Shakach is a title name given often to elders who are renowned for arbitrating individuals and groups that have quarreled. It is this title name that is given to a restaurant. There are two reasons why the restaurant has got this name. First, the owner of the restaurant has the Shakach title hence the hotel is named after his title name. In this sense, ʃakaʧ mɨgɨb-bet refers to a restaurant belonging to the person called Shakach. It is important to note that title names in Gurage can be used without a proper name. This is true if there is no ambiguity in the sense that there is no

other individual called by that title during a conversation. In case there are two persons with the same title names, the title name has to be used with a proper name as in Shakach Menuta and Shakach Zeberga. The second option is that Shakach is given to the restaurant figuratively. People who crossed one another negotiate in the Shakach restaurant where the best dishes are served. In other words, it assumes that 'food is a negotiator.'

Unlike in Damo Agata, the Shakach mɨgɨb-bet has only one Guragina term, only the title Shakach. The compound word mɨgɨb-bet 'restaurant' functioning as a complement is Amharic.

C) Ensete varieties as signs

Another feature of the signs on business centers in Wolkite is the use of Ensete plant varieties names to the business centers. Gurage people are known for Ensete production and they are called by Shak (1966) 'the people of Ensete Culture'. This culture, therefore, is reflected in the signs used. We present only two of them here.

The first of the two, Astara bar and restaurant is shown in (23) below:

23) **Ethiopic script**   **Latin script**

አስታራ ባ ር ና ሬ ስ ቶ ራ ን ት   BAR & REST**U**RANT[sic]

Astara bar-na restaurant   bar and restaurant

Astara bar-and restaurant   bar and restaurant

'Astara Bar and Restaurant'

It is worth mentioning that Gurage people's lives are highly dependent on the Ensete plant. Ensete is grown in most parts of Gurage except in the extreme highland areas. In fact, Ensete is part of their culture. Many of their cultural foods and their artifacts are made of the Ensete plant. Ensete has many varieties and the varieties have different roles including medicinal values. Thus, the varieties have a status assigned to them by the community. Among the highly valued Ensete varieties are Astara and Gwarye, both of which are medicinal.

Astara has the medicinal value of mending broken bones of human beings. So, if someone has a fracture or a broken body part, first (s)he gets first aid from traditional doctors called ədʒ kənə literally 'right hand', and then (s)he is prescribed by the traditional doctors the Ensete varieties, often Astara at the beginning stage and then Gwarye. The former has body softening while the latter body building properties.

Thus, Astara restaurant is used as a label in the sense the foods in that cafeteria are as medicinal as Astara. It is important to note that the roots of Astara or Gwarye are not yet commercialized and cannot be found in bars and restaurants. In the Latin version of the sign, the name Astara is missing probably intentionally because the translation is meant for non-local people or foreigners. Unfortunately, the word restaurant is misspelled in the translation version as 'resturant [SIC]'.

Surprisingly, Gwarye is used as a business name for a cafe selling juice as shown in (24) below:

(24)   ጓርየ   ጭማቂ   ቤት

g^{w}arjə   ʧʼɨmakʼi   bet

ensete.variety   juice   house

"Gwarye juice house"

A Gwarye variety of the Enset plant is often used as a food by cooking its root and by scrapping its stem. No part of it is drunk as juice. It is strange why Gwarye is used as a business name of a juice-selling house. It seems that the word is used for cultural significance; a vitalization of Gurage culture rather than advertising the quality of the juice sold in the cafe. Structurally, the initial word gwarjə is Guragina, ʧʼɨmakʼi 'juice' is Amharic but bet 'house' is common to Guragina and Amharic, in fact, a Semitic origin as we find it in Arabic and Hebrew.

Religious identity expressed with signs

Linguistic signs used in Wolkite reflect religious identities. The basic strategies used to do so include using religious personal names, Biblical or Qur'an names, names of Holy places and others. Most Muslim hotels have specific labels expressing that they sell Muslim foods. They often have signs of the moon and a star. On the contrary, most hotels serving food and services to Christians do not have any labels or signs showing the Christian religion. It seems that the default is a Christian Hotel. However, the butchers' selling meat for Christians have to label a cross sign on their butchers'. The linguistic signs below are a few examples showing religious identities:

A) **Signs reflecting Muslim identity**

(25)   *መን ትሐዛ* መስ ሊም ምግ ብ ቤት

            muntɨhaza muslim mɨgɨb bet

            'Muntihaza Muslim Restaurant'

Munthaza is a Muslim female's proper name. The restaurant is hus given a name after its owner Munthaza with additional information Muslim. What is more, signs of a moon and a star are used to emphasize religious identity.

The restaurant in (26) is named after Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. Besides, it has both signs (a moon and star) and the label Muslim.

(26)   *ሪ ያ ድ* የ መስ ሊ ም ም ግ ብ ቤት

            rijad   jə-muslim mɨgɨb bet

            Riyadh GEN-Muslim food house

            'Riyadh Muslim Restaurant'

The third example (27 below) showing the Muslim religion is a hotel named after Medina, a Holy place in Mecca. It also has the label ye-Muslim- 'of Muslims' and signs of the moon and a star. Further information provided includes that the hotel provides a place of prayers in addition to accommodations. Here is the linguistic label:

(27) *መዲ ና* የ መስ ሊ ም ሆቴል ፡ የ መኝ ታ አ ገ ል ግሎት አ ለ ን ፤
      የ መስ ገ ጃ በ ታ አ ለ ን

        mədina jə-muslim həUtel jə-məɲta agəlglot   allə-n
        jə-məsgədʒa bota   allə-n

        Median of-Muslim hotel   of-bed service   exist-1po
          of-praying place exist-1po

       'Medina Muslims Hotel, we provide accommodations and
          praying place services'

B) **Signs reflecting Christian identity**

Signs used to show Christian identity are words from the bible, more specifically from Hebrew expressing concepts such as wealth and wisdom or knowledge. Two examples are given below:

(28)   *ሮሆቦት* ኮስሞቲክ   የመሽራ ቬሎና የሚዜ ልብሶች
        እናከራያለን

rɨhobot kosmotik jə-muʃɨra velo-na jə-mize lɨbsoʧ
ɨnakkərajallən

Rehoboth cosmetic GEN-bride Velo- GEN-bridegroom
clothing rent

   'Rehoboth cosmetics; we rent bride's and groom's
clothes'

Rehoboth is a Hebrew word with the meaning 'It [God] has broadened for us' or 'things became plenty for us.' Hence, the assumption behind the label in (28) is that the people are declaring to the public that 'by the power of God their business has broadened and that they became rich'.

In the linguistic landscape, we do not find any Guragina term. The initial position which is often occupied by Guragina is replaced by a Hebrew word to magnify religious identity rather than ethnic one. The second-word cosmetic is a loan word from English and all the others are Amharic words.

(29)   *ይዲድያ* የስጦታ እና የወጥ ቤት እቃዎች መሸጫ

jidɨdɨja jə-sɨt'ota inna jə-wət'-bet ik'awoʧ məʃəʧ'a

Yididya GEN-gift and GEN-stew-house utensils
sale-shop

'Yididya gifts and kitchen utensils sales shop'

Yididiya is a biblical name. It is a name given to a woman who was supposed to be wise or 'one whose mind was bright' probably towards understanding the words of God. When we come to the sign in the business name here, it is not known if it signifies that the owner of the shop is liked by God or is wise, but it certainly signifies Christianity. A single word out of the whole chunk that accompanies the word is used for the purpose. Like in (28) above there is no Guragina term in the linguistic signs in (29). Except for the Hebrew origin word Yididiya, all the words in the name are Amharic.

It seems that the linguistic landscape shows either ethnic identity (which may include cultural and linguistic) or religious identity but not both at a time. In fact, it was possible to use traditional religious names such as demuamwit 'god of fertility' or wak' 'god of wealth,' if both religious and ethnic identity were sought to be reflected.

Language structure used in Signs

We have concomitantly discussed language structures such as cod-mixing. In this sub-section, we will summarize and generalize the structural patterns of language used in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite.

There are no monolingual signs in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite. The signs are written in two languages and scripts as in (1) for Qabena where Amharic is used in the first line and Qabena version in the second line. In almost all cases, the signs contain mixed codes within the same utterance. There are different types of mixes including a morpheme as in -na 'and' is mixed with the English lexical item café-na (Example 21), a single lexical item (Examples 1-18), two lexical items from the same language as in the case of the Guragina terms (Examples 19 & 21).

Syntactically, the first word in the signs is Guragina and all the others are Amharic, English, or a mix of the two. If the sign has more than one Guragina term in the sign, both terms come at the initial position consecutively and other language terms follow. We can summarize this as follows:'

Guragina (Guragina) -other language(s):

  ይስሬሽ የ ሀን፶ መሳ ሪ ያ ና ሽቀ ጣሽ ቀ ጥ (8)

  ምርግግ ል ኳን ዳ + **(10)**

  የ ጀካ የ ተን ቢ ሆቴል (19)

  ዳሞ አ ጋ ታ ካ ፌ ና ምግ ብ ቤት (21)

Religious (religious) -other language(s):

  ርሀበ ት   ኮ ስ ሞቲ ክ   የ መሽ ራ   ቼሎና   የ ማዜ   ል ብሶ ች
  እ ና ከ ራ ያ ለ ን (28)

  ሪ ያ ድ የ መስ ሊ ም ምግ ብ ቤት (26)

We have also two scripts in use in the linguistic landscape: the Ethiopic and Latin-based Roman script. We did not come across the two scripts mixed within a lexical item, but both are used in the same signage often the Ethiopic coming first and the Roman script next be it presented horizontally or vertically.

Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of this study was to investigate the way signs on buildings and roadsides in a multilingual Wolkite town are used to express identity (linguistic, religious, and ethnic), and other layers of meanings, and to describe how the language used in the linguistic landscape is structurally arranged.

The study showed, as is the case in the general language use in the Zone, the linguistic landscape in Wolkite is dominated by Amharic. Many posters, shops and hotel signs are written in Amharic. The reason to use Amharic in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite is manifold. First, Amharic is the language of wider communication so clients or customers can easily understand and be attracted by the posted signs or advertising posters. Second, Amharic is the language of administration, education, and media, so the language of commerce and advertisement is dominantly Amharic. Amharic is dominantly used even in other parts of Ethiopia where local languages are official languages in regional states such as in Oromiya (Alemayehu & Takele, 2016; Abdu, 2022) and Tigray (Lanza & Hirut 2009).

Guragina varieties were marginally used to construct linguistic, cultural, and religious identity, similar to other findings in Alemayehu and Takele (2016), who report Afan Oromo was used for symbolic purposes, to express wishes, and aspirations and to attract business. Qabena was recorded in one instance, but Mareqo was not visible in the linguistic landscape of Wolkite. The former was less visible for demographic reasons, but the latter was not visible due to demographic reasons as well as the geographical distance from which Mareqo speakers live.

In trademarks, posters, and labels, we find Amharic, Guragina, and English mixed. The mixture is systematically arranged in that the first word is often Guragina while the other words are Amharic, which sometimes is mixed with English. When business people felt that a product or a service might be sold to foreigners, the linguistic landscape consisted of multilingual labels: Guragina and/or Amharic and English. What is more, in most cases, bi-script (Ethiopic and Latin) was used.

The linguistic landscape affirms that the people in Wolkite would like to use their language in public spaces and institutional settings. Therefore, concerned officials and stakeholders should consider the use of Guragina in official settings.

The study of the linguistic landscape in more detail with additional empirical data can help to uncover diverse multilingual situations and the language use patterns in Gurage in general and Wolkite town in particular. As sociolinguistics and political situations are dynamic, the linguistic landscape in towns is ever-changing. This parallel dynamism opens a way for the development of the emerging field of the linguistic landscape.

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