



Embroidering Growth: A Narrative Inquiry into an EFL Teacher's Development through Linguistic Landscapes

Bordando el crecimiento: Una investigación narrativa sobre el desarrollo de un profesor de EFL a través de paisajes lingüísticos

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Abstract

This study explores the Linguistic Landscapes (LL)-oriented professional development of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher through narrative inquiry. Focusing on her LL-centered growth in an educational setting, it captures her personal narratives to understand the impact of LL activities on her professional development. Utilizing interview, narrative frames, an open-ended survey, and an online presentation, the research tracks her journey from learning about LL to integrating it into teaching, conducting research, and writing a thesis. The findings are presented in a narrative through the metaphor of crafting a tapestry, symbolizing the participant's professional journey. In-depth analysis reveals that the EFL teacher skillfully wove together the LL-centered classroom practices and research insights, creating an intricate tapestry of her professional development and showcasing her unwavering commitment to growth and the transformative impact of LL on her teaching journey. The study offers implications for language teachers' development and future research recommendations.

Keywords: Linguistic landscapes; English as a foreign language; Teacher education; Professional development

Resumen

Este estudio explora el desarrollo profesional orientado a los Paisajes Lingüísticos (PL) de una profesora de inglés como lengua extranjera (ILE) mediante una investigación narrativa. El estudio capta sus narrativas personales para comprender el impacto de las actividades de PL en su desarrollo profesional. Utilizando entrevistas, marcos narrativos, una encuesta abierta y una presentación en línea, la investigación sigue su trayectoria desde el aprendizaje del PL hasta su integración en la enseñanza, la realización de investigaciones y la redacción de una tesis. Los hallazgos se presentan en una narración a través de la metáfora de la elaboración de un tapiz. El análisis revela que la profesora de ILE entretejió hábilmente las prácticas de aula centradas en el aprendizaje permanente y los conocimientos de investigación, y creando un intrincado tapiz de su desarrollo profesional. El estudio ofrece implicaciones para el desarrollo de los profesores de idiomas y recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave: Paisaje lingüístico; Inglés como lengua extranjera; Formación del profesorado; Desarrollo profesional



INTRODUCTION

Linguistic Landscapes (LL) is concerned with the systematic analysis of linguistic elements in both public and private spaces, expressed in various forms, including words, images, signs, and graffiti. Alongside the examination of road signs, billboards, street and place names (Landry & Bourhis, 1997), LL also explores the underlying motivations and ideologies that shape the diverse range of language expressions found in these environments (Malinowski, 2015). This field of study holds significant importance as it illuminates the social and cultural structures of language, offering a fresh perspective within the realm of linguistics.

In recent years, there has been significant growth in the field of LL, which is evident from the increased number of international conferences and dedicated publications in this area (e.g., Krompák et al., 2022; Melo-Pfeifer, 2023). As a result, researchers from various disciplines have been drawn to LL, contributing to the expansion of theoretical and methodological knowledge in the field. In a recent analysis by Shohamy and Pennycook (2022), four main directions of development have been identified: geopolitical, semiotic, ethnographic, and pedagogical. The geopolitical expansion signifies a shift from solely focusing on languages and written elements in signage, primarily in Western contexts, to encompassing countries in the Global South. This broadening of scope recognizes the significance of studying languages and signs in diverse global locations. The second category goes beyond a narrow concentration on language elements within specific spaces and instead perceives the entire physical environment as a sign. These studies emphasize the inclusion of multiple modes of communication, such as sound and smell, thus expanding the concept beyond language and writing alone. The third group takes an ethnographic approach to interpret LL elements. These studies highlight the significance of contextual analysis, historical development, the intentions of the sign producers, the target audience, as well as the perspectives of both relevant and irrelevant observers. Finally, pedagogical studies explore the integration of LL into educational contexts and its potential to enhance students' awareness of multilingualism in their immediate surroundings, such as school environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The advancement and diversification in the field has brought about new opportunities for research and exploration in the realm of second language teaching and learning. Scholars have highlighted the potential of LL in developing pragmatic skills through the analysis of texts with various social functions, for contributing

to critical multimedia literacy skills, and facilitating meaningful interactions in language learning processes by fostering awareness of the sociocultural and symbolic power of language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Chesnut et al., 2013; Hancock, 2022; Solmaz, 2021). Previous research has also emphasized the significant contribution of LL in various domains, such as critical language awareness, language development, high order and critical thinking skills, translangual and transcultural competences, identity positioning, and acquisition of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competences (Elola & Prada, 2021; Kruszynska & Dooly, 2023; Malinowski et al., 2020; Niedt & Seals, 2020; Solmaz & Przymus, 2021). Additionally, LL has been proposed as an effective means to bridge the gap between the classroom and the wider community, allowing learners to delve into the symbolic motivations, multi-functional roles, and sociocultural dimensions of language(s) while adopting the role of “language detectives” (Roos & Nicholas, 2019; Rowland, 2013; Sayer, 2010). Similarly, Chern and Dooley (2014) introduced English literacy walks, which involved students interacting with and analyzing written materials in real-world contexts and provided opportunities for them to enhance their language skills and critical thinking abilities. Despite the political complexity of LL as an ideologically loaded arena, the authors recognized its potential for language learning in contexts where teachers previously expressed concerns about the limited availability of English input outside the classroom. More recently, Roos and Nicholas (2019) conducted a study showing that engaging with LLs not only enhanced young learners’ language learning but also facilitated their understanding of their own culture, language, and personal identity. Maxim (2020) focused on the study abroad experiences of US undergraduate students in Austria and found that LL-based activities outside the classroom fostered German learners’ autonomous and collaborative learning skills. Gorter et al. (2021), on the other hand, presented multiple cases demonstrating the integration of LL into Spanish instruction at different levels. This integration resulted in heightened student recognition of semiotic elements in their surroundings beyond the classroom. Additionally, Bal (2023) reported that the incorporation of LL into high school curricula in Türkiye led to not only improvements in language proficiency but also a deeper understanding of LLs and related concepts among learners. These findings provide evidence supporting the idea that LLs offer valuable possibilities for language learning, despite their original intention not being focused on language instruction (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008; Malinowski et al., 2020; Solmaz & Przymus, 2021).

Another area of growing interest in the field of LL research revolved around the domain of pre- and in-service teacher education. Grima’s (2020) study, for

example, delved into the examination of house names in Malta, revealing that language teacher candidates actively engaged in metalinguistic activities. These activities proved instrumental in their ability to reflect upon and interpret the creative use of language. Similarly, in the Chinese context, EFL teachers acknowledged the educational value of the LL, albeit with a limited acceptance of Chinese English appearing on signs (Shang & Xie, 2020). The exploration of LL-focused research in teacher education settings has also led to the emergence of additional resources, including guidebooks that provide practice-oriented LL activities for English language classrooms (Solmaz & Przymus, 2021). Furthermore, Solmaz (2023) recently reported that involving EFL student teachers in LL-focused tasks and fieldwork resulted in a deeper comprehension of English as a lingua franca and Global Englishes, as well as a heightened awareness of the diverse expressions of English in everyday contexts. Similarly, several studies have noted that teachers recognized the advantages of LLs in establishing meaningful connections between the classroom learning environment and the external world (Brinkmann et al., 2022; Lourenço & Melo-Pfeifer, 2023). The research in this area was further advanced by the publication of an edited volume by Melo-Pfeifer (2023). This volume delved specifically into the topic, deepening the understanding of students and educators regarding the nuanced nature of LL research. Melo-Pfeifer (2023) demonstrated how LLs can promote multilingual education, especially within teacher education programs. The book goes beyond superficial observations, exploring the intricate layers that shape the complex interplay of language in various contexts, thereby making a value-added contribution to the field.

Despite the recent advancements in the field, there remains a dearth of comprehensive investigations into the instructional practices and firsthand experiences of language teachers who have successfully integrated LL into their classrooms. Informed by the prior research in the field and through the lens of an EFL teacher, this study aims to explore the professional development of EFL teachers incorporating LL into their pedagogical practices. By utilizing a narrative inquiry methodology, the study aims to offer in-depth insights into the EFL teacher's journey of acquiring knowledge about LL, implementing LL-oriented classroom practices, approaching LL from both a teacher and a researcher perspective, and reflecting on her professional development.

METHODOLOGY

Narrative inquiry served as the primary research approach to delve into an EFL teacher's professional development activities and her LL-oriented practices within

an educational context. This approach focuses on exploring individuals' lived experiences through storytelling and personal accounts, enabling a profound investigation of the intricate perspectives and realities of the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It offers a lens through which we perceive the world, where "experience is mediated by story" (Xu & Connelly, 2009, p. 221). The primary advantage of narrative inquiry lies in its ability to highlight how individuals use storytelling to make sense of their experiences in fields of study where gaining insights from the perspectives of those directly involved is crucial (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Narrative inquiry has been shown to be valuable in exploring the professional journeys and trajectories of teachers in educational research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Tsui, 2007), and when applied to the development of foreign language teachers, it has the potential to shape global perspectives and foster cultural exchange and intercultural understanding (Xu & Connelly, 2009).

In case study research, it is crucial for researchers to carefully select cases that offer valuable and insightful information as these cases allow for a thorough exploration of the important issues under investigation (Wan, 2019). In this particular study, a purposive sampling method was employed to ensure a representative sample. Esra (pseudonym), a twenty-six-year-old EFL teacher from southeastern Türkiye, was invited to participate. Esra grew up in a multilingual environment and received her education there until completing high school. She then successfully passed the university entrance exam and pursued English language teaching at a state university in a metropolitan city within the same region. After graduation, Esra began teaching English at a high school in her hometown. Later on, she completed an MA program in English language teaching, during which she wrote a thesis on the integration of LL into high school English classrooms. To protect the confidentiality of the EFL teacher participant, the specific location of Esra's origin and workplace has intentionally been omitted throughout the paper. Esra was chosen as the participant due to several factors, including her educational background, growing familiarity with LL, experience in developing and implementing LL-centered pedagogical practices, and overall suitability for representing EFL teachers who integrate LL into classrooms.

I employed a range of data collection methods for the present case study, including conducting a semi-structured interview, administering an open-ended survey, utilizing the recording of an online presentation, and employing narrative frames. First, I chose to utilize the semi-structured interview due to its inherent flexibility, which allowed me to ask follow-up questions and provided the interviewee with opportunities to elaborate on their responses. I carefully formulated

the interview questions to align with the research objectives of the study (see Appendix A). Second, I created an open-ended survey to collect insights from the participant regarding her familiarity with LL, perceptions of LL's usefulness, opinions on integrating LL into the class, and intentions for future use of LL materials. Third, I utilized the transcribed text from the recording of the participant's presentation at a digital symposium that specifically emphasized teachers' LL practices, reflections as well as the benefits and challenges they faced along the way. Finally, I collected data through the use of narrative frames, which are structured templates for written stories containing a series of incomplete sentences and blank spaces of varying lengths (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). The purpose of the narrative frames is to guide participants in creating a cohesive story based on their experiences and reflections, the goal of which is to align their narratives with the research goals. To facilitate this process, I utilized the narrative frame, allowing my teacher participant to visually and introspectively explore her experiences through storytelling. With the aim of achieving this aim, I constructed a set of twenty-five narrative frames in the form of sentence starters and paragraph templates, which served as prompts for the participant (see Appendix B).

Considering the collected data consisting of narration-oriented semi-structured interviews and narrative frames as the primary sources, I employed a paradigmatic approach to analyze the data. This involved subjecting the narratives to paradigmatic analysis in order to identify common aspects across the dataset (Polkinghorne, 1995). Carefully selecting the narratives from transcribed interviews and frames as well as transcribed presentation and responses from the survey, I organized them in a manner that aligns with the objectives of this investigation. These objectives include gaining insights into Esra's world of teaching and learning, her language teaching journey, her introduction to LL as a pedagogical material, her thoughts and motivations behind LL-oriented practices, and her strategic teaching and research efforts as social and educational activities. To interpret the interplay between contextual factors and Esra's agency in designing and implementing LL-centered activities in her classroom, I reconstructed narratives thematically, following the methodology of previous research (e.g., Gao, 2010). Through an iterative process of coding, categorizing, and re-organizing the data, I associated specific instances with broader concepts, allowing for exploration beyond predetermined themes. However, to capture the changes in Esra's perceptions and practices over time and to ensure clarity, I carefully maintained the sequential coherence of the narratives and organized the data extracts chronologically under each heading as much as possible. This approach provided a comprehensive and holistic

understanding of how the EFL teacher structured her experiences and identities through her personal encounters with LL-centered practices. In the end, the analysis of data revealed a single major theme that centered on the participant's professional development in relation to her LL experiences and LL-oriented classroom practices. Drawing from the approaches employed in narrative analysis (see Barkhuizen et al., 2014, pp. 81-84), I employed the identification and interpretation of a metaphor, namely "Tapestry", to represent the emerging theme. This approach allowed me to demonstrate the intricate and multifaceted nature of the participant's LL-centered professional journey.

FINDINGS

In this section, I present the findings of the current study. I begin by providing background information on Esra, the solo participant in this research. Then, I proceed to cover the major theme that has emerged from the gathered data, employing the metaphor of 'tapestry' to enhance the presentation and understanding of these findings.

Following her high school graduation, Esra transitioned to university by enrolling in the Department of English Language Teaching at a state university near her hometown. Throughout her academic journey, she took a diverse range of courses that covered various aspects of the field, which included skill-oriented classes, specialized curriculum areas like teaching methodologies and approaches to teaching English, as well as other subject-specific topics. Esra then embarked on internships in local schools, which lasted for two semesters, and completed her program of study. Building on her experiences, she further pursued a Master's degree in the same subject. Her research focused on the incorporation of Linguistic Landscapes (LL) into high school contexts, resulting in a thesis that showcased her knowledge in the field. I met Esra in the later stages of her undergraduate studies. She enrolled in three courses that I taught, and as she progressed to the thesis stage of her MA, I assumed the role of her supervisor. Currently in her mid-20s, Esra has established herself as an English teacher at a high school in her hometown. Her current goal is to pursue a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics/Second Language Acquisition and Teaching as she continues to advance her career and fulfill her passion for language education.

The primary focus of the emerging theme revolves around Esra's professional growth and development experiences in relation to Linguistic Landscapes (LL), symbolized by the metaphor of a "tapestry". Esra's journey began when she

attended a professional development workshop for English teachers, organized by two academics from a nearby state university. It was during this workshop that Esra first encountered the concept of LL and realized its potential as a valuable resource for language teaching and learning. In her open-ended survey response, Esra expressed, “Before that, I was completely unaware of the existence of LL or its applicability as teaching materials or in the classroom.” This initial encounter acted as the loom on which Esra’s professional growth was intricately woven. The workshop acted as the catalyst, igniting a fresh perspective on language, its functions, presence and profound influence in everyday contexts.

Kindling a sense of curiosity and fascination, Esra felt fortunate to participate in a workshop that encouraged participants to apply their newfound knowledge in their own classes. This opportunity allowed her to further explore the relationship between language and its visual manifestations, viewing it from a pedagogical standpoint. As she noted in the interview, “It was particularly helpful for me because when I returned home, I searched for LL resources online and came across similar resources mentioned in the workshop, such as road signs, traffic signs, and street signs.” To implement what she had learned, Esra introduced these resources and engaging activities centered around language learning to her high school students. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, she successfully conducted these lessons in an online setting. By doing so, she added another layer to her teaching tapestry. For her in-classroom practices, she introduced LL to high school students through materials and a series of engaging activities in an online setting at the time of COVID-19. Adding another layer of thread to her tapestry, she participated in a digital symposium, where she presented her in-classroom practices alongside fellow teachers and professionals. During her presentation, she reflected on her own process of learning about LL and applying it into the classroom by stating:

I think it [incorporating LL activities into the class] raised my social awareness and provided me with a different perspective and viewpoint. I learned different dimensions of language and developed new materials. This experience allowed me to use different teaching methods and techniques, providing a pleasant experience for spending time with my students while focusing on the environment.

Becoming more attuned to the impact of language in society, Esra acquired a comprehensive understanding of language and its various dimensions while diversifying her instructional approaches to teaching language, thereby creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere. While acknowledging certain areas of development, Esra reflected during the interview that she realized her reliance on the

teachings of the workshop limited her exploration of LL: “I must admit that although I learned a lot from the workshop, my understanding of LL and its breadth was still limited. For my activities, I mostly focused on the concepts introduced during the workshop and didn’t go beyond that.” Essentially, she recognized that she had woven her tapestry with only a few select colors and a single set of threads, resulting in a restricted range of patterns and textures in the tapestry.

For Esra, attending the digital symposium provided a platform for presenters to exchange knowledge, pedagogical practices, and experiences. This event was a significant step towards creating a richer and more colorful tapestry in her professional development process. Esra vividly recalled the enthusiastic responses she received from fellow educators and aspiring teachers: “Some of them mentioned their interest in implementing similar activities in their own classrooms. So, I believe that my presentation was effective not only for myself but also for others.” The ripple effect of her presentation extended beyond her immediate circle of educators, which can be interpreted as a sign of the tapestry expanding beyond her journey, as her presentation inspired others to weave their own threads into their teaching practices.

A significant turning point in Esra’s professional development was when she decided to enhance her teaching practices and expand her knowledge in the field by enrolling in an MA program. This decision propelled her towards a deeper understanding of language pedagogy and research. Participating in MA classes helped her professional journey tapestry take shape and become more complex. Although there was no specific coursework dedicated to sociolinguistics, Esra encountered LL during her first semester. In a course that focused on reading articles written by prominent figures of the field and engaging in discussions based on them, an entire week was devoted to LL. This experience allowed her to discover the interdisciplinary nature of LL and its profound connections with various fields. She recalled her time and eloquently stated, “I took the opportunity to expand my theoretical knowledge by studying the background, origins, and connection of LL with multilingualism, language policy, education, and schoolscapes.” This enabled her to perceive LL from a broader perspective and grasp its multifaceted nature. In response to the narrative frames, she further expressed, “My initial knowledge of LL was practice-oriented thanks to the workshop experience. However, engaging in LL-related readings and discussions deepened my theoretical understanding of LL.” These quotes reveal that Esra’s foundation in the tapestry of LL stemmed from a practical standpoint. However, her academic pursuits pushed her to transcend the

boundaries of her prior knowledge, enriching her tapestry with intricate details and resulting in a more nuanced depiction of LL.

Esra achieved a significant milestone in her comprehension of LL during the end of her first semester of MA coursework. She crafted a literature review paper that specifically explored studies related to LL, enabling her to delve deeper into academic research through a firsthand approach. This endeavor not only enhanced her research skills but also familiarized her with the methodologies employed in LL research. Reflecting on the process, she stated, “I learned about the evolving process in LL studies, where qualitative perspectives gained prominence alongside quantitative methods as well as the multimodal and semiotic aspects of LL being further recognized.” Esra also acknowledged the importance of considering various modes of communication beyond language alone and observed the progress of the field in terms of both practical implementation and theoretical understanding. In response to a relevant narrative framework, she specified, “I understood that LL entails a more comprehensive perspective that embraces multimodality and the field deepened both in practice and theory.” This realization was particularly crucial for equipping her with the methodological tools and perspectives necessary to conduct her own research, akin to the intricate interlacing of threads in a tapestry. It proved especially valuable during her second semester when she had to carry out an investigation on a topic of her choice and present it in the form of an academic article. Aligned with her interests and future research goals, Esra viewed this as an opportunity to explore the impact of LL on her students’ language development, ultimately serving as a pilot study for her MA thesis investigation. To facilitate this study, she devised a research design that tasked her students with examining the LL of various countries in EFL contexts using *Google Street View* and engaging in discussions through a digital platform. She aimed that these LL-centered activities would foster an increased awareness of ELF among her students. Comparing her prior LL-focused teaching experiences, Esra made the following observation during the interview:

In my first attempt after the workshop, I focused on motivation and language skills since I felt uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the topic. However, after gaining more information and knowledge about LL, I integrated different aspects of LL including multilingualism, English as a lingua franca, and other cultural concepts, expanding the scope of my approach. Additionally, we discussed sign types such as top-down and bottom-up, which were not included in my initial activity for the symposium. After reading more about LL, I could better understand and implement these topics in my classroom practices, making a significant difference in my approach to LL.

Esra's narrow selection of colors and patterns in the tapestry (i.e., limited perspective on LL) gradually expanded as she incorporated diverse elements and perspectives such as multilingualism and ELF. This expansion allowed her to weave new patterns and techniques (i.e., top-down and bottom-up signs) into the tapestry, resulting in the growth and refinement of the design. However, she also faced difficulties in the areas of data analysis and effectively reporting her findings, which manifested as knots and tangles in the thread of the tapestry. "Writing an academic article for the first time was challenging", as Esra recalled during the interview. She specified, "Especially a qualitative paper, a type of research I wasn't really familiar with. I didn't really know how to incorporate my students' views and report in what I examined".

A significant milestone in her LL-oriented professional development came when she delved deeper into the design and implementation of her research for her MA thesis. This addition of a substantial thread to the tapestry of her professional journey further assisted her in building a more intricate and carefully woven pattern. During the interview, she expressed this situation by stating, "When I conducted my study, my previous practical and theoretical experience with LL greatly assisted me in many ways including students' expectations, anticipating potential questions, following a particular pedagogical model, designing methodology, collecting and analyzing data, and reporting them". As emphasized by Esra, each thread (i.e. experience) contributed to the overall design, serving as a valuable guiding force throughout the research process and enhancing her ability to navigate various aspects of her thesis academically. Esra also acknowledged the positive impact of her workplace environment by highlighting the interest and support she received from her peers and administrators throughout the process. She mentioned in a narrative frame, "My colleagues showed eagerness to learn more and expressed their interest to explore LL further. Besides, my school manager appreciated the new approach I implemented in my classroom, even observing some parts of the activities I designed for my students".

Reflecting on her journey from initially learning about LL to completing a thesis on the subject, Esra underwent significant professional development. This transformative process exemplified her unwavering dedication to personal growth, as she eloquently expressed:

I personally believe that I have gained experience and growth in my teaching profession and understanding of LL. Initially, it was just an in-classroom activity, and I was not fully familiar with the extended meanings of the concept. However, as I gained a deeper understanding, I was able to integrate different aspects of LL into my classroom. This evolution

transformed my approach from a simple in-classroom activity to a more extensive academic study.

In summary, Esra's journey of crafting a tapestry (i.e. professional development) unfolded with her introduction to LL through a workshop. This initial thread led her to participate in a digital symposium where she presented her pedagogical LL practices. As Esra pursued her MA degree and immersed herself in the program, her tapestry of growth began to flourish with vibrant threads. Her understanding of LL shifted from a practice-oriented perspective to a more theoretical one, adding depth and complexity to her intellectual journey. She skillfully wove together her LL-centered classroom practices, pedagogical approaches, and research insights, creating an intricate tapestry of her professional development. Adorned with the vibrant threads of LL, her tapestry of professional development showcases her unwavering commitment to growth and the transformative impact of LL on her teaching journey.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study explores the professional growth and development experiences of an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher in relation to Linguistic Landscapes. Through a narrative inquiry approach, I delve into the teacher's journey, using the metaphor of a tapestry to illustrate the various stages of her growth. Starting from her initial encounter with LL during a professional development workshop to the completion of her thesis, I depict Esra's LL-oriented professional development over the span of approximately three years. This journey showcases the transformative impact of LL on the growth and development of an EFL teacher, highlighting the importance of ongoing professional development activities and providing teachers with opportunities to grow with respect to LL.

A significant finding of the study emphasizes the potential of organizing and delivering LL-centered professional development activities for language teachers. It becomes evident from the present narrative inquiry that Esra's journey began with a workshop that introduced her to the concept of LL. This workshop ignited a fresh perspective on language, its role, and its potential utilization in classrooms. Attending this workshop inspired Esra to incorporate LL activities into her high school classroom. This not only provided her with new insights into various language dimensions but also empowered her to create innovative teaching materials and foster a positive learning environment for her students. This finding is in line with the previous research in the domain of both pre- and in-service teacher education contexts (e.g., Grima, 2020; Melo-Pfeifer, 2023; Solmaz, 2023), where educators and

aspiring teachers developed a greater understanding of LL for interpreting the creative use of language, recognizing LL's pedagogical value, and developing awareness by going beyond superficial observations. Considering the profound impact of attending professional events, it is suggested that teacher educators and professionals organize LL-focused professional development activities, particularly for in-service teachers who may have limited sociolinguistic educational background or familiarity with LL. Such professional activities can equip teachers with the necessary tools to navigate the ideologically loaded linguistic landscapes around them and effectively integrate them into their classes. While the primary focus of the study was on the professional growth of an EFL teacher, the reactions and feedback from her students and colleagues regarding the in-classroom practices provide evidence of the potential of environmental print in public spaces for language teaching and learning. These findings align with existing literature (e.g., Krompák et al., 2022; Malinowski et al., 2020; Niedt & Seals, 2020), which underscores the significance of utilizing LL as valuable resources for language instruction in both classroom and non-classroom environments.

Another key finding of the study relates to the impact of professional development activities on the participants. Esra acknowledges the positive influence of the half-day workshop, but also recognizes the limitations of relying solely on its content. Her understanding of LL was restricted as she primarily focused on the activities introduced during the workshop. This realization prompted her to reflect on the need to broaden her exploration of LL and diversify her teaching materials. It also highlighted that short-term professional activities, such as one-hour or half-day workshops, may not sufficiently cover both the theoretical and practical aspects of LL. Educators cannot expect teachers to fully comprehend the content with such limited exposure. Consequently, it is argued that while short-term in-service professional development activities serve as catalysts in introducing LL, additional efforts are necessary to support teachers in developing a comprehensive theoretical understanding of LL and its interdisciplinary nature. This will enable them to grasp the broader dimensions and implications of LL. Similar to Esra's case, teachers can increase their understanding of LL through engaging in LL-related readings, discussions, and conducting LL-focused teacher research. One potential strategy to enhance the exposure of professional events for teachers and promote networking, knowledge sharing, and a deeper understanding of multifaceted nature of LL could involve the creation of digital interactive modules. These modules would function as a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) platform for language teachers to connect, exchange valuable insights, and expand their knowledge of LL, thereby

contributing to their professional development. As illustrated by the case of Esra, an example of such an event could manifest in various formats, such as a digital symposium. This would allow teachers to engage in networking, receive valuable feedback, and share their LL-based classroom practices (see Araújo e Sá et al. [2023] for more specific suggestions). By doing so, the ripple effect of knowledge may extend beyond the immediate circle of teachers and encompass their colleagues and administrators. Consequently, this may contribute significantly to the growth and dissemination of LL practices, mirroring the impact experienced by Esra.

Another finding from the study highlights the challenges and difficulties faced by teachers in their professional growth. These challenges vary depending on the teachers' educational and sociocultural backgrounds, as well as their previous exposure to LL and academic contexts. Some of these challenges include understanding the LL concept and its theoretical foundations, limited availability of materials and resources, and navigating academic aspects such as conducting teacher research and reporting findings, as exemplified in Esra's case. While not all teachers may encounter identical obstacles, it is crucial to ensure their access to knowledgeable individuals or educators with expertise in the field, who can offer guidance and support when faced with such challenges. These experienced professionals play a vital role in helping teachers identify areas for improvement and overcome obstacles. Assisting teachers in navigating these challenges is essential for effectively integrating LL into their classrooms, as these difficulties can serve as opportunities for growth and learning, thereby enhancing teachers' skills and understanding of LL, as demonstrated in Esra's case.

In summary, Esra's trajectory serves as a compelling illustration of the profound impact that linguistic landscapes (LL) can exert on the perspectives and instructional approaches of language teachers. Her dedication to professional advancement and committed pursuit of knowledge propelled her transformative journey, which culminated in the expansion of a mere classroom activity into a comprehensive scholarly investigation. These findings underscore the significance of offering teachers opportunities for LL-focused professional development and reinforce the immense potential of LL as a valuable instructional resource within language teaching and learning environments, benefiting not only students but also the teachers themselves.

The interpretation of the study's findings requires a cautious approach due to several inherent limitations. Firstly, the study only involved a single participant, which raises concerns about the generalizability of the results to a larger

population. Additionally, another limitation is the lack of multiple coders, which may introduce bias or subjectivity in the analysis of the data. Despite these limitations, the study made extensive use of various data collection tools, demonstrating a comprehensive effort to gather relevant information. However, given the constraints mentioned, it is important to exercise caution when drawing definitive conclusions from the findings.

Moving forward, it is imperative for researchers to delve further into the exploration of language teachers' professional development practices using a narrative inquiry approach. This approach holds promise in providing a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of language educators. By adopting a narrative inquiry approach, researchers can illuminate a broader perspective into the domain of professional identity and development of these educators, considering factors such as their personal narratives, challenges faced, and successes achieved (Lourenço & Melo-Pfeifer, 2023). The insights gained from such an approach would be invaluable in facilitating the design of language learning-related professional development programs tailored to the specific requirements of language teachers (Melo-Pfeifer, 2023; Solmaz, 2023). This, in turn, will enhance the effectiveness of professional development programs, ultimately benefiting both the teachers and the language learners they guide.

APPENDIX A. SAMPLE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Can you tell me about your experiences using Linguistic Landscapes (LL) in your EFL teaching? How did you first become interested in incorporating this approach?
- What motivated you to integrate LL into your classroom? Were there specific goals or outcomes you hoped to achieve?
- Can you describe in what ways incorporating LL activities into your class has impacted you?
- What challenges, if any, have you encountered while implementing LL? How did you overcome these challenges, and what did you learn from them?
- Can you reflect on how attending a workshop, presenting at a digital symposium, or designing your own LL-oriented research affected your overall understanding and implementation of LL activities?

- What sparked your interest in exploring LL from a researcher perspective (i.e. your MA thesis)?
- What are some of the changes you have observed in your personal and professional experience with LL, from the first time you encountered the concept to defending your LL-centered MA thesis?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your journey with Linguistic Landscapes in EFL teaching? Any additional insights, anecdotes, or reflections?

APPENDIX B. SAMPLE NARRATIVE FRAMES

Please make sure to fill in the placeholders [*personalize with your specific details*] with your own experiences and observations to complete the narrative frames below.

- The main factor that motivated me to integrate Linguistic Landscapes (LL) into my EFL classroom was [*personalize with your specific motivation or reason*].
- I remember once in my classroom I had a very memorable experience involving LL when [*provide a specific and vivid description of the experience*].
- Regarding the incorporation of LL into my classroom, it would have been very helpful if I had known earlier that [*share an insight or knowledge that you wish you had known earlier*].
- Participating in professional development initiatives related to LL exposed me to [*describe the specific insights or knowledge gained from the initiatives*].
- The general perspective of the school administration regarding innovative teaching approaches like LL was an important factor to consider for me. They expressed their views by stating [*describe the administration's views, expectations, concerns, or support*].
- I had the opportunity to share my LL-related experiences and learn from other teachers who had incorporated it into their classrooms. These exchanges helped me realize [*share the insights or lessons learned from these interactions*].

- In reflecting on my personal and professional experience with LL, I recall a series of changes that occurred from my initial encounter with the concept to the defense of my LL-centered MA thesis. It all began when I first discovered LL and was captivated by its potential to *[describe the initial fascination/interest]*.
- Throughout this journey, I witnessed several changes in my understanding and application of LL. For instance, I noticed a significant shift in my perspective from *[describe the initial perspective or mindset]* to *[describe the new perspective or mindset]* as I delved deeper into the concept and explored its practical implications.
- As I defended my thesis, I felt a sense of accomplishment and confidence in my ability to *[describe the personal growth or achievements related to the examining LL in a research context]*

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