

The Colombian Linguistic Landscape: A Study of Commercial Signs

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Abstract : This study documents and demonstrates the profound impact of the high status of American English and culture in Colombian commercial landscape due to the globalization and commodification of English. It also documents and describes how Colombian advertisers make use of various language and visual mechanisms in the commercial linguistic landscape to convey messages, create an image with which the target audience can identify, and build a relationship with that target audience. The data (in the form of pictures) were collected in different cities in Colombia and were classified and organized into different categories for the reliability and validity of the analysis. The research questions were: do the ubiquity and high status of American English and culture play a major role in the Colombian commercial linguistic landscape? If so, how?, what roles do national and local culture and language (Spanish) play in the commercial linguistic landscape?, and what different linguistic and visual strategies do Colombian advertisers employ to reach their target audience? Based on data analysis and results, American and local culture and icons play a major role when Colombian advertisers create and design their commercial logos and ads to get consumers' attention and establish a rapport with them in a successful way. In order to achieve their objectives, Colombian advertisers rely on creative linguistic and visual techniques in their ads, such as puns, humor, irony, comparisons, metaphors, mocking, exaggeration, parody, personification, sarcasm, satire, allusion, onomatopoeias, and imitation (copycat or cloning).

Keywords : Colombian ads, linguistic landscape, rhetorical devices, sociolinguistics

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