

# Colloque international

## 14<sup>th</sup> Linguistic Landscape Workshop: Utopia and Dystopia

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*Titre* : Linguistic landscape in Parisian and its suburban refugee camps : Focus on Urdu-speaking asylum seekers in France

*Résumé* : This study emerged from an ethnographical study under the aegis of the National Research Agency's project LIMINAL "Linguistic and intercultural mediations in a context of international migrations" (2017-2021) examining the linguistic and cultural mediation within the asylum-seekers camps in Paris and its suburbs and in some other parts of French borders like Calais in the North and Vintimille on the Italian border. In this paper, I will give an account of the language practices of asylum seekers, in particularly of the Urdu-speaking asylum seekers from Pakistan and Afghanistan. The purpose of my research project was to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding the dynamic language interactions among the asylum-seekers with varied verbal repertoire and with the French social workers in addition to the semiotic tapestry of linguistic landscape which were communicated toward them. I was also in part interested in the linguistic biographies of the informants from their country of origin until their settlement in France. There is a little scientific understanding of the role of language in this field where all the languages of asylum-seekers are brushed away on the profit of the French language. Through the linguistic landscape, the purpose of the study was to understand how the languages were mobilized by the authorities, the social workers and also by the asylum-seekers. What were the different kinds of linguistic markers and signs? Data collection tools based on

sociolinguistic and ethnography like questionnaire, interviews, field notes and participant observations were employed for over the period of two years (2018-2020). The study shows that French language is almost omnipresent in the asylum centers and English positions itself as *lingua franca par défaut*, and the mother tongues of the asylum-seekers are seldom taken in consideration, except for the Arabic. Along these three languages mostly visible, surfaces equally in the verbal interaction language of the migrants termed as “Migralect” which serves as the common language among the migrants.

**Keywords** : Urdu-speaking asylum seekers in France, Language practices of migrants in France, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Urdu.