

Political and administrative processes behind street renaming in Poland

Małgorzata Fabiszak, Anna Weronika Brzezińska, Patryk Dobkiewicz, Tomasz Dyrmo

This talk looks at a specific area of Linguistic Landscape studies focusing on street names (e.g. Azaryahu 1996, 1997, 2011, Ben Rafael et al. 2006, Berg and Vuolteenaho 2009). We analyze the street name changes in two cities: Zbąszyń (112 streets in 2018) and Poznań, Poland (2700 streets in 2018) over the span of 100 years. The choice of locations is dictated by the fact that Poland has undergone several changes in state ideology, which were reflected in efforts to purge, create and control the semiotic commemorative cityscape. Our research question is whether and if so how the renaming procedures differ between cities of different sizes and in different periods. We combine methods drawing on geographical information systems; ethnographic interviews with administrative officials and NGO representatives involved in the renamings; and media analysis. In doing so we employ Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak 2009) as an analytic framework for data analysis. The spatio-temporal patterns of power struggle over the commemorative cityscape show certain similarities across various periods and some differences relative to the size of the city.

References

- Azaryahu, M. 1996. "The power of commemorative street names". *Environment and Planning D* 14: 311–330.
- Azaryahu, M. 1997 "German Reunification and the Politics of Street Names: The Case of East Berlin". *Political Geography* 16: 479–93.
- Azaryahu, M. 2011. "The Politics of Commemorative Street Renaming: Berlin 1945–1948". *Journal of Historical Geography* 37:483-492.
- Ben-Rafael, E., Shohamy, E., Amara, M.H., and Trumper-Hecht, N. 2006. Linguistic landscape as symbolic construction of the public space: The case of Israel. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 3 (1), 7-30.
- Berg, Lawrence D. and Jani Vuolteenaho. (eds.). 2009. *Critical Toponymies. The contested politics of place naming*. New York: Routledge.
- Reisigl, Martin and Ruth Wodak. 2009. The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, 2nd edn. London: Sage. 87–121.