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### Utilisation of Linguistic Landscape for Acquiring English as a Foreign Language

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This paper focuses on the role of the linguistic landscape in facilitating the acquisition of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Kenya's multilingual society. It explores how different aspects of the linguistic landscape, including signs, symbols, public notices, and interactions within educational settings, support learners in engaging with and acquiring English. Linguistic Landscape Theory (LLT), which emphasises the visibility of languages in public spaces as a key factor in language learning, is employed. The paper employs a descriptive design and uses qualitative and quantitative data. The data presented is generated at three language institutes in Nairobi: the Consolata Language Centre (CLC), the Language School of Kenya (LSK), and the Kenyan Institute of Foreign Languages and Professional Studies (KIFLAPS). A purposive sampling approach was adopted to select 30 learners and 2 instructors from each institute. Data were collected through questionnaires for learners, in-depth interviews with instructors, and non-participant observation of the linguistic landscapes within the institutes. The findings reveal that the linguistic landscapes in the selected institutes were rich in visual displays, including electronic devices, printed materials, and other visual aids. These elements were strategically incorporated to support EFL acquisition by creating an engaging and visually stimulating environment. The importance of integrating real-life language usage within learning approaches and how the surrounding language environment impacts learners' language development are highlighted. It concludes that the linguistic landscape is vital in accelerating learning, enhancing information transfer, and fostering familiarity with English. It also contributes significantly to developing key language skills such as reading, speaking, and critical thinking. The paper proposes that incorporating a thoughtful linguistic landscape can create a supportive, immersive learning environment, which enhances EFL acquisition outcomes in diverse educational settings.

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## INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of EFL in Kenya is a crucial and complex process with significant implications for educational success and socioeconomic mobility. As a former British colony, Kenya has entrenched English as a central component of its educational system and broader societal functions. English is an official language and the primary medium of instruction from primary school to higher education. Proficiency in English is often equated with access to better educational opportunities, career prospects, and social advancement (Muindi & Gathigia, 2020). Consequently, mastering English is essential for personal and national development. However, the success of EFL acquisition is influenced by various factors, including the linguistic environment in which learning occurs. This paper focuses on one such factor: the linguistic landscape within language institutes in Kenya.

The concept of the linguistic landscape refers to the visible and audible language elements present in public spaces, including signs, symbols, texts, and spoken language (Sharma, 2023). Within educational settings, the linguistic landscape encompasses classroom materials, signage, and teacher-student interactions, vital in shaping the language learning experience. The linguistic landscape is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the learning process. It can either facilitate or hinder language acquisition, depending on how well it aligns with the learners' needs and

the instructional goals of the language institute (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). In the context of EFL, the linguistic landscape must be carefully designed to support language learning, making it a subject of increasing interest for researchers and educators alike.

Kenya presents a unique case for examining the role of the linguistic landscape in EFL acquisition due to its multilingual nature. The country is home to over 60 languages, with English and Kiswahili serving as official languages alongside numerous indigenous languages (Simiyu, 2019). This linguistic diversity poses both opportunities and challenges for EFL learners. On one hand, exposure to multiple languages can enhance cognitive flexibility and linguistic awareness, which are beneficial for language learning. On the other hand, the dominance of English in formal education and public life can create a disconnect between students' linguistic backgrounds and the language they are expected to learn (Muthwii, 2022). Therefore, the linguistic landscape within language institutes must be carefully curated to bridge this gap, ensuring that English is accessible and relevant to all learners.

Despite the recognised importance of the linguistic landscape in language learning, there has been limited empirical research focused on how these landscapes impact EFL acquisition in Kenya. Much of the existing literature on linguistic landscapes has concentrated on public spaces in urban areas or multilingual contexts outside of the educational

setting (Gorter, 2018). Studies have explored how multiple languages in public signage replicate social hierarchies, cultural identities, and language policies (Blackwood, 2018). However, fewer studies have examined the specific role of linguistic landscapes within educational institutions, particularly in the context of EFL learning. This gap in the literature necessitated more research on how the linguistic landscape within language institutes influences EFL acquisition, especially in multilingual societies like Kenya.

In Kenya's multilingual society, where students frequently speak multiple languages, the linguistic landscape within educational settings plays a vital role in influencing learners' engagement with and acquisition of the English language. However, there is a limited understanding of how elements of linguistic landscape, such as signs, symbols, advertisements, and notices, contribute to the effective learning of EFL. Although creating learner-centred and contextually relevant linguistic landscapes is crucial, gaps remain in identifying best practices that facilitate EFL acquisition across diverse educational contexts, especially in language centres designated for learners to acquire EFL. This paper, therefore, seeks to address these gaps by examining the linguistic landscapes at selected language institutes in Kenya and assessing their impact on EFL acquisition to enhance language learning outcomes.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Empirical Review

Choi et al. (2019) conducted a study in Korea to investigate the interpretations and meanings attached to the concept of a 'global' brand within the context of higher education. The researchers aimed to explore how Korean and international students actively interpret the meanings associated with the institution's efforts to create a global culture. The study drew upon ethnographic data collected at a Korean university that had adopted English as an official language as part of its

internationalisation policies. By extending the discussions in semiotic studies of linguistic landscapes and place-making, the researchers analysed the representation and interpretation of public signs on the university campus. This reviewed study contributes to the paper since it examines the perspectives of international and local students and their interpretations of the global culture created by the institution. It highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the role of language and symbols in constructing a sense of belonging and identity within the higher education environment. It, therefore, contributes meaningfully to this paper since it has addressed discussions in semiotic studies of linguistic landscapes and place-making.

Andriyanti (2019) conducted a study in the Indonesian context, specifically focusing on the linguistic landscape in school environments and the sign patterns found there. The research revealed that the language choices in the school signs accurately represented the locally relevant and commonly used languages within those educational settings. This perspective aligned well with the paper's focus on language centres, as both examined signs within and around language centres. Building upon the insights from the reviewed study, this paper explores the visual representation of English in public spaces within selected language centres and its impact on EFL acquisition.

Han and Wu's (2020) study on language policy, linguistic landscape, and residents' perceptions of language use in Guangzhou, China, examined the extent of convergence or divergence among these elements. The study employed the triad framework, which incorporates spatial practice, conceived space, and lived space, to analyse linguistic landscape practice, language policy, and residents' perception as interconnected dimensions. By shedding light on the conflicts and disparities within the linguistic landscape, the research called for a greater appreciation of linguistic diversity and for fostering inclusive language practices that promote

understanding and harmony among different linguistic communities. A significant contribution of this reviewed study is examining the extent of convergence or divergence among these elements. It provides a valuable foundation for this paper to build on similar themes and investigate how linguistic landscapes influence learning outcomes.

In the UK, changes in language education policy, insular mentality, and the global dominance of English have led to a decline in language acquisition beyond the compulsory stage. Therefore, Lanvers et al. (2019) conducted a study focusing on the lack of interest in language acquisition in Anglophone countries, primarily due to the widespread use of English as a global lingua franca. In conclusion, the study highlights the potential of raising language awareness to foster interest in language acquisition among Anglophone students. The reviewed study contributes to understanding the lack of interest in language acquisition within Anglophone countries, largely attributing this to the predominance of English as a global lingua franca. This perspective is instrumental for this paper, as it sheds light on the challenges and attitudes towards language learning in contexts where English enjoys significant global prominence. Another notable contribution of the reviewed study was its focus on the sociocultural factors affecting attitudes towards language learning. By examining how the global dominance of English influences perceptions and diminishes motivation to learn other languages, the study offered a more comprehensive understanding of the broader implications for language education policies. This perspective further enhances the discussion in this paper by contextualising the role of linguistic landscapes in stimulating interest and participation in learning EFL, especially in non-Anglophone settings like Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Linguistic Landscape Theory (LLT) is an interdisciplinary framework that analyses the visible use of language in public spaces. Initially developed by linguists Landry and Bourhis in 1997,

LLT explores the presence, roles, and sociolinguistic implications of languages and writing systems within the public environment. The theory examines how language choices and representations reveal a community or society's social, cultural, and political dynamics (Spolsky, 2020). It focuses on the languages and scripts displayed in public spaces, such as signs, advertisements, billboards, shop names, street names, and public notices, considering both written and spoken languages made visible through text. LLT highlights the visibility and accessibility of languages in the public sphere, exploring which languages are present, their frequency, and their distribution across different linguistic landscapes. Language visibility can reflect power dynamics, language policies, demographic factors, and historical or cultural contexts (Seals, 2021).

The concept of the LLT provides a framework for studying the relationship between language and the physical environment in which it is used. It explores how languages and linguistic features are displayed, represented, and interact in public spaces, reflecting the sociocultural dynamics of a particular community or society. The theory has several foundational elements and tenets, including Multilingualism and Multimodality, Visibility and Power Relations, Semiotics and Symbolic Landscapes, Agency and Language Planning, Time and Change, and Discourse and Ideology (Spolsky, 2020). LLT acknowledges the existence and importance of multilingualism within a given linguistic landscape. It recognises that multiple languages and language varieties coexist and interact in public spaces. Furthermore, the theory considers written language and other forms of communication, such as images, symbols, and visual displays, collectively called multimodality. This paper's discussion is framed using the Linguistic Landscape Theory's perspective on the linguistic landscape. The paper is centred on evaluating the elements of the linguistic landscape that contribute to acquiring EFL in selected language institutes in Kenya. The analysis is

conducted through the lens of the first principle of this theory. This principle underscores the importance of the visibility of various languages and linguistic features in public spaces, highlighting it as a critical component of the LLT.

## METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods, is utilised. Data collection involves direct observation of the linguistic landscape within the selected language institutes, interviews with educators, a questionnaire for learners, and analysis of the elements of the linguistic landscape obtained from the selected institutes under study. The qualitative and quantitative components of the paper assessed the effectiveness of different linguistic elements in facilitating language acquisition. This methodological approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how the linguistic landscape interacts with other factors influencing EFL acquisition outcomes.

The study was carried out at three purposefully selected language institutes in Nairobi, Kenya: CLC, LSK, and KIFLAPS. These institutes were chosen due to their direct involvement in English language acquisition in Kenya. They specialise in language instruction and are regarded as having a significant influence on the acquisition of EFL outcomes in the country. Through an analysis of these institutions, the research offered valuable insights into the linguistic landscape of English language acquisition in Kenya and its broader implications.

The study employed purposive sampling to select 90 learners from the three language institutions. The sampling was actualised using 30 per cent of a population of less than 1000, as given by Kathuri and Pals (1993). This approach offered significant advantages, including the representation of diverse language learners, comparability across different institutions, and an enriched analysis of the relationship between the linguistic landscape and

EFL acquisition experiences. Similarly, the study utilised purposively the available linguistic landscape, including both outdoor and indoor elements such as posters, notices (educational, safety, public, and event-related), and advertisements within and around each selected language institute in Kenya. Therefore, four elements were purposively obtained at KIFLAPS and LSK, while five were obtained at CLC, resulting in a total of 13 elements used to generate the required data from the respondents. These elements provided valuable data due to their widespread presence and visibility to instructors and learners. Other linguistic landscape components, such as public road signs, street names, and graffiti, were excluded. However, this exclusion did not imply their irrelevance but was a deliberate decision to maintain focus and consistency within the scope of the study.

In this study, the unit of analysis comprised the elements of the linguistic landscape present in the selected institutes, as well as the individual responses gathered from participants within the study context. These responses provided rich insights into language usage, enabling the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the region's cultural and sociolinguistic dynamics. To achieve the objective of the study, data collected through observation and questionnaires underwent descriptive analysis. The in-depth interview data were transcribed in detail, capturing both the context and dynamics of the discussions. This process helped validate and complement the findings, offering a more comprehensive interpretation of the research outcomes.

## FINDINGS

This section expresses the student respondents' perceptions of the various elements of the linguistic landscape that contribute to their acquisition of EFL in the selected language institutes. The linguistic landscape, consisting of visual displays such as signage, billboards, posters, and notices, provides learners with exposure to the target language and



opportunities for engagement and practice. Table 1 summarises the students' responses to statements related to the elements of the linguistic landscape and their impact on EFL acquisition.

**Table 1: Elements of the Linguistic Landscape for EFL Acquisition**

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. D
This language centre has visual displays (signage, billboards, posters, and notices) that can help people acquire EFL.	7%	9%	7%	55%	21%	3.74	1.114
The display of English language public notices in the language institute contributes to my reading ability in EFL.	5%	5%	5%	48%	38%	4.09	1.019
The encounter with the linguistic landscape in my language acquisition process motivates me to practice and improve my English language skills	2%	6%	1%	46%	45%	4.25	0.925
The language institute provides opportunities for interaction with the linguistic landscape in acquiring EFL.	2%	1%	9%	64%	24%	4.05	0.77
The linguistic landscape in the language institute will enhance my overall English language acquisition experience during the acquisition process.	1%	2%	8%	52%	37%	4.2	0.784
The linguistic landscape in the language institute makes it easier for me to practice English outside the classroom.	4%	0%	13%	51%	33%	4.09	0.881
I recommend that the language institute use the linguistic landscape to support English language acquisition.	2%	5%	2%	51%	40%	4.21	0.888
<b>Average</b>						<b>4.09</b>	<b>0.912</b>

**Source:** Field data (2024)

As presented in Table 1, most student respondents agreed with the statements regarding the elements of the linguistic landscape and their impact on EFL acquisition. The encounter with the linguistic

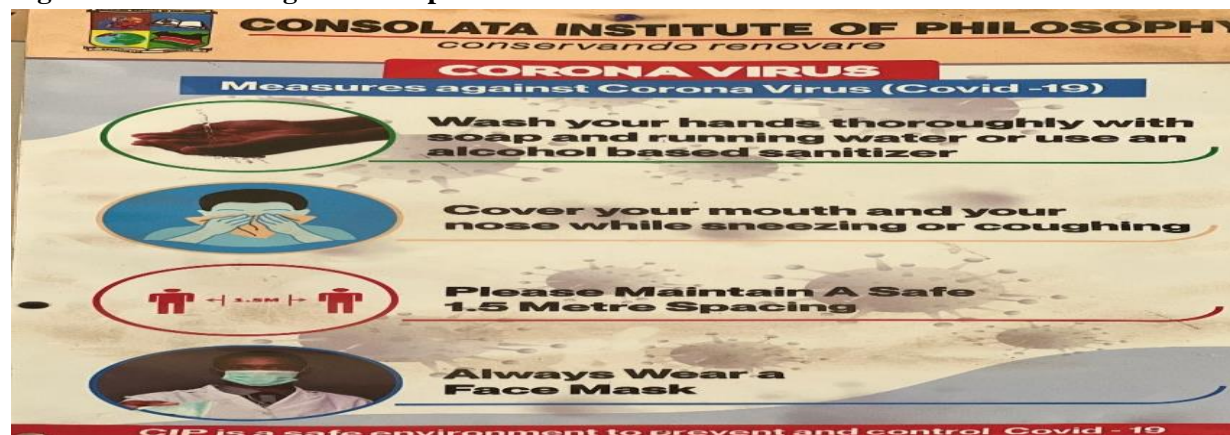
landscape in the language acquisition process was reported by 91% of students to motivate them to practice and improve their English language skills, with a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.925. Additionally, 91% of students recommended that language institutes use the linguistic landscape to support English language acquisition, with a mean of 4.21 and a standard deviation of 0.888. The elements of the linguistic landscape with the highest means were the encounter with the linguistic landscape motivating students to practice and improve their English language skills ( $M=4.25$ ;  $SD=0.925$ ), the recommendation for language institutes to use the linguistic landscape to support English language acquisition ( $M=4.21$ ;  $SD=0.888$ ), and the linguistic landscape enhancing the overall English language acquisition experience during the acquisition process ( $M=4.2$ ;  $SD=0.784$ ). The element with the lowest mean was the language centre's visual displays that can help people acquire EFL ( $M=3.74$ ;  $SD=1.114$ ).

This implies that the most influential elements of the linguistic landscape for EFL acquisition were the encounter with the linguistic landscape motivating students to practice and improve their English language skills, the recommendation for language

institutes to use the linguistic landscape to support English language acquisition, and the linguistic landscape enhancing the overall English language acquisition experience during the acquisition process, as they had a mean above 4.2. Low standard deviations in the items with high means suggested low variations in students' responses, implying students' agreement on the importance of those elements of the linguistic landscape for EFL acquisition. These findings are corroborated by the responses from instructors who participated in in-depth interviews. The qualitative findings from the in-depth interviews with instructors further support and elaborate the quantitative results. The responses are analysed and categorised into themes and codes, as presented below.

The instructors' responses provided valuable insights into the various types of visual displays that make up the linguistic landscape in their language institutes. These displays include digital and traditional materials, offering a diverse range of resources to cater to the learning preferences of modern students. The instructors also indicate the importance of printed materials in the linguistic landscape. Instructor 001 from CLI mentioned the use of 'Posters, Flashcards, Photographs'.

**Figure 1: Measures Against the Spread of COVID-19 a Poster From CLC**



Instructor 004 from the LSK stated that 'Charts, posters, wall mounts' are used in their institute. Drawing from the participant's responses, the researcher deduced that posters serving as visual

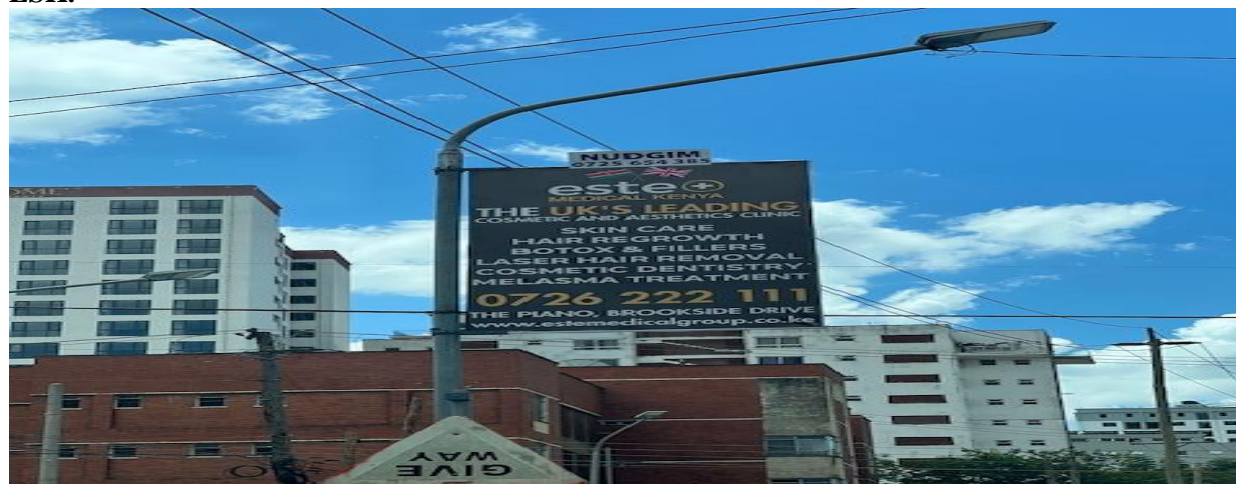
and textual reminders of COVID-19 safety protocols hold considerable importance when examined through the LLT framework, highlighting the significance of language visibility and linguistic

features in public spaces. As noted by Instructor 004 from the LSK, the use of printed materials such as posters, charts, and wall mounts provided an effective medium for delivering essential health guidelines in a manner that is both impactful and accessible. These materials ensure that critical information is communicated to everyone within the institute, fostering inclusivity and raising awareness.

Specifically, posters act as constant and vivid representations of safety protocols, combining visual and textual elements to communicate their message. Positioned in prominent public spaces, they transform these areas into linguistic landscapes where language, imagery, and meaning work together to deliver crucial information. This directly supports the theory's focus on the visibility and

relevance of language in shared environments. Furthermore, these posters' design and strategic placement underlined their dual role as health advisory tools and cultural artefacts reflecting the institution's linguistic practices. Using simple, understandable language, the posters enhance comprehension and encourage adherence to safety measures. Their presence in public spaces further integrates them into the broader linguistic landscape, ensuring it addresses communal health concerns. In this way, linguistic landscapes extend beyond conventional teaching tools to include practical resources like posters that bridge the gap between language, social responsibility, and public health. This adaptability underscores that linguistic landscapes are dynamic, evolving to meet immediate needs while maintaining the visibility and relevance of language in meaningful contexts.

**Figure 2: An Outdoor Advertisement for Este Medical Kenya, a Cosmetic and Aesthetics Clinic at LSK.**



This advertisement demonstrates using visual aids to effectively communicate services and contact information. Instructor 004's point about using visual aids to make learning enjoyable is reinforced here, as such advertisements can also help language learners by providing context and vocabulary related to health and beauty services. Instructor 002 from CLC added, 'Posters, flashcards, photographs. They are best because modern students relate more to visual content'. As a researcher, this analysis climaxed the pivotal role of visual aids in improving

the accessibility, engagement, and effectiveness of language learning. Instructor004 from the LSK pointed out that while learning a new language can be challenging, employing visual aids makes the process more engaging and enjoyable. This insight aligned with the observed impact of advertisements that employ visual elements to convey services and contact details. Beyond their commercial purpose, such advertisements provided language learners with contextual vocabulary and expressions,



expanding their practical linguistic skills in health and beauty services.

**Figure 3: A Directional Sign at the CLC.**



The use of such visual aids highlights the importance of clear and concise signage in aiding navigation and providing necessary information to students and staff. This complements Instructor 002's emphasis on the effectiveness of visual content like posters, flashcards, and photographs in modern educational environments. Instructor 004 from the CLC also mentioned the use of 'Pictorials and charts'. As a researcher, the analysis revealed the critical role of visual aids in enhancing communication, navigation, and learning within

educational settings. Using clear and concise signage to guide students and staff demonstrated visual elements' practical value in effectively providing essential information. This observation aligns with Instructor 002's perspective on the significance of visual content, such as posters, flashcards, and photographs, in modern learning environments. These tools are highlighted as particularly effective in engaging contemporary learners, making abstract concepts more tangible and accessible.

**Figure 4: A Sign Found at the LSK, Instructing People to "MAINTAIN SILENCE ALONG THE CORRIDORS"**



The sign reminds students and staff to keep noise levels down in the corridors, likely maintaining a conducive learning environment. Instructor 007 from KIFLAPS listed; 'Maps and Images, Infographics and Charts, Sentence Starters and Story Frames, Etymological Trees'. Instructor 008 from KIFLAPS noted that 'Charts, digitally printed images add more clarification of what is being taught'. As a researcher, the analysis accentuated

the crucial role of signage in fostering behavioural awareness and achieving educational goals within institutional environments. The sign reminding students and staff to minimise noise in the corridors significantly contributed to maintaining a productive learning atmosphere in adjacent classrooms. This effective use of visual communication demonstrated how signage reinforces institutional norms and expectations

while incorporating behavioural guidance into the broader linguistic landscape. Instructor 007 from KIFLAPS emphasised the importance of visual aids, such as maps, images, infographics, charts, sentence starters, and story frames, in improving understanding and engagement. Likewise, Instructor 008 from KIFLAPS stressed the effectiveness of charts and digitally printed images in clarifying instructional materials. These tools helped create visually stimulating environments that accommodated diverse learning styles and made linguistic features more approachable and comprehensible.

Grounded in the principles of the LLT, which prioritises the visibility of languages and linguistic features in public spaces, such signage and visual

aids enhanced the accessibility and practicality of language use in shared areas. The strategic placement of the noise-reduction sign in a corridor highlighted the role of visual cues in shaping the physical and linguistic environment, ensuring that institutional messages were easily understood and widely applicable. This analysis underscored how visual aids transform shared spaces into dynamic linguistic landscapes supporting educational and behavioural objectives. These tools bridged the gap between theoretical instruction and real-world application by making language features and institutional guidelines more visible. They fostered inclusivity and interaction, demonstrating that linguistic landscapes are adaptable systems capable of addressing diverse educational and community needs.

**Figure 5: A Sign with an Inspirational Quote by the Dalai Lama at LSK**



This sign is a visual aid, providing a motivational message to the viewers. As highlighted by Instructor 001, such visual content helps learners internalise information, making it easier to understand and remember. Instructor 002 from the same institute added, 'The visual displays help students to relate better to the content being taught, making it easier for them to understand and remember information from their language classes'. Instructor 004 from the LSK stated, 'By looking at the landscapes, they can relate with the pictorial in their language and understand it and remember'. Instructor 008 from KIFLAPS noted, 'Yes. It helps the learner of the language to understand the language at a faster rate'.

From a research standpoint, the analysis emphasises the vital role of visual aids as practical motivational

tools in education, particularly in the context of the acquisition of language. The assertion, 'This sign serves as a visual aid providing a motivational message to the viewers', illustrated that visual content goes beyond mere decoration, functioning as an integral element of learning strategies. Instructor 001 noted that such visuals assist learners in absorbing information more efficiently, improving comprehension and memory. This observation aligns with the LLT tenet that underscores the value of visual engagement in enhancing cognitive development. Instructor 002 provided further insight by highlighting how visual displays create a stronger connection between learners and the content. In providing relatable imagery, these aids simplify abstract concepts, making language acquisition more accessible and

easier to recall. Similarly, Instructor 004 emphasised the link between visual contexts and linguistic understanding, suggesting that relatable images enable students to frame their learning within practical, meaningful contexts, thereby boosting retention and comprehension.

Instructor 008 supported this perspective by pointing out that visual aids accelerate the process of language acquisition. This view was parallel with the first tenet of LLT, which emphasises the prominence of languages and linguistic elements in public spaces as a key aspect of learning. By

incorporating visual representations, learners gain exposure to linguistic diversity in a way that facilitates their understanding of new language structures and concepts. In summary, the analysis highlights the transformative impact of visual aids in education. From inspiring learners to enhancing their ability to retain and understand material, visuals are powerful tools in language learning. Researchers and educators should continue to innovate and incorporate visual elements into teaching methods to optimise their effectiveness and contribute to more engaging and impactful learning experiences.

**Figure 6: Fire Action Notice from KIFLAPS**



This sign exemplifies how visual and textual elements are combined to convey critical safety information effectively. Instructor 008's note highlights the importance of such visual aids in helping language learners understand and follow instructions more quickly and accurately, thereby enhancing their comprehension and response during emergencies. These responses indicate that visual displays help students visualise concepts, internalise information, relate to the content, and understand and remember language information. This aligns with the findings of Han and Wu (2020), who stressed the effectiveness of visual aids in promoting language comprehension and retention. The linguistic landscape's ability to facilitate language acquisition shows its significance as a powerful pedagogical tool. By providing students

with visual representations of language concepts, the linguistic landscape enables them to establish meaningful connections between their existing knowledge and the target language (Han & Wu, 2020).

This visualisation, internalisation, and relation process enhances students' understanding and memory retention, ultimately leading to more effective language acquisition. The visual aids serve the critical functions of enhancing student understanding, catering to modern learning preferences, and facilitating language acquisition. These findings align with the existing literature, underscoring the importance of visually engaging and informative materials in creating a stimulating learning environment that promotes comprehension, motivation, and retention.



(Andriyanti, 2019; Choi et al., 2019; Han & Wu, 2020). By purposefully incorporating a diverse range of visual displays, language institutes demonstrate their commitment to learner-centred pedagogy and their recognition of the transformative potential of the linguistic landscape

in supporting EFL acquisition. The instructors mentioned the motivational and engaging power of the linguistic landscape. Student 001 from CLC mentioned, 'They get to visualise the concept, they internalise the information from their language to English making it easy for them to learn'.

**Figure 7: A Sign for Brightwoods Apartments from the LSK**



This sign serves as an example of how the linguistic landscape can enhance learning by providing contextual clues and real-world applications of language. As stated by Instructor005, such visual elements help break the monotony of classroom teaching, making learning more engaging and effective. Instructor 007 from KIFLAPS added that the linguistic landscape provides; 'Emphasis on communicative and pragmatic, Collaborative activities and discussions, Variety of teaching methods and materials, Creating a safe and inclusive learning environment'. These responses show that the linguistic landscape creates a dynamic and stimulating learning environment by helping students visualise concepts, internalise information, and break the monotony of traditional classroom teaching. Incorporating communicative, collaborative, and inclusive elements further enhances student engagement and participation. These findings align with the research of Wartmann and Purves (2018), who highlighted the role of the linguistic landscape in creating an immersive and engaging learning environment that motivates active participation in language acquisition.

The linguistic landscape's ability to motivate and engage learners is a testament to its transformative potential in EFL education. By creating a dynamic, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment, the linguistic landscape ignites students' passion for language learning and encourages active participation. This heightened motivation and engagement increase student involvement, improved language proficiency, and a positive attitude towards EFL acquisition. Language institutes that prioritise the development of a motivating and engaging linguistic landscape can significantly enhance student outcomes and foster a culture of active learning and student success. The instructors also emphasised the linguistic landscape's role in providing opportunities for language practice and reinforcement. Instructor 002 from CLC mentioned, 'The visual displays help students to relate better to the content being taught, making it easier for them to understand and remember information from their language classes'. Instructor 004 from the LSK stated, 'By looking at the landscapes, they can relate with the pictorial in their language and understand it and remember'.



**Figure 8: Two Signs Located in a Stairwell, One for the Aviation College of Kenya and Another for the Language Connections Centre at KIFLAPS**



These signs exemplify using visual aids to provide clear and concise information about educational opportunities and locations. Familiarity with such signage can enhance the learner's understanding and navigation within the institution, reinforcing Instructor 008's point about the importance of familiarity with the language in educational contexts. These responses indicated that by relating to the visual content, students could better understand and remember language information, enabling them to practice and reinforce their language skills. This finding is consistent with the research of Han and Wu (2020), who emphasised the importance of authentic language exposure and practice in facilitating language acquisition. The linguistic landscape provides language practice and reinforcement opportunities, which is crucial for developing language proficiency. The linguistic landscape creates a conducive environment for language practice by offering students visual representations of language concepts they can relate to and engage with.

## DISCUSSION

The study evaluated the linguistic landscape for EFL acquisition through the perspective of the first tenet of LLT. This tenet regards the visibility of various languages and linguistic features in the public sphere as a significant aspect of LLT. The findings showed that the visibility of linguistic features, such as signage, billboards, posters, and notices, is important in promoting EFL acquisition. The widespread agreement among students about

the presence of visual displays and their impact on language learning emphasises the importance of linguistic visibility in the public sphere. This is consistent with the first tenet of LLT, which states that the prominence and accessibility of languages in public places reflect social and linguistic dynamics within a community (Spolsky, 2020). In addition, the study's findings aligned with the first tenet of LLT, which emphasises the visibility of languages and linguistic features in the public sphere. The students' responses confirmed the significance of signage, billboards, posters, and notices in promoting EFL acquisition within the selected language institutes. The prominence of these visual displays reflects the institutes' commitment to creating a linguistically rich environment that supports language learning. By strategically incorporating English language elements in the linguistic landscape, the institutes foster a sense of immersion and exposure to authentic language use, which is crucial for effective EFL acquisition (Choi et al., 2019). The visibility of English in the public spaces of the institutes also reflects the language's status and importance within the educational context, mirroring the social and linguistic dynamics of the wider community (Spolsky, 2020).

Moreover, the findings suggested that the linguistic landscape is a valuable resource for incidental language learning (Andriyanti, 2019). As students navigate the physical spaces of the language institutes, they encounter English language input

through various visual displays. This repeated exposure to authentic language in context reinforces their language acquisition process, even when they are not actively engaged in formal language instruction (Han & Wu, 2020). The linguistic landscape becomes an extension of the classroom, providing students with opportunities to engage with English in a more naturalistic setting. This incidental learning complements the explicit instruction received in the classroom, creating a holistic language learning experience (Choi et al., 2019). The prominence and accessibility of English in the linguistic landscape of the institutes contribute to a supportive and immersive environment that facilitates EFL acquisition, aligning with the principles outlined in the first tenet of the LLT (Spolsky, 2020).

The study revealed that the linguistic landscape in the selected language institutes in Kenya comprised various visual displays, including electronic devices, printed materials, and visual aids. The findings indicated that language institutes actively incorporated digital tools such as laptops, mobile phones, and interactive displays to support EFL acquisition, aligning with the growing trend of technology integration in language education. The study also found that printed materials, such as posters, flashcards, photographs, charts, wall mounts, word walls, grammar charts, mind maps, and concept maps, were widely used to reinforce language concepts and vocabulary, creating a visually rich and stimulating learning environment. Further, the study showed that language institutes employed diverse visual displays, catering to different learning styles and ensuring multiple avenues for students to engage with language material. These findings align with the research of Choi et al. (2019), Andriyanti (2019), and Han and Wu (2020), who emphasised the importance of incorporating various visual elements to create a stimulating and inclusive learning experience.

The study equally established that the visual displays in the linguistic landscape served the

critical functions of enhancing student understanding, catering to modern learning preferences, and facilitating language acquisition. The findings indicated that language institutes purposefully incorporated visually engaging and informative materials to break down the complexities of language learning, making it more accessible and enjoyable for students. This approach enhanced students' comprehension of language concepts and fostered a positive attitude towards language learning. Moreover, the study revealed that the linguistic landscape played a crucial role in facilitating language acquisition by providing students with visual representations of language concepts, enabling them to establish meaningful connections between their existing knowledge and the target language. These findings are consistent with the research of Andriyanti (2019), Choi et al. (2019), and Han and Wu (2020), who underscored the importance of visually engaging and informative materials in creating a stimulating learning environment that promotes comprehension, motivation, and retention.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the study, this paper concludes that the linguistic landscape within the selected language institutes in Kenya presents a multifaceted and dynamic environment featuring various visual displays crucial for EFL acquisition. The integration of electronic devices, printed materials, and other visual aids serves as a cornerstone in fostering a learner-centred atmosphere. This environment, rich in visual stimuli, enhances comprehension, sustains motivation, and supports effective retention of language concepts. The design and deployment of these elements create an interactive setting where learners engage more deeply with language content, accommodating diverse learning preferences and fostering a supportive educational experience that aligns with contemporary pedagogical strategies.

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