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**Media perception of transformations in the commemorative cityscape**

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This paper is a part of a project “**Memory and ideology in the linguistic landscape: Commemorative (re)naming in East Germany and Poland 1916-2016”.** By integrating insights from linguistic landscape research and collective memory studies we propose the concept of the **commemorative cityscape,**understood as a constantly negotiated and renegotiated spatial expression of the collective memory and identity of the city inhabitants that is influenced by the socio-political and ideological factors at the national level. Commemorative renaming can thus be treated as a “battle for representation” (Trumper-Hecht 2009:238), a “barometer” of political changes and a ‘tool’ for creating social identity (Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska 2011:165; Moszberger, Rieger, Daul 2002:5; Azaryahu 1986, 1996, 1997, 2011a,b). In our talk, we focus on the instrumentalisation of the commemorative cityscape as an exercise in active forgetting (A. Assman 2010) or repressive erasure (Connerton 2008).

Our project takes a perspective of historical socio-linguistics by focusing on the public perception of the changes in street names in three Polish and three German cities (Poznań, Zbąszyń, Leipzig, Annabel-Bucholtz, Frakfurt(Oder)/Słubice) as represented in the regional newspapers and the associated internet information sites. The pivotal years of 1919, 1939, 1945 and 1989 mark historical turning points for street renaming in Polish cities. Within the last 70 years, a more detailed division is possible: 1948-1949 (Stalinist era), 1956 (Khrushchev’s Thaw), and then 2007 and 2015 when Law and Justice governments came to power and promoted their own historical policy. For Germany, the crucial threshold years are 1933, 1947, 1989 and street renaming – as well as discussions about commemorative semiotic practices continue to take place.

The collected articles will be analysed within a Discourse Historical Approach (DHA, Wodak & Meyer 2009, Wodak & Forchtner 2014), which views texts as connected to discourses and interpreted within their socio-historical and current contexts. The identification of the recurrent themes in the argumentation strategies (= topoi) as well as the positioning of the social agents revealed through the analysis of the strategies of nomination, predication, intensification, mitigation and framing allows us to reconstruct the media debates concerning the transformations of the commemorative cityscape in ideology-driven attempts at revising social identities.

**Key words**: street renaming, media perception, collective memory, DHA, linguistic landscape

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