

Routledge Critical Studies in Multilingualism

SPACES OF MULTILINGUALISM

Edited by
Robert Blackwood and Unn Røyneland



Spaces of Multilingualism

This innovative collection explores critical issues in understanding multilingualism as a defining dimension of identity creation and negotiation in contemporary social life.

Reinforcing interdisciplinary conversations on these themes, each chapter is co-authored by two different researchers, often those who have not written together before. The combined effect is a volume showcasing unique and dynamic perspectives on such topics as rethinking of language policy, testing of language rights, language pedagogy, meaning-making, and activism in the linguistic landscape. The book explores multilingualism through the lenses of spaces and policies as embodied in Elizabeth Lanza's body of work in the field, with a focus on the latest research on linguistic landscapes in diverse settings. Taken together, the book offers a window into better understanding issues around processes of change in and of languages and societies.

This ground breaking volume will be of particular interest to students and scholars in multilingualism, applied linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

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Preface

Marilyn Martin-Jones

The first steps towards incorporating this innovative *Festschrift* project into the Routledge series on Critical Studies in Multilingualism were taken in a meeting with Unn Røyneland at the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (The MultiLing Center) at the University of Oslo, in November 2019. I later learned, through correspondence with Robert Blackwood and Unn Røyneland, that the essential groundwork for the project was actually laid during a month-long visit by Robert to the MultiLing Center in May 2018. After almost three years of collaboration between contributors and dedicated editorial work by Robert and Unn, two landmark publications in the field of multilingualism are ready to go into production at the beginning of March 2021. For me and for Joan Pujolar, my co-editor, it is a pleasure and a privilege to be able to include these volumes in the series. I say this for three reasons:

First, because the volumes have been designed and edited by Robert and Unn, with both vision and dedication, as an international tribute to Elizabeth Lanza, as she retires from the leadership of the MultiLing Center. Throughout her academic career, Elizabeth has shaped the contours of several different strands of research on multilingualism in distinctive ways: through her outstanding research innovation and strategic crossing of disciplinary boundaries; through her exceptional capacity for sustained and highly productive research collaboration with scholars in the global north and, more recently, in the global south; and through her inspired leadership and vision for the MultiLing Center, which has provided a unique forum for groundbreaking research in the sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics of multilingualism. These dimensions of Elizabeth's scholarly achievements are alluded to, again and again, across the chapters of these two volumes.

Second, Joan Pujolar and I warmly welcome the inclusion of these two volumes in our Routledge series because of the transdisciplinarity reflected in them and because of the illuminating ways in which they consider the trajectories of speakers and language resources across the lifespan, and across social and institutional spaces. This transdisciplinarity fits well with the way in which we have conceptualised this book series, keeping it open to wider debates in the social sciences and the humanities.

Third, we welcome the original ways in which Robert and Unn have designed and edited the two volumes. They have re-imagined the genre of *Festschrift* in bold and novel ways. The overall organisation of the two volumes around different themes makes it possible to index different moments in Elizabeth's career as a researcher, along with the different fields of research to which she has made major contributions. Moreover, all of the chapters are co-authored, with a view to echoing Elizabeth's commitment to research collaboration, in her own work and in the research developed in the MultiLing Center.

Forty-four scholars from across the world have contributed to these two volumes. They are scholars working at the cutting edge of different strands of research into multilingualism, and they include established and early career researchers. Volume 1, entitled *Multilingualism across the Lifespan*, showcases psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research that addresses issues similar to those that Elizabeth has been concerned with in her work on bilingual acquisition and on the language practices and policies of bilingual families. This volume also incorporates a section on bilingual ageing, which has close resonances with research of this type developed within the MultiLing Center. Volume II, entitled *Spaces of Multilingualism*, presents empirical work and theory-building in the sociolinguistics of multilingualism, focusing primarily on areas of research where Elizabeth has herself made major contributions – areas such as the study of interaction and the construction of identities, and research into linguistic landscapes, in global south and global north settings. This volume also points to ongoing shifts in thinking about the contexts for research into language policymaking and for language pedagogy relating to linguistic landscapes. The range, depth, and quality of the scholarship assembled here by Robert and Unn are impressive. Together, these two volumes make the most fitting tribute to Elizabeth Lanza's outstanding achievements as a researcher and latterly as the Director of the MultiLing Center at the University of Oslo, Norway.

Acknowledgements

The journey that culminates in these volumes began in Bern at *XScapes*, the tenth International Linguistic Landscape Workshop (2018), and we would like to use this space to express our gratitude to those who have supported this project on its road to completion.

In particular, we would like to thank the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (MultiLing) for its generous financial support for this project, especially its funding for Open Access to ensure that the work contained here can be shared as widely as possible. Equally, the Center supported Robert in a month-long visiting scholarship at MultiLing, during which the groundwork for the project was laid. Also at MultiLing, we would like to thank research assistant Anne Marte Haug Olstad for her careful copy-editing of all the chapters. Hence, this volume was partly supported by the Research Council of Norway through its Centres of Excellence funding scheme, project number 223265.

We record here our gratitude to the Department of Languages, Cultures, and Film at the University of Liverpool, UK. Unn came to Liverpool to give a research paper to the Place, Space & Belonging Research Group in May 2019, and we used this opportunity to work together on this project.

We are delighted that these volumes appear in the Routledge series *Critical Studies in Multilingualism*, and we would like to thank Marilyn Martin Jones for her input on the proposal and for her subsequent encouragement. At the same time, we are grateful to Joan Pujolar for supporting us and this endeavour. Elyse Preposi has guided us and answered our questions over the lifespan of this entire project, and we thank her here for her patience and enthusiasm.

Academic scholarship is always improved by peer review, and as well as inviting some of the contributors to review critically the chapters here, we also called on expertise from across our disciplines. In particular, therefore, we would like to thank Peter Auer, Susan Berk-Seligson, Gunilla Byrman, Tanya Karoli Christensen, Cecilia Cutler, Diana Eades, Alex

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Introduction

Robert Blackwood and Unn Røyneland

This is the companion volume to *Multilingualism across the Lifespan*. Together, these two collections pay tribute to our colleague and friend, Elizabeth Lanza, a towering figure across a range of disciplines whose research interests inspire and underpin the philosophy of this homage. In planning these volumes, we agreed that one of the guiding principles would be that every chapter is co-authored, articulating in their conception and execution one of Elizabeth's approaches to life and scholarship, which we seek to honour. Not just through her leadership of the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan (MultiLing) but throughout her career, Elizabeth has invited, engineered, and nourished collaborations between researchers. This recognition and valuing of the power of working together has come to characterise the work of MultiLing, the research center financed by the Research Council of Norway as a Center of Excellence. To reflect this approach, all of the contributors to both volumes were asked to work with someone else, in some cases where the authors have not collaborated before. These partnerships characterise, in their method, the creativity that can be unexpected, unorthodox, and even unlikely, but their outcomes are much more than the sum of their parts. As such, these volumes harness the imagination and dynamism of a wide range of researchers, both established and early-career, and exemplify the enthusiastic and creative relationships that have been initiated and cultivated by Elizabeth over her own academic lifespan. Equally, they go some way to reflecting the numerous examples of co-authorship that have come to define Elizabeth's approach to scholarship, where she has co-authored and co-edited with more than two dozen collaborators.

Multilingualism and Linguistic Diversity

In positioning the two volumes around multilingualism and linguistic diversity more generally, we address here one of the most pressing human issues: an issue that has long been recognised and cherished in some parts of the world, taken for granted elsewhere, and positively resisted and decried in other places (often in those countries – for there is a national dimension to

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this – which self-identify as modern, successful, and welcoming). Thinking through linguistic diversity and multilingualism as a phenomenon is one of the aims of these two volumes; in particular, the authors interrogate some of the easy caricatures of what it means to deal with linguistic diversity: to be multilingual, to live multilingually, to organise others' lives multilingually. Assuming that multilingualism equates with multiple languages, some might think that we are overlooking the complexity contained within this axiom. We seek, however, to grapple with the breadth of questions surrounding the interaction between, across, and via languages and lects.

Languages and lects are acquired, deployed, restricted, encouraged, communicated, displayed, (re)created, and lost across the lifespan. The trajectories of languages – and here we deliberately (and, for some, provocatively) uncouple the concept of a language from habitual understandings in traditional discussions of acquisition – are not linear, regular, or without disruption. In this volume, we explore these trajectories as they play out in spaces and through policies. From deconstructing the competing concepts for the analysis of multilingualism, the rethinking of language policy, and the testing of language rights, through to pedagogy, meaning-making, and activism in the linguistic landscape, the authors privilege the study of linguistic diversity as a defining element of identity creation and negotiation. Anchored in new research, the contributors engage creatively with multilingualism as a lived reality. This volume, alongside its partner volume dedicated to trajectories of multilingualism across the lifespan, tackles issues around the processes of change in and of languages and societies. As such, the authors in this volume attend to multilingualism as an evolving phenomenon at landmarks in individuals', families', and communities' lives.

The volume and Elizabeth Lanza's work

We have arranged this volume into three parts. The boundary between the two volumes is not fixed, and in organising them, we have discussed at length how best to sequence the contributions. Consequently, it is in some ways unhelpful to characterise the volumes according to their intellectual orientation, especially as a number of chapters could sit in either tome. Nevertheless, this volume leans towards the sociolinguistic, whilst its companion volume tends towards the psycholinguistic – although, from the outset, we recognise the problematic nature of categorising each volume as such, especially as we argue that the symbiosis of these two areas of linguistics is highly productive and – of course – is embodied in Elizabeth's career.

Notwithstanding, we have structured this volume into three parts, each of which engages with a different perspective of Elizabeth Lanza's work. The first part, "Rethinking the Context" (Part I), invites rethinking of the context(s) for spaces of multilingualism; here, the two pairs of contributors actively unpick the boundaries that traditionally have been erected between disciplines. They each grapple with the productive messiness that is generated

by unsettling long-established borders and by thinking through the potential for language policy, pedagogy, and activism to refocus our collective attention on approaches and structures that we might have accepted too readily. The study of language policy, or more specifically family language policy (FLP), has been a central part of Elizabeth's research throughout her career. This research area was prominent both in her early work on bilingual children and more recently through the MultiFam project "Family language policy in multilingual transcultural families" (2015–2018) led by Elizabeth and funded by the Research Council of Norway. One of Elizabeth's first publications, which was published by *Multilingual Matters* in 1988, addressed infant bilingualism and language strategies in the home. This was also the topic of her PhD (1990), a work which was the basis for the monograph *Language Mixing in Infant Bilingualism: A Sociolinguistic Perspective* (2004), published by Oxford University Press. Notably, she has co-edited no less than four seminal special issues on multilingual family language policy: one with Li Wei in the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (2016), one with Kendall King in the *International Journal of Bilingualism* (2017), and two with Xiao Lan Curdt-Christensen in the *International Journal of Multilingualism* and *Multilingua Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication* (both 2018). In the title of her blog post in *Psychology Today* from January 2021, Elizabeth asks rhetorically, "Family Language Policies: Do We Need Them?" Taking off from her own journey towards multilingualism, which began in childhood when she and her family sailed across the Atlantic and into New York Harbor in the 1950s, Elizabeth discusses recent research in FLP and gives advice to families who want to raise their children bilingually or multilingually. Several articles dealing with language practices and policies in the family may be found in the companion volume, *Multilingualism across the Lifespan*. These articles discuss the foundations of the field and its current directions, including family language planning in migratory contexts and in the context of indigenous language reclamation. Elizabeth's research also encompasses language policy more generally. She was involved in a project on multilingualism in Ethiopia, which was funded by the Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Programme for Development Research and Education, in collaboration with Addis Ababa University (2001–2006). This project marks the beginning of Elizabeth's extensive involvement with sociolinguistic issues in Ethiopia, focusing particularly on linguistic landscapes and language ideologies, to which we return below.

In the second part of this volume, "Interactions, Ideologies, and Identities" (Part II), three contributions focus on the construction, contestation, and negotiation of identities through narratives and in interaction more generally, and on meaning-making in precarious situations, such as police investigative interviews with second-language speakers. The chapters show how contemporary transient and fluid realities call into question any easy equation of language or dialect with personal and group identities, and

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how practice-oriented approaches to narratives may reveal how migrants' multiple identities emerge and are embedded, negotiated, and deployed in context, thus escaping essentialist views of identity. The study of narratives and migrant identities has been an important strand in Elizabeth's research, not least through the SKI project (2008–2013), "Språk, Kultur, Identitet" (Language, Culture, and Identity in migrant narratives), funded by the Research Council of Norway. In this research project, which was led by Elizabeth, scholars from linguistics, literary studies, and cultural studies gathered to investigate the ways in which narratives of migrant life present new understandings of cultural diversity. Notably, Elizabeth's long-standing collaborator, Anne Golden, was part of the SKI project, together with Pia Lane, and Anna De Fina played an important role as inspirer. Successfully bringing together researchers from across fields and disciplines attests to Elizabeth's remarkable ability to bridge disciplinary gaps and bring about illuminating interdisciplinary synergy, an ability which also has been a hallmark of her leadership of MultiLing.

The final part, "Linguistic Landscapes" (Part III), contains four chapters all dealing with Linguistic Landscape (henceforth LL). It is unsurprising that a considerable proportion of this volume includes contributions pertaining to LL, given Elizabeth's significant contribution to the field. Her numerous LL publications, including a volume she edited that built on the work first presented at the fourth Linguistic Landscape Workshop held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2012, leap to the eye. As discussed in Blackwood, Johanessen, and Mendisu (this volume, Chapter 6), Elizabeth's work on aspects of the LL of Ethiopia, with her collaborator and friend Hirut Woldemariam, has come to characterise her influence on LL research. From her academic and leadership roles at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, Woldemariam went on to enter politics serving as a minister in successive Ethiopian governments; she would have very much liked to contribute to this volume, but her commitments meant that, whilst she is very much part of the chapter by Blackwood, Johanessen, and Mendisu in spirit, she was not in a position to participate actively in this endeavour.

Elizabeth and Woldemariam were the earliest of early adopters of the potential of examining language and other meaning-making resources in the public space, with a joint presentation at the first Linguistic Landscape Workshop in Tel Aviv in 2007. Their contribution at this event, devoted to the LL of, as they referred to it, "an African country without a colonial past," heralded not only the explosion of research into Ethiopia, but also nourished early Ethiopian sociolinguistic scholarship. Some fifteen years later, there is more published LL research on Ethiopia than any other African country with the exception of South Africa. The dynamic collaboration between Elizabeth and Woldemariam has been highly productive and, as attested by a generation of Ethiopian scholars, hugely influential. Researchers including Fekede, Raga, Tesfaye, Woldemichael, Yigezu, and Mendisu (in his contribution to this volume (Chapter 6)) point to the

foundational work undertaken in Ethiopia by Elizabeth and Woldemariam, which provides an invaluable set of readings of the LL of a country in dramatic transition.

The context of Elizabeth and Woldemariam's paper in Tel Aviv attests to the potential of LL scholarship to embrace subjects from across the humanities and social sciences; in their paper, their engagement with postcolonialism foreshadowed not only the evolution of this field to interpret resources in the public space to understand the complexity of histories, but also continued the unpicking of artificial boundaries that can sometimes be erected between disciplines. The chapters in this volume which focus on LL are co-authored by researchers who self-identify in terms of their disciplinary backgrounds from across a wide number of fields, highlighting the porosity of the borders between subject areas as well as pointing to the productivity of collaborations that span these traditional boundaries.

At the same time, the collaboration between Elizabeth and Woldemariam presaged the belated recognition of the contributions made by scholars in the Global South, with their body of work serving to highlight the importance of Southern perspectives to work in sociolinguistics and beyond. It is characteristic of Elizabeth's long-standing commitment to Southern scholarship that she was, alongside Woldemariam, the driving force behind taking the LL workshops to Addis Ababa for the first meeting of the burgeoning group in Africa. Although one of the most frequent participants at LL workshops, Elizabeth – due to ill health – had to miss the meeting in Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, she was in e-mail contact from Oslo several times a day as the conference unfolded, following the progress of the discussions and keen for updates on papers that she had been particularly interested in as she and Woldemariam finalised the programme. The subsequent volume that emerged from this workshop, co-edited by Elizabeth and Woldemariam, which foregrounded the question of negotiating and contesting identities in LLs, includes half a dozen chapters from Southern contributors.

The volume published after the LL workshop in Addis Ababa also points to the productiveness of cross-fertilisation between Elizabeth's long-standing research interests, with questions of identity echoing through the body of work on the LL of Ethiopia. Significantly, the collaboration with Woldemariam did not privilege the centre and other traditional sites of power; in their work on Mekele, capital of the Tigray region of Ethiopia, Elizabeth and Woldemariam joined others in sociolinguistics interested in the periphery and those places where identity is often predicated on difference to the centre. In the light of geopolitical developments in Ethiopia, this work on Tigray has received renewed interest as questions of complex, negotiated, and compound identities remain the reality for most humans. As such, Elizabeth's work – with Woldemariam – in Ethiopia serves as one of the first benchmarks for interpreting identity in the public space which has been influential for subsequent generations of researchers.

The chapters

We frame Part I of this volume as rethinking the contexts for what follows and open with the chapter from Li Wei and Kelly-Holmes (Chapter 1). From their viewpoints, they engage in a dialogue on the evolution of language policy over the past two decades, considering the contours of socio-political disruptions that have characterised this period. Together, they reflect on the challenges which face each generation, including the naming of languages and the presuppositions of unity within ethno-linguistic communities to talk through issues such as translanguaging, commodification, and heritage language schools. Li Wei and Kelly-Holmes close their contribution with a series of pertinent questions regarding the possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, Shohamy and Pennycook (Chapter 2) trace the development from awareness to activism in LL research, sketching out what they identify as four different expansions in the field. Using the model of Critical Language Awareness (CLA), they highlight how multilingualism in public spaces can be used as a backcloth onto which awareness campaigns around inequality and injustices can be projected. Shohamy and Pennycook assert that a clearer and more critical focus on the locus of the gaze is called for in LL research, supported in part by displays and exhibitions that present to the community the LL journey from awareness to activism.

Part II covers questions of interactions, ideologies, and identities, and starts with a chapter by Mesthrie, Opsahl, and Røynealand (Chapter 3), who consider embodiment in linguistic performances and identity negotiations, contrasting the notion of Norwegianness with the fluidities of post-apartheid South Africa. Through the lens of language and embodiment, they contend that performances of the authentic local, of the immigrant persona, and of the other both confirm and contest stereotypes in Norway, whilst the South African examples remind us that the association of bodies with a single language is inappropriate for most of Africa. Mesthrie, Opsahl, and Røynealand conclude that recent rapid social changes have thrown the fluidity of language–body relationships into sharp relief, despite prevailing expectations of more straightforward connections between embodiments and language practices. De Fina, Golden, and Tonne’s chapter (Chapter 4) explores how narrative, as both a method and a lens, provides new insight into identity construction by migrants, in particular from a multilingual perspective. Adopting a practice-based approach, they consider storytelling activities by Dreamers (young, undocumented migrants to the USA who have grown up and been educated there) and by migrant doctors to Norway who have learnt Norwegian. De Fina, Golden, and Tonne argue that the identities assembled by narrators are complex and contradictory constructions which are highly nuanced and, as such, counter prevailing myths that see migrant identities as homogenous. The final chapter in Part II sees Urbanik and Pavlenko (Chapter 5) grapple with the issue of securing the understanding of a second language in the highly stressful scenario of

investigative police interviews, where rights are communicated by police authorities. Comparing interviews from the USA and Norway, the authors analyse the manipulation of power relations in the legal process of ensuring understanding in formal exchanges, but equally draw attention to the potential for the inability to understand to go undetected. Urbanik and Pavlenko articulate a set of recommendations to facilitate understanding of rights in a second language, which include speed, formulation in accessible language, and awareness of interactional accomplishment on the part of those communicating rights.

Part III opens with a contribution from Blackwood, Johannessén, and Mendisu (Chapter 6). Johannessén was working on this chapter when she died, and we recognise here her enthusiasm and excitement in contributing to this volume dedicated to her friend and colleague. Blackwood, Johannessén, and Mendisu bring Lanza's interest in Ethiopia into view with their examination of three pairings of sites (main commercial streets, markets, and shopping centres) in order to explore further the dichotomy of the symbolic and/or communicative value of what is broadly understood as "English". Using sites in Oslo, Norway, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and testing the contention that function lies in the eye of the beholder, they note that the balance between the symbolic and the communicative use of English shifts, and argue that a language usually performs both functions at the same time.

Next, Jaworski and Gonçalves (Chapter 7) refract their analysis of a street-level literary monument to the Norwegian author and playwright Henrik Ibsen through the prism of nation-building and egalitarianism. They consider the 69 citations from Ibsen's works in the Norwegian national literary language in relation to traditional towering monuments to identity, including national flags punctuating the skyline. Jaworski and Gonçalves contend that this new landmark as a site of national memory, when read closely for its range of meaning-making potentials, seeks to articulate an egalitarian nationalism through pop art. Androutsopoulos and Deumert also exploit the potential of dialogue in their chapter (Chapter 8), in part in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fusing a material-semiotic approach to signage in Hamburg, Germany, and an atmospheric approach privileging affect, memory, and experience in Cape Town, South Africa, the authors interpret the arrangement of kiosks and spaza shops. By complementing a multimodal genre sign analysis with the embodiment of experience, Androutsopoulos and Deumert interrogate these urban sites of sociability and everyday interaction, concluding that there is important complementarity in the two approaches to analysing what they consider to be social assemblages. The section devoted to LL closes with a chapter by Gorter, Cenoz, and van der Worp (Chapter 9), which returns to Donostia-San Sebastián in Spain's Basque country to consider the uneven interaction between local and global relations as attested in the city's San Martín market. They consider their corpus of images from the market as well as

interviews with stallholders to discern the ideologies at play regarding the languages of signage, including Basque, Spanish, English, and – at the insistence of EU regulations – Latin. Gorter, Cenoz, and van der Worp remark that, from this glocal space (a local market richly decorated with markers of globalisation), there are important conclusions to be drawn, not just about the struggles of languages such as Basque but also about the highly textured connections between food and languages.

Thurlow (Chapter 10) has the unenviable task of drawing together the entire volume and rises to the challenge with his auto-ethnographical exploration of messiness in multilingualism. Invoking Universal Design, he considers a possibility for unpicking hegemonic multilingualism (which he identifies as hiding in plain sight in Switzerland) by creating spaces in which the substances of individuals' speech, ideas, and opinions are upheld. Thurlow identifies the thread of questions of power that runs through this volume, and concludes that Elizabeth has used her "power" at MultiLing to value process rather than output and to give space to the telling of stories in people's own words and languages.

Part I

Rethinking the Context



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1 Language Policy

Taking Stock in a Changing Context

Li Wei and Helen Kelly-Holmes

Introduction

In this chapter, we apply our different but complementary foci to examining how the key concepts of language policy have evolved over the last two decades in response to socio-political disruptions and how they might continue to change in the future. We also want to raise new, further questions that need to be explored and debated, given the ever-changing context, particularly in relation to the emergence and integration of smart technology into our everyday lives. The chapter is constructed as a dialogue in which we discuss and evaluate these key disruptions from our particular perspectives on language policy: Helen Kelly-Holmes works on the economic dimensions of multilingualism, focussing for example on advertising and the concept of linguistic fetish, and language policy with a particular interest in minority languages. Her focus has always been on mediated language, and for that reason she is particularly interested in the role of technology. Li Wei's work is around everyday multilingual practices in families and communities. In particular, he has studied community language schools for immigrant and ethnic minority children in the UK as well as Family Language Policy in transnational families. He has contributed to the development of the concept of translanguaging. The chapter is structured as a reciprocal interview between us. We believe these questions have wider implications for language policy research and practice and enable us to take stock as we move forward in this rapidly changing context. We are aware that we are offering more questions than answers, for example in relation to whether changing concepts of language and language policy are driven by social, economic, and technological changes or whether such changing conceptions are themselves driving change. In other words, the fascinating question of whether language policy is evolutionary or revolutionary remains deliberately open.

Li Wei: How fit is language policy for twenty-first-century challenges?

Helen: When I read articles framed within language policy, I often question whether the concept, the term, and the key tenets are in fact useful and relevant in today's world and whether studying language policy forces complex problems into simple frameworks. For example, the nineteenth-century narrative of one language = one people = one territory still underpins, no matter how it might be resisted, for better or worse, most minority language revitalisation movements and policies as well as studies of national policy. Twentieth-century concepts and assumptions also underpin much contemporary research in language policy, most notably the idea that language policy can fix both language problems and/or social problems. So, language policies at macro or state levels or at meso levels within schools and other institutions can be implemented to redress inequalities – individual and societal – and address injustice. This conceptualisation of language policy seems to me to rest on the same assumptions, namely that we know what language is and how to do it (and we all agree on this), we can do things to it, we can control and direct it, and we can manage people's behaviours around it and attitudes to it (see, e.g., Nekvapil and Sherman 2015).

It goes without saying that these understandings have been and are being continuously challenged. For example, Kathryn Woolard's (2016) work on linguistic authority in relation to Catalan has challenged a perhaps often too easy assumption about where power and agency lie in language policy. Deborah Cameron's (2005) concept of verbal hygiene showed how language management does not just happen in relation to different languages and that the need to manage and control what, how, and where others speak is a widespread, deep-seated tendency that often has very little to do with language. With language policing, Jan Blommaert et al. (2009) attempted to identify that there can be multiple, competing centres of normativity and policymaking, and to show that these can be powerful and impactful, and that there is more going on than just the top-down and meso levels. We have moved away from the idea that only governments and institutions make language policy and towards the idea that we are all constantly making language policies – sometimes contradictory ones – throughout the course of our lives, perhaps even of our day, and attempting to monitor and control our own and others' language behaviours (Shohamy 2006). The "new speaker" concept (O'Rourke and Ramallo 2013) also introduced a new dimension to language policy by attempting to address the difficulties that learners experience when they attempt to acquire a minoritised language and in the process challenge the language = people = territory tenet. As Alexandra Jaffe (2007) pointed out, revitalisation efforts actually need these fluid and flexible constructions of speakerhood. To succeed, such efforts need not only new speakers, who are to be created and encouraged through acquisition policies, but also those new speakers need to be able to have a

relationship with the language and to stake a claim and not be excluded from ownership, not least if they are to continue to support language policy and planning efforts by their respective governments and regional authorities. Language policy's assumptions have also been challenged by the evolution of "translanguaging" (Garcia and Li 2014) as a way to describe a phenomenon that is very real in all of the domains that are of interest to language policy but that evades capture and understanding by many traditional frameworks and methodologies of language policy.

Tom Ricento's (2000) three eras model of language policy is a framework that can be applied more generally to the field, in my experience. The first era is that of the postcolonial nation-building, where a unifying language is needed (one language = one people = one territory); the second is the era in which the cracks and fissures upon which that policy is built begin to appear, and language is used to fix those problems; and finally the current era, or what he terms the postmodern one, which is characterised by hybridity and the loss of certainty about what language is, how it can possibly "fix" problems and indeed the critiquing of why and how these "problems" have been framed as such, since such a problematising, however well-intended, was based on the same tenets of one country = one nation = one language. In our work trying to chart the development of minority language media policy in Sámi and Irish, Sari Pietikäinen and I used Ricento's framework to try to put a shape on our findings. We dubbed the first era that of gifting – whereby the central government gifts media resources to the minority language community, which presents itself as internally homogenous for this purpose and is subsequently addressed as an internally unified and homogenous group. In the second era, the attempt is to fix the language problems that are occurring, as inevitably the complexity that is covered up by this homogenous unity starts to appear. The aim is for full normalisation of the language situation, a modernist goal of having the trimmings of a modern language. In the contemporary era, which we termed the "performance" era, these certainties are gone – or rather the easy assumptions that we had about these certainties are gone and are replaced by fluid concepts and changing tenets. Where previously languages were seen to belong to (particular) speakers, now they are up for grabs and available as part of anyone's repertoire, albeit in different ways and with different limitations. A few interesting conclusions emerged from our study (Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes 2011), and they are worth thinking about in a wider context of understanding language policy and allowing it to grow and develop as a concept or perhaps be cast aside, its time being done now that the era of mega-policies is apparently done. First of all, an appreciation of the economic and technological dimensions, not just political, to these different eras is crucial. Older conceptions of language policy force us to include the macro and meso into our analyses as we increasingly focus on micro-level management. Secondly, it is important to recognise that while models allow for a neatly ordered chronology, the reality is much messier,

and instead what we have are parallel and overlapping stages. Our conclusion was that to understand this complexity, we needed all of these concepts from all of these eras. While twenty-first-century concepts are inclusive, if we abandon the nineteenth- and twentieth-century ones, then it becomes very hard to talk to governments, for example, who may be more than happy to curtail funding for heritage language maintenance when languages with a capital L, linked to recognisable and delineable groups, disappear from the vocabulary and studies. So, what is needed, perhaps today more than ever, is a delicate balancing act that involves constantly and vigilantly checking, acknowledging, and living with both complexity and simplicity.

Helen: In your work with immigrant and ethnic minority communities, what are the key language policy concerns, and how does the concept of translanguaging relate to language policy?

Li Wei: The recent surge of interest in multilingualism amongst the international academic research community may have come as something of a surprise to the very many communities across the globe where multilingualism has always been an integral part of people's everyday life. The new curiosity may be partly due to the presence of large numbers of 'misplaced' populations who speak languages other than the assumed 'indigenous' ones, especially in Western Europe and North America, where people seem to be more used to imposing their own languages onto the local populations as they go to other parts of the world than having others coming to their land. These 'misplaced' speakers are usually labelled as 'immigrants', "migrants," "refugees", or "ethnic minorities." Over time, their languages become called "community" or "heritage" languages. A key policy concern regarding immigrant and minoritised communities is the labelling of the various languages in their linguistic repertoire. The designation of a language and its speakers with one of the above-mentioned labels is a policy decision and has serious consequences for the status of the language and the community in society. Policies that are designed to support the minoritised languages and social groups usually assume that their status is a real one rather than one constructed and imposed by society. For instance, in many English-dominant countries, such as Britain and the USA, people who have roots in another country are often designated as English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) speakers. EAL children are expected to struggle in the mainstream educational system. They need help with English. And if they do achieve well in schools, they will be celebrated as examples of success. In the USA, the label "bilingual learners" is often used to refer to school-aged children from immigrant families, who may or may not themselves be immigrants. Just because their parents and the ethnic community they have been categorised into have a language, or languages, in addition to English, they are deemed as having incomplete knowledge of English and being in need

of remedial support in English. García and Alvis (2019), following Mignolo (2015), have pointed out that the epistemology from which the minoritised speakers are observed and described and taught in the standard educational system is, of course, not their own epistemology. In the refugee population in Western Europe, there are numerous cases of people who are highly educated and skilled, with knowledge of several languages, but had to flee their home countries because of war, political and religious persecution, or natural disasters. Their social status does not render them linguistically or professionally less competent. Yet they are often treated by the system as inferior and in need of charity. Amongst the so-called economic migrants, the motivation for learning the society's dominant languages is usually very high as they want to get jobs, earn a good living, and support the family. Where we do find cases of migrants lagging behind in acquiring the dominant language of their newly found homes, it is usually because they have been discriminated against and stigmatised (Dabach 2014). In Britain, lack of English is often used as an excuse for the under-employment of certain immigrant and ethnic minority communities, especially women of these communities. Yet, when one looks at the opportunities for these people to learn English, they are hardly there. Public funding for free English language classes for adult learners of minority ethnic backgrounds has been withdrawn. As a result, some of the eager ethnic minority learners are put into adult literacy classes, which were meant for those who have had interrupted education and are in need of developing their reading and writing skills. There are reports that competitions for the limited places on adult literacy classes between white working-class learners and ethnic minority learners have led to tensions between the communities (Hamilton and Merrifield 2000). Yet the official discourse has always been "English is the language of social integration and community cohesion" for the immigrants and members of ethnic minority communities. Del Percio and Wong (2019) have critiqued some of the current policies and practices regarding English language for employment for refugees, migrant workers, and ethnic minorities in England.

Internal differences amongst the immigrant and ethnic minority communities themselves tend to be ignored in the macro social policies of governmental institutions, which treat individuals within the communities as if they are all the same. "Diversity from within" is one of the toughest policy challenges regarding minoritised communities. There are significant differences in tribal membership, religious affiliation, and, of course, language in many immigrant and ethnic minority communities. Terms such as the Asian community, Chinese community, Italian community, Black community, or Hispanic community neglect many of these very important differences – differences that are particularly meaningful from within the communities concerned. Over time, communities change and develop, and intergenerational differences occur. One of the persistent questions that ethnic minority communities of all kinds have to address is how to manage language maintenance and language shift across generations. Whilst some communities

seem to have managed to maintain their ethnic languages better than others, few have been able to resist the intergenerational language shift altogether. Linguistic ideologies play a crucial role here. Some believe that language maintenance is important primarily for identity reasons. To be a member of a community, one needs to be able to speak the language of that community. Yet, in recent decades we have seen a new kind of ethnic and racial awakening – a complex combination of increased awareness about the social position that the ethnic minority community is assigned in society and a desire to have a more powerful voice in social life. It is a much deeper understanding of what it means to be an ethnic minority or descendent of an immigrant, which involves their personal experiences and/or observations, education, and sociopolitical activism. This is best seen in the claim amongst minoritised communities in the USA and Britain that English is also their language. Many of the Somali youths we interviewed in our recent study of their multilingual practices in London explicitly argued that English is their language too. And they are very proud of the fact that they use English as a primary language of communication in their everyday life (see Abdullahi and Li, 2021). This is not about not wanting to be bilingual or multilingual; these youths know Somali too. But to them, the different named languages – Somali, English, etc. – carry very different socio-historical sensitivities and significance. Therefore, maintaining the boundaries between these languages carries a special meaning. What is particularly interesting is that most of the Somali youths who expressed a desire to claim English as their language also reported experiences of racism. In fact, experiences of discrimination and injustice seem to be a key factor in triggering their ethnic consciousness. The following quote from one of the youth leaders from our interviews is very telling:

English is the language of the Britain. Fine. I'm British. We are British too. Just because I'm Black doesn't mean that I can't speak English. I speak English just as good. English is my language too.

Such claims of language ownership and language rights present new challenges to language policy making. Policies that are aimed purely at maintaining, protecting, and supporting the ethnic community languages seem no longer sufficient to meet the needs of all members of the minority communities.

In the last few years, I have been involved in developing the concept of translanguaging along with other researchers in education, linguistics, and psychology (e.g., Garcia and Li 2014; Li 2018). Translanguaging wants to remind people that named languages are political constructs, and human communication is a fluid, dynamic, and multi-scalar process that involves the use of a diversity of semiotic means. The so-called multilinguals are people who have developed an awareness of the social existence of the named languages through socialisation in context as well as the structural differences

and similarities between the named languages, and know how to manipulate these differences and similarities for meaning-making. Translanguaging has been explored in the context of language education, including the education of ethnic minority children, and of cognition. The relevance of translanguaging for language policy has been touched upon in the context of revitalisation of minority and endangered languages – indeed, the concept has its origin in minority language revitalisation and bilingual programmes as a pedagogical approach against monolingual language policies in schools. Translanguaging clearly advocates a breaking of the boundaries between named languages. It argues from a position that all human languages are contact languages, and human languages evolve through contacts with each other. Mixing and borrowing are key mechanisms of linguistic change over time for all human languages. Language attrition, loss, and endangerment are very unfortunate linguistic consequences of social change. We have seen tremendous, admirable efforts and investment in minority language revitalisation and endangered language conservation. Some of the efforts, however, take a monolingual approach, such as trying to write a dictionary and a grammar of a named language when there is no monolingual speaker of that language any more, or imposing monolingual policies in order to promote the teaching and learning of a minority language to a new generation of speakers who naturally know other languages. We need to ask ourselves very tough questions: In whose interests are these efforts being made? Who are the real beneficiaries of these efforts? Can any language survive without mixing with and borrowing from other languages? Fundamentally, we need to re-evaluate the dichotomies between majority versus minority languages, indigenous versus immigrant languages, or native versus foreign languages, and do away with the one-nation-state/community/person = one-language ideology. The re-evaluation and re-assessment should lead to a rethinking of language policies, including language-in-education policies, and move towards inclusion and equity across communities and social groups.

Li Wei: In terms of the work you have done, do you see commodification as harbinger of growth or decline in relation to minority languages?

Helen: Commodification is a concept that I've grappled with for a long time in my own work, and that struggle is still going on (for a critique of the concept of language commodification in applied linguistics, see Block 2018). The concept of commodification, of course, refers to the introduction of exchange values and relations into domains that were previously considered to be outside of such exchange values and relations. While commodification has become (not always accurately) synonymous with use in commercial settings and exploitation for commercial purposes, as Jackie Urla (2012) has pointed out, as soon as we “thingify” languages (Silverstein 1996), i.e., start to think about them, produce meta discourses about them, name them,

count them (Moore, Pietikäinen and Blommaert 2010), plan them, and crucially try to engineer people's behaviour in relation to language(s), we are already commodifying them. They take on a life of their own; they move from verbs to nouns (see Pennycook and Makoni 2007). While we can see this as a type of reification or thingification, language policy and planning (LPLP) for minority languages can be seen as a type of commodification of languages, particularly when we understand commodities in terms of their usefulness, and LPLP as a restoration of usefulness, even though it is in fact often seen as a response to or a defence against commodification processes understood as marketisation.

Arjun Appadurai's (1986) understanding of commodities and commodification (the process of becoming a commodity) has proven very helpful for me in terms of understanding the position of minority languages. He reminds us that commodities are best seen in terms of usefulness or utility – so a commodity is something that is useful and, therefore by extension, valuable. With his insight, we can see how the minoritisation of languages involves a process of the loss of utility – sometimes deliberate and direct, sometimes as a consequence of other policies and events – thus rendering them useless for communicative functions beyond immediate – and generally undervalued – family, community, and intimate domains. This was certainly the case for Irish, which was the object (i.e., thingified) of a policy of marginalisation by the occupying British Crown. Economic policies and their disastrous consequences also rendered the language “useless,” and as parents prepared their children for emigration to the USA, primarily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, English rapidly assumed “useful” and thus valuable status. The cultural-nationalist movement at the end of the nineteenth century targeted the revival of Irish, particularly for symbolic purposes; however, it was only with the establishment of the independent state that an attempt was made to reinstate Irish as a language of utility with wide communicative functions. Creating utility value for Irish while simultaneously increasing the symbolic value of the language resulted in an era that Muiris Ó Laoire has described as that of the “mega-policy” (2005) involving corpus, status, and acquisition planning.

One reason for the introduction of such “mega-policies” is to mitigate the effects of market economics and logics on minoritised languages and effectively to protect them either by sheltering them from the unfettered interplay of demand and supply which would have condemned most minoritised languages to die out – as has been the case across the globe – and/or to create a kind of protected market for them. So, for instance, language policies which require that a minority language be used for certain official and public functions and in domains such as education are automatically creating a demand for speakers of those languages, which in turn stimulates (or should stimulate) a supply – i.e., encourage people to maintain their language and/or promote language learning as attractive for those who do not already know the language. Appadurai (1986) terms this kind of protection from the market

“enclaving,” and enclaved commodities are deemed out of bounds for the rough and tumble of market economics. However, interestingly, the enclaving process itself can result in further commodification possibilities. For example, because of its protected, minoritised status, the language is not mainstream, and thus becomes something rare and valuable in an era of globalisation and increasing homogenisation. “Small languages” can thus achieve a kind of “exclusivity” in relation to the big, ubiquitous languages of the world (Pietikäinen et al. 2016). For example, a previously stigmatised and devalued Danish dialect, Bornholman, has been used to enhance the value of what was previously considered mundane food from the eponymous island in Denmark, in an exclusive restaurant in Copenhagen (Maegaard and Karrebæk 2019). In this way, minoritised languages can offer a “luxury register” in Appadurai’s words precisely because they are not widely spoken or known.

This “commercialisation” has been an interesting side-effect of language revitalisation policies, whereby private companies start to use the minoritised language because of its symbolic value. However, this symbolic value is dependent on the utility value of the language not really increasing substantially – if we think of utility as the range of communicative functions across which the language can be used. If the language situation became “normalised,” which is generally the goal of status, corpus, and acquisition planning as part of revitalisation, the language would ironically lose this “luxury register” and would become ultimately a practice, rather than a thing. On the other hand, use of the respective language in these commercial ways, particularly where they are linked to a kind of “peripheral cool,” as Mireille McLaughlin (2013) has described, can have a substantial, positive effect on attitudes towards the minoritised language. Traditionally, we may have thought that a language had to have utility in order to have symbolic value, but we can see here how having symbolic value can make a language seem more appealing and attractive to learn and, crucially, to use.

So, commodification is not a new or straightforward process in relation to minority languages, and it is also not simply carried out by one “side” or the other with predictable consequences. It is helpful to think of the commodification (the thingification) that is carried out by language policy and language planning agents and agencies and that carried out by commercial actors as inextricably linked and interdependent rather than as two separate or even competing and incompatible forces – the former being always to the betterment of and the latter being always to the detriment of the revitalization of minority languages, as the traditional dichotomy has been framed.

Helen: You have researched multilingual practices in heritage language schools. Do any of the models of language management work in this context?

Li Wei: Heritage language schools, or complementary schools as they are called in the UK, for immigrant and ethnic minority children have been an

important socio-political, educational movement in many different countries, especially in Europe and North America, for well over half a century. They have made a major impact on the lives of thousands of children and their families of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. I see them as a site of contestation of competing ideologies and policies – socio-political, educational, as well as language ideologies and policies. First of all, we need to understand the socio-political history of such schools. In Britain, the first group of complementary schools emerged in the late 1960s for children of Afro-Caribbean families. It was a direct response by Afro-Caribbean parents, who were very dissatisfied with what their children received from mainstream education at the time. In particular, they felt that the mainstream school curriculum often failed to reflect the interests, experiences, and culture of the Afro-Caribbean community. As Chevannes and Reeves (1987, 159) put it:

The existence of the black voluntary school is predicated on the black population's unsatisfactory experience and appraisal of British education – an experience composed of all the classical ingredients of social alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, social isolation and self-estrangement.

Although bilingualism was never a main concern of the Afro-Caribbean schools, language was still a key issue. There was a widespread perception in the British society at the time that at least part of Afro-Caribbean children's under-achievement in mainstream schools could be attributed to their "poor" English language proficiency. The children were deemed to be speaking a variety of English that was different from Standard British English. Little recognition was given to the well-formedness of what was later known as the Black English Vernacular, nor to its importance in developing new identities for its speakers and communities. Instead, public debate centred around the so-called "restricted" versus "elaborated" codes (Bernstein 1974) and their perceived effects on Afro-Caribbean children's school achievements (see Edwards 1983, for a critique).

A second wave of the complementary schools movement in Britain came in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the main advocates were the Muslim communities of South Asian and African origins. Muslim parents wanted separate, religious schools for their children because they believed that their children's religious traditions were more likely to flourish if taught by committed adherents in an environment free from what they regard as the antagonistic influences of either the Christian-dominated or secular ethos of mainstream schools. They asked for equal rights to the Anglican, Catholic, or Jewish communities, who were able to have their own schools. Language was clearly a major concern for the Muslim schools, and it was closely intertwined with religion. Arabic was widely taught alongside a range of community languages in order for the children to be able to read the Koran.

After a series of unsuccessful attempts to secure government funding, the first two Muslim schools received official recognition and support in 1998, one year after the New Labour government came to power.

At around the same time as the Muslim communities in the UK were urging for separate education for their children, a number of other immigrant communities began to set up their own complementary schools with an aim to maintain their linguistic and cultural heritage. For example, the Chinese, the Turkish, and the Greek communities set up a significant number of schools in England and Scotland for their British-born generations. These schools were really weekend classes, and they were truly complementary in the sense that their organisers never asked for a separate education for their children. Instead, classes were run at weekends or outside normal school hours to provide additional teaching of the community languages and cultures. There are now more of this type of community language school and classes than separate schools for Muslims and Afro-Caribbeans combined.

Although the specific social context in which these three broad types of complementary schools in the UK were set up differed, there was one common feature – they were set up in response to the failure of the mainstream education system to meet the needs of the ethnic minority children and their communities. Despite the public debates over pluralistic, multicultural education over the decades, UK governments have made no real attempt to address the criticisms that the mainstream education system was disabling and disempowering ethnic minority children and their communities. Instead, various governments have tried to make use of the complementary schools for their own political and economic agendas. The apparent success of the Chinese community schools has been used by politicians and other policymakers to argue that ethnic minorities were better off with “self-reliance” and to cut back already limited funding in the local education authorities’ budgets for bilingual classroom assistants. Complementary schools and classes were further marginalised as a result. They were seen as a minority concern and were left with ethnic minority communities to deal with themselves.

While challenging the policies and practices of mainstream education in the UK, which has remained largely monolingual in English only, complementary schools raise a number of important questions about themselves. For instance, one of the principal objectives the complementary schools in the country have set themselves is the maintenance of linguistic knowledge and cultural identity amongst the British-born generations. How successful have the complementary schools been in achieving this objective? More importantly perhaps, what is this “cultural identity” that the schools and communities wish to maintain? Do parents and children share the same idea and vision about their identities? It is often said that identity is a dynamic rather than a static concept; it is negotiable and changeable; it is conditioned by context but can be manipulated by individuals, groups, and institutions for different purposes. Complementary schools are an important social

context for developing identities for the immigrant and ethnic minority children attending them. What impact this specific context has on the children's identity development is an issue worth further investigation.

Complementary schools also raise questions regarding pedagogy and classroom management. It is obvious and understandable that the schools want to insist on using specific community languages in this particular domain. Nevertheless, the long-term consequence of such compartmentalisation of community languages is an issue of concern, apart from the practical difficulty of maintaining a strict non-English-speaking policy in the schools. It has been observed that teachers in complementary schools and classes often resort to English when they have failed to explain new terms and concepts in the community languages that they are teaching. Such practices, however, would reinforce the status of English as the dominant language of society.

Community language schools have evolved and continue to evolve with the societal changes that are taking place around them. They raise a wide range of questions way beyond management of languages. Language management models can benefit from examining the issues that emerge from this major, worldwide socio-educational movement. These schools have proven to be a key institution that makes conscious and explicit efforts to control language choices for specific communities. They produce and reproduce certain cultural and linguistic ideologies through community-specific discourses and in response to wider societal policies and pressures. They are socio-historical products. Language management models need to examine the role of such institutions in society, the way they construct their discourses, and factors that impact on the effectiveness of achieving their own stated objectives. Crucially, language management models need to pay more attention to the interfaces of the linguistic, communicative, historical, socio-cultural, and economic-political dimensions of decision-making of such institutions.

Li Wei: What is happening in relation to language policy online?

Helen: The challenges of the emerging smart web, or what is called Web 4.0, not only affect languages and speakers profoundly but all aspects of our society, as technology begins to mainstream and integrates into everyday life. So, it is less and less meaningful to think of language policy as either online or offline, and it is a key moment to examine the readiness and relevance of language policy to deal with the challenges of integrating technologies and to ask how we got to this point. In the early days of online media, there was a justified concern that this new technology would simply be another means by which more languages would become endangered and ultimately disappear. I say justified because we can see the early days as a good example of a *de facto* policy of English monolingualism. The early Internet and later World Wide Web pioneers were operating in their

own linguistic milieu and were developing the medium for their own limited purposes and their thoughts rarely, if ever, turned to the language needs of users beyond this group. The “pioneering” nature of the early developers also meant that there would have been resistance to attempts to control and manage behaviours through mechanisms like language policy. The World Wide Web, which delivered content for the Internet, was founded on a particular conception of equality that implicitly promoted monolingualism. It was established on the principle that it should be the same everywhere for all users. This, by inference and by assumption at the time, particularly given the context outlined above, meant that it should be monolingual, i.e., in English. In this particular conceptualisation of equality and homogeneity, multilingualism would have been divisive and damaging. We have seen many such examples in language policy, whereby equality and fairness are used as arguments for promoting monolingualism and excluding multilingualism. For instance, France where monolingualism and linguistic unity was considered pivotal in fostering solidarity and fraternity and ensuring equality (Wright 2004, 31–32).

Crucially, as technology changed, as the purposes for which the Internet and later the WWW had been designed for expanded and its political-economic base changed, as a more diverse group of developers and users became involved, multilingualism began to happen, albeit in a partial and incoherent way. Again, there was no overall authority that could impose a top-down language policy, although as the WWW began to be carved up into specific top-level domains for particular countries, respective governments attempted to extend territorially and nationally based language policies to these top-level domains. At first, and perhaps inevitably, it was “big” languages that started to appear more online. However, this was limited to languages based on the Roman alphabet, until the technology enabling non-ASCII-based scripts was developed and improved, to allow the development of other “big” languages such as Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and Russian. Still here at this point in time, we are dealing with top-down decisions about which languages should be provided and to whom, and the work that is being done here is by language professionals largely.

With the emergence of a number of interactive features that are summed up by the term “Web 2.0,” this dynamic changed and multilingualism in fact exploded. The participatory web has completely changed and challenged the model of top-down provision and online language policy, with users creating and “gifting” a lot of localised language content. A particularly well-known and early example was the Facebook translations app (see Lenihan 2013, for an extensive study). Social network Facebook was originally available only in English; however, when the company decided to become multilingual to expand its market, instead of going down the multilingual provision route, it implemented a crowdsourcing solution, developing an app that users could download. The availability of languages on the app for localisation by users was determined by user demand. The

translation community consisted of users who participated in the app, and this community voted individual users' translations up and down. While there was a final moderation step by Facebook, the process overall bypassed language professionals. There was no need to "prove" any kind of language ownership or expertise in order to participate in the translation of Facebook into that particular language. Now, with users doing all the work, the number of languages that can be provided becomes potentially limitless.

Currently, it would seem that we are in a period of intensified but isolated tailoring and personalising of online language provision. We no longer have to "choose" our language options because they are already chosen for us based on our previous online behaviour, location data, etc. Multilingual provision is still taking place (see, for example, Berezkina 2018), and will continue to take place alongside this. And, despite the technological advances, monolingual mindsets do still underpin a lot of technological development, although this is changing as the players in these industries become somewhat more linguistically diversified. And still, for many in the world, accessing digital technology, where that access is even physically or economically possible, involves language shift to a "bigger" language. So, a key question for us today is who makes online language policy for us? On the one hand, we can think of this as being done by technology – the technology learns our language behaviour and gives us more of what we like linguistically; on the other hand, we are feeding the technology through our language behaviour, so in a sense it could also be argued that we are making and deciding our own language policies without the intervention of a macro or meso level.

Helen: Given everything that is happening in relation to online multilingualism, how does technology impact on intergenerational communication and Family Language Policy?

Li Wei: First of all, let me say something about the term "Family Language Policy," as many people feel that much of the work in this expanding field is on practice rather than policy in the conventional sense. It is absolutely true that in Family Language Policy research, the focus is on everyday practices, which may be classified as covert, unintentional policies. But a key concern in Family Language Policy research is how members of the family, of different generations, collectively make decisions regarding their language practices within and beyond the home domain, why, and whether the decisions change over time for what reasons (see also King and Curdt-Christensen, volume 1). In some sense, it is not about policy as a static entity but the process of policymaking.

Inter-generational communication is key to family dynamics and well-being, and it is an issue that all families have to face. When it comes to families where different generations have different language learning experiences, different proficiencies in different languages, and, more importantly, different understandings of the values of the languages and, therefore, different

attitudes towards them, inter-generational communication becomes a key site for language policy and management considerations. It is often assumed that in immigrant and ethnic minority families, the older generations naturally want to hold on to their ethnic languages and do not want language shift towards the majority languages to happen within the family. But we have ample evidence from our research, as well as in other people's work (Pauwels 2016), that processes of language maintenance and language shift are complex and dynamic, and it is rarely a one-directional phenomenon (see also Lane and Wigglesworth, volume 1; Anthonissen and Stroud, volume 1). In fact, many immigrant parents are very keen for their children to acquire and develop competence in the majority languages. And in many cases, they themselves also want to develop competence in those languages in order to improve their socio-economic standing. But in most cases, such families do not want to lose the languages they already have either. So, what they want is not replacing the ethnic languages with the majority languages, but developing bilingual and multilingual competence. We also have evidence that youths of immigrant and ethnic minority backgrounds want to develop a good level of knowledge of the ethnic languages in their post-teenage years as they develop better understanding of their identities and the benefits of being bilingual and multilingual (Lanza 2020; Lanza and Lexander 2019; Golden and Lanza 2019).

Recently we have undertaken a survey of language and literacy practices in transnational families in Britain as part of a project on family language policy. One of the interesting findings is the significance of mobile devices and digital social media in family. All the 783 families who responded to our survey reported that they used mobile devices and digital social media for communication. A significant proportion (64%) of the families reported that they gave children digital readers instead of bed-time stories. And all the multilingual families used English as well as other languages in their social media communication. New communication technologies have had a huge impact on our daily lives, and when they are used appropriately, they can be an important facilitator in acquiring, maintaining, and developing multilingual competence.

It is true that some elderly people might find the digital mobile devices a challenge, especially if one comes from a linguistic background that does not use the Roman alphabet, which is used for the input systems on most devices. But some are able to make it an opportunity to learn a new language via digital devices. In the Chinese families that we have studied, for example, we see many British-born Chinese children and adolescents using the alphabetic input to learn Chinese characters. Some sound-to-text conversion software also enables them to write messages to their parents and grandparents in their ethnic languages.

One of the most interesting features of the digital communications between different generations in the immigrant and ethnic minority families is that the messages exchanged between them are multilingual and

multimodal but rarely fall into a monolingual norm or standard. In the Polish families in London that we studied, we see parents and children communicating by social media with English, Polish (although not using standard spelling and rarely with diacritics), emoji, and other signs (Zhu, Li and Lyons 2015). From a monolingual or a linguistic purism perspective, such writings would not be acceptable. But they are what dynamic multilingual inter-generational communication is about in the era of social media. And they may well have a long-lasting effect on the named language systems. They certainly impact on family dynamics, which we need to understand much more through further research.

Concluding remarks

When we penned the outline for our joint contribution to this volume, we used the phrase “changing context” with a good degree of certainty and confidence about what those changes might entail. Now, as we deliver our chapter and conclusion, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, writing from “lock-down” situations. We are fortunate to be comfortable, safe, and able to work, but entirely at a loss as to how to “move forward” with life across the globe on hold and with very little understanding of what the “changing context” we are actually going to be facing might look like. While technology was already essential to everyday life, its integration and mainstreaming are now becoming complete: It mediates our work, our friendships, our intergenerational family networks, our healthcare, our consumption. As we have seen in China, South Korea, and other countries, technology is part of the way in which we can get back to some kind of normality while living with COVID-19. Ironically, by being online through tracking and contact-tracing apps, we may actually be permitted to live offline a bit more. And what will the linguistic dimensions and consequences of this be? Where are multilingualism and heritage languages in this conversation or might they be consigned to the non-essential category? We note that in the UK government’s listing of “key workers” – frontline workers fighting against COVID-19, including National Health Service (NHS) staff and social care workers, school and nursery staff, the police, firefighters and the army, supermarket staff and transport workers, etc. – interpreters for community languages, including British Sign Language, are not included. In fact, the standard practices in the NHS to provide translation and interpreting for ethnic minority patients are not followed in this crisis. Some communities have managed to translate public health information into their languages. But there is no specific support for languages other than English. In China, where the virus first occurred, there have been reports of communication failures due to the mutually unintelligible regional languages people spoke. There are also numerous examples of people trying to get information across to each other through social media in the absence of an adequate response by

formal governmental agencies or, indeed, under surveillance and censorship. In Britain, many bilingual and multilingual families are concerned that the space for home languages, which they have carefully nurtured over the years, has been taken over by English because of homeschooling and working from home (see also Hardach 2020, which mentions Lanza's work on this issue).

During this crisis, many parts of the world have witnessed the rehabilitation of experts and big government both of which had been marginalised in the intensive globalisation we have been living through. What elements of that era will remain post-COVID-19? And how has the language of the crisis framed what the post-COVID-19 world will look like? What will become of travel and intercultural experiences, a mainstay of university education which is severely under threat for the current and possibly also future academic years? What will be seen as essential to education and to social and cultural life in a worldwide depression that is being forecast as the worst in almost a century? Overall, the response has been a communal one, and people have been prepared to forego civil liberties for the greater good and for their fellow human beings. Will the individualisation and personalisation that are features of contemporary digital experiences be challenged by a rediscovery of "community"? What will become of our familiar landscapes – our towns and cities? Which businesses, practices, and traditions will survive this crushing pause? Will it be a victory for the homogenising chains, or will small, local and ethnic businesses have the flexibility to adapt to this new existence? All of these questions and more about the current global crisis are crucial for us to think about as we attempt to understand, navigate, and shape what language policy might look like in the post-COVID-19 world.

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2 Language, Pedagogy, and Active Participant Engagement

Gaze in the Multilingual Landscape

Elana Shohamy and Alastair Pennycook

Introduction

This chapter points to several current ways in which linguistic landscape (LL) research has been expanding – a wider geopolitical scope, a broader semiotics, an ethnographic understanding of signs in place, and an emphasis on pedagogical affordances – towards a focus on pedagogy, awareness, and activism. Building on the work of Lanza and her collaborators (Blackwood, Lanza and Woldemariam 2016; Lanza and Woldemariam 2014), and the geopolitical and interpretive extensions they have brought to the field of LL, we point in this chapter to the significance of pedagogical action in relation to LLs, where students learn how to observe, notice, engage, and critically interpret the LL, with potential for developing student activism. Several approaches to LLs have raised the question of active participant engagement. At one level, this is a question of the interpretive element as LLs only have meaning when people make sense of the embedded signs. At another level, however, this has involved a more pedagogical focus, investigating ways in which the LL can be used by learners in schools to promote critical awareness of multilingual spaces (Hayik 2017).

In this chapter we take these questions further by looking at how students can become more aware of social and linguistic injustices and inequalities in the landscape but also engage in corrective transformative actions of the landscape. What is perceived in the LL is highly dependent on the positionality of the viewer – the linguistic, political, racial, or ethnic gaze through which people read the landscape – and thus what is proposed for change is dependent on both what is seen and how corrective action is understood. This has implications for multilingual educational policies, the ways students perceive mutual ownership of public space, and the role LL pedagogies can play in developing activist student engagement focused on social change. In the first part of the chapter, we provide a brief overview of developments in LL research. This is followed by a discussion of three studies of the LL in Israel that raise questions about awareness, injustice, and activism with regard to inclusion, equality, and justice. The subsequent discussion raises questions about activism, pedagogy, and the student gaze.

**Geopolitical, semiotic, ethnographic,
and pedagogical extensions**

From its central focus on linguistic signs in public spaces and the relation between identifiable languages in the environment and wider domains of multilingualism and language policy, LL research has expanded in several directions: The geopolitical, semiotic, ethnographic, and pedagogical. The first has been an opening up to both global and Southern perspectives. From its inception, LL has focused predominantly on languages found on signage in public places, where the “linguistic” refers principally to named languages or textual inscriptions, the “landscape” denotes the public space in which these signs occur, and the geopolitical domain has been predominantly in the global North. While this linguistic-textual orientation has itself expanded toward multiple languages and modalities, studies from the global South expanded the scope in important ways (Blackwood, Lanza and Woldemariam 2016). Of importance from this perspective are studies of how languages, such as English (particularly through various brand names and their appropriation), in cities, such as Addis Ababa (Lanza and Woldemariam 2014), have been perceived as prestigious, and how such perceptions are linked to social and economic aspirations and the functions of language in late modernity.

A second expansion has taken the landscape as the primary focus and asks how such material spaces can be viewed in semiotic terms. While this distinction is not always clear (as with all the distinctions here, these developments are neither linear nor discreet), in its strongest form this approach to LL reverses the priorities of the language-in-the-landscape framework by developing a landscape-as-language framework, potentially eschewing any reference to named languages. This, then, is a focus on the landscape itself as a set of signs, where landscape is foreground rather than background, signs are semiotic items rather than forms of public signage, and the term “language,” if it is used, may be an umbrella term for social semiotics rather than referring to particular linguistic varieties. Not only has LL research from this perspective made salient a wide range of public spaces – streets, and virtual spaces – but it has shifted the focus of study towards a broad semiotics that includes graffiti, transport, and mobility (Pennycook 2009, 2019; Karlander 2018), multimodal analyses of monuments (Waksman and Shohamy 2016), tattoos and embodiment (Peck and Stroud 2015), smells (Pennycook and Otsuji 2015), and other interpretable domains, such as markets (Lou 2017). From this perspective, the “linguistic” in the LL focuses not so much on named languages and scripts as on a wide array of social semiotic resources (Shohamy 2015).

A third expansion has raised the question of the processes by which we interpret LL texts. As broader discussions of text and discourse analysis have suggested, we cannot rely solely on textual analysis to understand

meaning, and we need to get beyond the idea that “a chunk of discourse has only *one* function and *one* meaning” (Blommaert 2005, 34). This position raises several concerns for LL research, suggesting that discourse analysis of language in public space alone will never suffice: We need an ethnographic understanding of how texts got there, what work they do, and who reads them. Rather than making assumptions about authorial intent, it is important to include the context of a sign; the history of the place where it is displayed; the intended audience; social, cultural, and political institutions; the reactions of passers-by; and customers (whether signs are intended for them or not) (Malinowski 2009; Trumper-Hecht 2010). Blommaert (2013, 107) therefore urges the use of ethnographic understandings of the LL: we have to account for “complexity as an empirical feature of sociolinguistic superdiversity.” The LL is part of our social fabric, produced, deciphered, lived in, resisted, and a site of identity formation and contestation (Williams and Lanza 2016). Different religious LLs in Addis Ababa presented by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church – a marker of national identity – and Protestant religious communities – subsequently introduced to Ethiopia by foreign missionaries – serve as a platform for evangelization, contestation, debate, and understanding (Woldemariam and Lanza 2012).

A final development (though this overview is not intended in such a short space to be comprehensive) addresses the educational possibilities of LL projects. Different projects have ranged from using the LL as a source of linguistic input to developing critical awareness of school and neighbourhood multilingualism (and the disparities between the two) (Dagenais et al. 2009; Gorter and Cenoz 2015; Malinowski 2015). Sending students out to document the LLs that surround them can bring much deeper awareness of languages in the environment as well as afford significant learning opportunities back in the classroom. Intervening in educational spaces (shifting from monolingual to multilingual LLs), it has been shown, can have major effects on children, families, school policies, and educational possibilities (Menken, Rosario and Valerio 2018). The pedagogical possibilities afforded by critical LL awareness open up questions about why certain languages are present or absent, which link to questions of immigration, ethnic suburbs, discrimination, marginalization of minorities, and languages within a wider set of political and economic relations (Hayik 2017). For Shohamy and Waksman (2009, 314), LLs not only provide a site for research but also enable sites for “critical pedagogy, activism, and language rights.” Building on these developments in LL research and pedagogy, we now turn specifically to questions of critical language awareness and activism.

From critical language awareness to critical language activism

It is into this expanded LL space that this chapter now moves by looking at research that examines how students can become more aware of social and linguistic injustices in the landscape and how they can engage in changing

these landscapes. A key element of many of the pedagogical orientations to LL is critical language awareness (CLA), which Alim, focusing on contexts of language use in the USA, explains as helping students become aware of the ways in which education and other institutions “silence diverse languages in White public space by inculcating speakers of heterogeneous language varieties into what are, at their core, White ways of speaking and seeing the word/world, that is, the norms of White, middleclass, heterosexist males” (Alim 2005, 28). The relations of language, race, gender, ethnicity, and religion in the Israeli contexts that we will be examining in this chapter are different, and yet the general concerns remain the same: Critical exposure to various LLs is an effective tool for noticing social, political, and linguistic injustices.

These first two studies examined language awareness among tertiary students in Israel. The studies showed the potential for LL pedagogies to develop increased language-political awareness. One study (Shohamy and Abu Ghazaleh Mahajneh 2012) focused on the reactions of university students toward the LL in their academic studies at a major university in Israel. While Arabic and Hebrew are displayed in their hometowns, and Arabic is the language of instruction in their schools, when they come to the university they are faced with a situation where Hebrew is the only language of instruction and English is the language of academic texts; Arabic does not exist. Almost all the LL signs on campus are in Hebrew, some are in English, and there are hardly any signs in Arabic. In the study by Shohamy and Abu Ghazaleh Mahajneh (2012), the attitudes and reactions of Arab students towards these language representations were assessed via interviews. The students felt that Arabic should have a more important role to play, as it was completely marginalized and overlooked.

They said that the university needs to translate the signs for Arab students in order to show respect, even if students understand the meaning of signs written in Hebrew. One of the students explained, “I understand the meaning of the signs, but prefer that these signs will be translated in order to provide us with some rights at the university.” Another student said that signs in Arabic are important since “more than a fifth of the students at this university are Arabs”; further, a student argued that “translation is necessary since it is a sign of respect and the least they can do.” One student wrote that putting the signs in Arabic grants legitimacy to its speakers and shows that Arab students are an integral part of the university. The Arab students accepted the dominance of Hebrew but believed that displaying the signs on campus in Arabic would show that the university grants them respect, empowerment, legitimacy, recognition, rights, belonging, and symbolic value.

Half of the students noted that the lack of Arabic in public spaces at the university should be interpreted as a violation of their human and personal rights. The students also reacted to electronic signs and especially to aural announcements, such as those heard over the loudspeakers in the library

and the students' housing area. They felt their cultural identity was diminished since the lack of Arabic implied marginalization. An interesting finding was that the students were pessimistic about the future and could not see how the situation would ever change. This view about the future, they noted, led them to become less active and engaged in taking any steps to try and affect change in the signs on campus. The bilingual Hebrew/English policy reinforces and confirms their feelings that this is a permanent reality that will never change. This view can be interpreted as a sign that they internalized their inferior status in relation to a "Jewish Israeli" at the university, that they do not really count and have no participatory role to play. In other words, while the Shohamy and Abu Ghazaleh Mahajneh study was able to show students' awareness of the discriminatory LL at the university, it did not suggest an increased sense of activism. It suggested in fact just the opposite: A tendency to *surrender* to the perceived reality and comply with de facto policy rather than act.

In the second study of students in Israel, Goldstein-Havazki (2011) examined the development of LL awareness by Arab high-school students. Ten Arab students were each asked to document 15 signs in the neighborhood in Jaffa where they reside. Jaffa is part of the mixed city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa; most Arab-Israelis in the city live in the Jaffa section, making up about a third of the population there. The students were given pre- and post-survey questionnaires about the visibility of Arabic, Hebrew, and English in their neighborhoods. They were then asked to analyze and reflect on LL representation in the area. The main finding was that, contrary to what the students thought at the beginning of the study – that Arabic would be a dominant language in their neighborhoods in Jaffa given the large number of Arabic residents living there – Arabic had very low representation in the LL in the public space in relation to Hebrew and even English, even among the shop owners some of whom are their own close relatives.

This awareness – originating from engagement with actual data which they themselves were trained to collect and document – does not simply stop at a level of understanding. It also produced a range of affective and ideological responses. There were feelings of frustration when the full extent of the lack of Arabic became apparent: "I don't have any comments because look, from all of the signs I analyzed, this was (the only) restaurant sign which was written in Arabic and in Hebrew." Some were at least able to notice the positive in the occasional multilingual usage: "Only Mr. Buckhary, whose sign on his private medical clinic was in three languages, English, Hebrew, and Arabic, this made me very pleased!" Students also raised questions about the hierarchical relations among languages in Israel. One student, reacting to a danger sign where Arabic was displayed in the last place noted: "And I ask myself why is English written before Arabic? Arabic is the second official language in Israel, isn't that so? And I live in a city where all inhabitants or most of them are Arabs or Arabic speakers." For some students, it was a question of respect: "If Hebrew and English appear on the sign, at least

they should add Arabic for the Arab inhabitants so they will understand the point of respect.” For others, it was a question of exclusion, as if the Arabic-speaking community was not concerned with certain questions; in response to a sign in Jaffa presented only in Hebrew asking residents not to pollute the environment, one student asked: “Environmental protection also isn’t related to Arabs???”

For some of these students, this turned into resentment and criticism of their own community as they realized that even Arab-Israelis gave in to the hegemony of Hebrew: “Most of the store-owners in Jaffa are Arabs, so why don’t they put Arabic on the sign of their stores? We are proud to be Arabs, so why don’t we show the whole world that we are proud Arabs?” Some provided quite explicit criticisms of the ways they saw their own community had taken on board not just dominant state ideologies concerning languages but also broader language ideologies. For example, one said:

Yefet is the main street in Jaffa or the longest and most known to everybody. Instead of keeping this place as an Arabic area, we change our language and prefer to write the signs in Hebrew to attract more customers and that the sign will turn to everyone, with the fact that most of the customers are Arabs from Jaffa who understand Arabic very well.

This is a private sign that a person from Jaffa decided in which language this sign should be written, without any involvement of the state. This means that even Arabs slowly began to think that Hebrew was more beautiful and better, and sometimes they were ashamed of Arabic (translated from Hebrew).

Another student offered an analogy that indeed links these language ideologies to Alim’s (2005) discussion of critical language awareness and race in the USA (above):

This research reminds me of a research which was conducted in the U.S.A. on black and white dolls for little children, where the black girls chose the white dolls because even in their thoughts and hearts they thought white was more beautiful than black and that this was a symbol for beauty.

(Translated from Hebrew)

The reactions of these students to the LL when they realized that Arabic was not dominant in their own neighborhood revealed feelings of discrimination, marginalization, and a lack of respect. It also created motivation among the students to change and transform their neighborhoods, and getting back to their families, discussing the issue of LL with them, and demanding a change for more Arabic representation in the public space. The study opened their

eyes to things they had not noticed before about the community where they lived, creating a call for change.

The first implication of the Goldstein-Havazki study was the immediate connection between students' engagement with and documentation of real LL data in their neighborhoods and their growing awareness of the ways in which Arabic is silenced in the Jaffa landscape. The second implication was the students' insight that this silencing was not just a top-down policy, a simple effect of the state, but rather an internalized set of norms. They arguably, therefore, started to articulate an understanding of hegemony, in the Gramscian (1971) sense, referring to ways in which cultural modes of oppression may be internalized.

The third implication was that these concerns led the students to become more involved in policy and counter-hegemonic activity, questioning their parents and relatives, a process that some of them viewed as acts of betrayal of their collective and group identity. As we know from other forms of critical work, becoming aware of inequalities, discrimination, and one's own community's complicity with oppression (like women realizing that other women may be equally complicit in their subjugation) can be a necessary step towards emancipation, but it is neither a comfortable awareness nor a liberatory endpoint. Yet for community members to engage with actual LL data can bring about a demand for growing participation in questions of language policy and practice. LL as an act of engagement can turn students into concerned people with attention to language as a political and economic tool, and to activists in their communities as they become aware of the public space as an arena they "own" and should take control of.

Encouraging activism

Clearly, then, encouraging students to engage with the LL increased awareness of how the languages operate around them. This awareness, however, may also lead to a sense of helplessness in the face of the recognition that their presence has little symbolic acknowledgement. Awareness without a sense of possible action and change may be an unwelcome gift. This leads us to the third study (Shohamy et al. 2019), which was part of a larger project to develop a new multilingual policy in Israel (Shohamy and Tannenbaum 2019). The topic examined here was the development of students' multilingual awareness as well as their attentiveness to the possibilities of change, and the meaning of activism. Thus the question posed in this study was not merely one of helping students become aware of the LL, as in the two previous studies, but also to be able to change the signs and render them more socially just.

The study was conducted in three 11th-grade L2 classes: Two in Hebrew-medium schools in an English L2 class, and one in an Arabic-medium school, in a Hebrew L2. In addition to the ways in which students in the previous studies took pictures of their LLs and brought them back to class, here they

were also encouraged to modify those signs in ways they found to be more socially just. These alterations, we should note, were digital alterations for discussion in class, rather than actual alterations to signs in the public sphere. There are limits we often need to draw in the process of developing a sense of critical activism among our students. Each LL teaching program took place over four sessions, each of 50 minutes, and taught by three teachers who had taken an LL course as part of their MA program at Tel Aviv University.

The following topics and activities were included: Students taking pictures of the LL in their environment; teachers introducing the LL concept; discussion of social issues and linking it to the LL examples; students sorting the pictures and critically analyzing them; selection of one picture they perceive as unjust and wish to modify; presentation in class of their modification along with the rationale for the change; submission of the before and after images and rationale for the change. The Hebrew L1 students wrote their reactions in English, while the Arabic-speaking students wrote in Hebrew. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 below display the format of what students submitted at the end of the four sessions: (a) The LL item that they perceived as being “unjust” to some group, (b) the new item which the student modified to become “just and inclusive,” and (c) an explanation of the rationale the student gave for the modification. In Figures 2.1 and 2.2 below, we see the format of the task.

The analysis of the data focused on the changes as well as the rationales provided by the students. This commonly, and not surprisingly, included the



Figure 2.1: Hebrew speakers learning English.



Figure 2.2: Arabic speakers learning Hebrew.

addition of, or replacement by, Arabic to signs that included only Hebrew and English:

“Since i wanted to make a change on the sign because as i said at the beginning warning signs in an Arab town must be in the mother tongue of the residents of the town (An Arab town).”

(translated from Hebrew).

Student recommendations also involved the exclusion of signs, such as the suggestion to “remove the flag of Israel just because it makes the fans and some of the players feel that they are not related. Maybe this removal will make them feel better and not strangers in this game.” Relative font size was also an issue: “We would add Hebrew to the sign in a big font and leave the English translation in a smaller font. In addition, we would add Arabic in a smaller font” (translated from Hebrew) (see Figure 2.2). Other suggestions included replacing a yellow button marked “stop” on a bus with what they saw as a more general symbol using a hand:

“In the original picture we don’t like the fact that there is only the English language there ... [W]e replaced the button with Stop sign because everybody knows what it means, it is also noticeable and can replace Hebrew, English, and Arabic together”

(translated from Hebrew).

In general, all students in the study focused on language equality and marginalization, and they used the revised LL to protest against what they saw as inequality and injustice. How they perceived such injustices, however, varied considerably depending on their background. This is specifically demonstrated in the process of the pedagogical activity. Unlike the study by Shohamy and Abu Ghazaleh Mahajneh (2012), where students were given signs to which they reacted, in this project they themselves selected the signs that they viewed as unjust and then engaged in a process of modification. Students from the minority Arabic-speaking group tended to correct mistakes in Arabic texts. This was a common source of frustration and, as noted elsewhere (Yitzhaki, Tannenbaum and Shohamy 2020), students of Arabic background often showed irritation, not only at the absence of Arabic in their surroundings but also at the presence of what they saw as “deficient” Arabic. These students also occasionally deleted Hebrew or English and promoted Arabic instead. They also tended to focus more on issues such as domestic violence, racism, minority languages, multilingualism, and religion.

The students from the majority Hebrew-speaking group, by contrast, were more concerned with promoting various social issues, such as veganism, ecology, and the accessibility of signs. In Figure 2.3, for example, students from the Hebrew-medium school picked up on what they saw as a lack of forcefulness on a sign in a grocery store advocating for working “together for a greener life.” These students wanted a stronger statement, suggesting greener living should be compulsory (a new law) rather

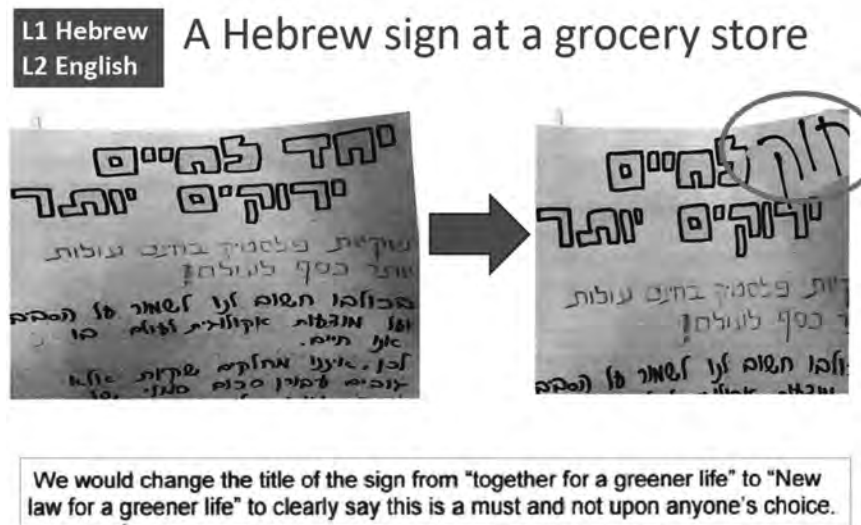


Figure 2.3: New Law for a greener life.



This stain will not wash off in the laundry. I felt that this sign protesting against violence towards women, written in Hebrew, is very relevant to our society as well and therefore I put it in Arabic (An Arab student (translated from Hebrew by ES).

Figure 2.4: This stain will not wash off.

than an option. In Figure 2.4, the students in the Arabic-medium school suggested adding Arabic to a sign drawing attention to domestic violence. Of particular significance here is the fact that the recommendation is not so much about linguistic inclusion (Arabic should be used more across public domains in Israel) but about an awareness that domestic violence is equally an issue in *all* communities. This suggests that alongside a concern for equal representation of Arabic was an awareness that domestic violence is an issue that overrides linguistic, ethnic, or religious differences.

This is not therefore the addition of Arabic as a form of civic inclusion (“Since in Israel we have Jews and Arabs, we would add a line in Arabic so (almost) all of the community in this place ... would be able to understand this sign and know where they are” [translated from Hebrew]) but rather the addition of Arabic to acknowledge a broader political struggle opposed to violence against women (“I felt that this sign protesting against violence towards women, written in Hebrew, is very relevant to our society as well, and therefore I put it in Arabic” [translated from Hebrew]). This is an important move politically – it is very different from the sense of shame discussed earlier that Arabic shopkeepers were using Hebrew rather than Arabic, since it suggests a move towards shared concerns around domestic violence. From this point of view, the failure to provide text in Arabic may mean that Arab-Israeli men may fail to see that the message is equally

addressed to them. Along with different orientations towards different languages, there were different kinds of political awareness at play.

This program, which was aimed at teaching students to become aware of the LL in public spaces and to interpret the spaces in terms of justice, equality, inclusion, and other social issues, showed how students can become activists and agents of change. The act of modifying the LL, making some languages more visible, emphasizing various political dimensions as they relate to languages, and providing a strong and sensible rationale for the change indicate that high-school students can serve as agents of change for social issues in their environment. It also leads to a deeper understanding of public space and controversial real-life social issues, facilitating the development of competence in and for change. The program discussed in the third study suggests that “reading” the LL is an effective tool for noticing social and linguistic injustices. The novel procedure of modifying pictures and providing rationale for change, proves to be valuable for promoting awareness, and can lead to potential activism and change. This activity has implications for multilingual educational policies that can enhance students’ awareness of issues, such as multilingualism, inclusion, acceptance, tolerance, and rights. This awareness went further than merely noticing languages in their environment; the program also enabled a deeper understanding of the public space and the controversial real-life social issues that are played out there.

Awareness, activism, positionality, and gaze

As discussed earlier, two of the important developments in LL research (alongside the semiotic and geopolitical expansions) have focused on the pedagogical roles the LL can play and the interpretive frames through which the LL is perceived. The studies discussed above raise several points for the pedagogical and interpretive engagement with LL. First, they shed light on the relationship between awareness and activism. This has long been a challenging concern in critical approaches to education (Pennycook 2021). From Paulo Freire’s (1970) focus on *conscientização* (conscientization) to consciousness-raising work in feminist pedagogies, a key theme in critical pedagogy has been making people aware of the inequitable conditions of the world around them. Awareness is not an adequate goal in itself, however, since it may equally lead to a sense of hopelessness or surrender.

As Lewis (2018) reminds us, “error correction” (showing why certain beliefs about language are wrong, or, in this case, showing that languages are inequitably represented in the public space) will not do the necessary work towards social change without addressing the material conditions and social positions tied to those language inequalities. As noted in the first study (Shohamy and Abu Ghazaleh Mahajneh 2012), students observed the inequalities and discriminatory practices in the university context but felt powerless to do anything about them: This was just the way things were. Students came to perceive that this was how Hebrew hegemony operates

and there was not much they could do about it. It was all very well to argue for respect and rights in relation to the use of Arabic, but the university LL – from signage to texts, from loudspeaker announcements to the medium of instruction – emphasized Hebrew and English, and there was little role for Arabic in this space. Beliefs that awareness may lead to action or emancipation assume too easily that students can find a pathway towards change.

Critical LL pedagogies therefore also need to help students develop a vision of social transformation, an alternative world worth striving for, as well as a means to develop activist orientations (Camangian 2015). Goldstein-Havazki's (2011) study showed the seeds of such change as high-school students started to see not only the inequalities of the Jaffa LL around them but also their own community's complicity in the reproduction of inequalities. These questions were addressed more explicitly in the Shohamy et al. (2019) study, which encouraged students towards forms of activism by asking them to suggest ways in which signs could be changed.

This is a critical pedagogy “that names, interrupts, challenges, critiques,” and offers different possibilities for “language classrooms, curricula, schools, and communities that in turn affect societies and human life as a whole” (Gounari 2020, 5). The introduction of an activist dimension in this project encouraged students to think beyond a position of surrender. The possibility of modification in this study, by contrast, gave the students a chance to imagine a different world where public signs looked different, font sizes changed, and languages took on different roles. This stronger activist sensibility then informed wider discussions, in classrooms, within families, among friends, and across the wider communities.

These studies also draw attention to the importance of developing an understanding of positionality or gaze in relation to the landscape. It is evident that LL studies need to incorporate how the landscape is viewed from varying perspectives. As Woldemariam and Lanza (2012) make clear, for example, it matters not just that the Ethiopian Orthodox and protestant churches have a different presence in Addis Ababa, but also that this is viewed differently from different perspectives. Likewise, it became clear in the Shohamy et al. (2019) study that LL looked very different depending on the positionality of the viewer. It revealed clear differences in the perspectives from which these different groups viewed and proposed changes in the LL. From a more cognitivist perspective this could be interpreted as “different ways of seeing,” as alternative schemas of interpretation, as different individual ways of reading the semiotic potential of the landscape. The different cultural, political, racial, and religious orientations at play here, however, suggest the need for a framework that is better attuned to the social positions from which the landscape is viewed.

Of importance here was not just the more commonplace observation that students of different backgrounds will likely notice different aspects of the landscape (the absence of Arabic, for example, is far more salient to students of Arab-Israeli than Jewish-Israeli background). What also became clear was

that students from a minority background – and who clearly saw themselves in these terms – viewed the LL from a perspective that went further than just the noting of inequitable language representation. Drawing on Inoue’s (2006) emphasis on the “listening subject,” and its take up by Lo and Reyes (2009) and Rosa (2019) to show that the *gaze* of the perceiver matters fundamentally in the ways language varieties are perceived, we need to move away from a belief that the LL exists in the environment waiting to be perceived. The LL, rather, is constituted by the gaze of the viewers, and their sociopolitical positionality matters fundamentally in that process of perception.

Drawing on the concept of “raciolinguistic enregisterment” (Rosa and Flores 2017, 631), which points to the ways in which language and race are combined in the perception of language use, we are interested here in the ways in which the landscape is viewed in very different terms by students of different backgrounds. This is not an individual effect (everyone sees the landscape from their own perspective), nor an equality of effect (each group has its own view), but rather a sociopolitical effect whereby the LL is viewed along different lines depending on the positionality of the student. While this positionality may indeed reflect the linguistic, cultural, and religious divides that run through Israel, there is also more complexity here. When one student remarked that there should be Arabic on the sign drawing attention to violence against women – on the grounds that this was equally a concern for her community as for the majority to whom it seemed to be addressed – she was raising concerns about language, gender, and community that transcend easy assumptions about a student gaze based purely on linguistic or ethnic lines.

Conclusions

Within the pedagogical and interpretive focus of LL, we have highlighted the need to develop a clearer and more critical focus on the locus of the gaze in the LL: Who is looking from what position informed by what relations of class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, language, and so on? The challenge is to understand and build into any understanding of LL research and pedagogy the lines along which the same landscape may become radically different according to who is looking. High-school students from Hebrew schools can see the LL politically but in ways that are marked by their majority ethnic and class positions. Students from Arabic schools see a different LL and have different suggestions as to how it might be changed. This both reveals the different ways in which the LL is understood and also suggests scope as a further site of discussion and educational benefit, revealing to each group the others’ sensitivities. There is the potential in such work for the majority group to become aware of what is perceived as unjust for the minority, while the minority can start to understand what matters (and doesn’t) for the majority.

Finally, we also want to draw attention to another, subsequent dimension of this project: The importance of “closing the LL circle,” by which we mean

taking the landscape back to the streets (or at least to public spaces), and of introducing this work to a new audience through public displays. One might, of course, simply hand our students some spray paint and urge them to be activists: Go forth and change the landscape. This might understandably cause some concern in both educational and municipal circles (though the possibilities graffiti offer as a challenge to perceptions of the public and private should not be underestimated). Instead, the project has moved back into the public sphere as a public exhibition. Following the work done by the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan in taking work on Multilingual Oslo and Multilingual Mothers into the public domain through exhibitions in museums and elsewhere, During the months of March 2020 and August, 2021 an exhibition of 15 signs of students signs - as is, modified and interpreted, in Hebrew, Arabic and English were displayed at the Social Science library -at Tel Aviv University. The goal was to expose this research to the public and to see how they react to student suggestions for change.

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Part II

Interactions, Ideologies, and Identities



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3 Contesting Stereotypes

Language, Body, and Belonging – Northern and Southern Perspectives

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Introduction

In this chapter we discuss cases where there appear to be a mismatch – or a potential dissonance – between expected language practices and embodiment. Dissonant expressions and narratives of belonging evoke important questions about indexing the local versus the global and notions of identities. Complexities over the relationship between colour, language, and identity are evident in the South African context and widely recognized. For instance, the author, television host, and comedian Trevor Noah notes that language was heavily implicated in the political culture of the apartheid era:

Language brings with it an identity and a culture, or at least the perception of it. A shared language says, “We’re the same.” A language barrier says, “We’re different.” The architects of apartheid understood this. Part of the effort to divide black people was to make sure we were separated not just physically but by language as well.

(Noah 2016, 58)

Within the Norwegian context, questions of ethno-racial classification have not been part of official policy since the “Norwegianization” campaign against the Sámi and Kven populations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., Lane 2009). Still, questions about “racial” or “ethnic” origin are often thematized in the public debate (e.g., Tyldum 2019) and are in fact included in the official application form concerning data privacy requirements (NSD 2019). Recent research indicates that there exists a stereotype securing the notion of “Norwegianness” as being strongly connected to embodiment, i.e., “whiteness,” and language practice (the use of a local dialect) (e.g., Røyneland and Jensen 2020).

We start by presenting some of the socio-historical conditions responsible for stereotypical notions of language and embodiment within the Norwegian context. These are further illustrated by displaying the linguistic performances and identity negotiations of three young men taking part in three different popular national TV programmes. The results are based on

analyses of dialect features as well as of interactions, narrations, and meta-pragmatic reflections on experiences related to language use and embodiment. The Norwegian cases will be juxtaposed with an account of changes in the South African context. During the apartheid era, there was not only an expectation that people classified in a particular way would have “typical” repertoires and accents, but that these in turn would feed into physical racial classifications in cases of official doubt. However, post-apartheid fluidities now call into question any easy equation of language and dialect with personal and group identities (e.g., McKinney 2007; Mesthrie 2012, 2017). These include the key term “coconut,” which encapsulates the theme of embodiment, referring in a mostly critical way to people alleged to be “Black on the outside, White on the inside” because of new socio-cultural and linguistic traits. These include, in particular, having English as a dominant part of their repertoire or speaking it with an accent that used to be considered “White.” How young people handle language and accent in a now freer South African society is thus worthy of consideration. Hence, both the Norwegian and the South African contexts involve cases where expectations of stereotypical linguistic behaviour are negotiated or contested, reflecting social change over the last three decades. We find, for example, in the Norwegian context that the term “Kinder Egg” is used as a highly offensive epithet in a manner parallel to the South African “coconut.” A Kinder Egg is a hollow, brown chocolate egg lined with a layer of white milk-cream, which contains a plastic toy, thus “Black on the outside, White on the inside.”

Theory, method, and data

This chapter addresses the ways in which “bodies and embodiment are central to the production, perception, and social interpretation of language” (Bucholtz and Hall 2016, 173). Violation of expectations connected to the combination of particular speech and particular (racialized) bodies may cause reactions, such as surprise, amusement, sympathy, uncertainty, resentment, anger, etc. (Røyneland and Jensen 2020, 7). Theories regarding negotiation of identities in interaction and membership categorization have served as a useful backdrop for our analyses (Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Stokoe 2012). The view of identities as something that is continuously co-constructed and contextually bound is widely recognized in contemporary sociolinguistics. Identities may be negotiated through evoking common categories, activities, and attributes, like explicit mentioning of membership categories or labels (like “Coloured,” “coconut,” “foreigner,” or “Norwegian”), or mentioning of specific attributes or practices associated with specific categories (like “dressing gangsta,” “eating Indian food,” “speaking white,” or having a specific skin colour). A critical dimension is added through the inclusion of raciolinguistic perspectives, where we recognize how such perspectives highlight the contestation of racial and linguistic

power formations (Alim et al. 2016; Rosa and Flores 2017). Moreover, we have found theoretical assumptions connected to ideologies of authenticity to be useful (Coupland 2003; Woolard 2016). According to the ideology of authenticity, the value and legitimacy of a variety lie in its social and geographical rootedness and are tied to specific speakers and their individual voices. Finally, this theoretical framing takes the commodification of varieties into account. Commodification concerns how a specific object or process is rendered available for exchange in a market (Heller, Pujolar and Duchêne 2014, 545). Heller (2010, 102–103) claims that globalized markets contribute to language commodification in two ways: language is perceived as a *technical* skill and as a sign of *authenticity*, useful as added value for niche markets as a distinguishing feature – for products or people. In the Norwegian part of our study, we see for instance how dialect figures as an important sign of authenticity upon which individuals establish and “sell” themselves as rooted in rural or urban Norway, as an artist or a successful comedian.

The Norwegian part of this study draws on a compilation of previous sociolinguistic work. In addition, we present three single-case, qualitative analyses of media performances, with an emphasis on dialect use and identity projection, acquired through close readings of three TV shows. The most prominent case is *Sondre*, one of the successful contestants in a prime-time musical TV competition (2019). The second case is the character *Ola Halvorsen* created by a Norwegian comedian for a popular comedy drama (2019). The third case features Jonis Josef, who created and stars in a series portraying teenage life in a multiethnic suburb (2019). We aim at demonstrating that such case analyses are helpful in displaying the rather complex reality surrounding language, colour, and identity in present-day Norway. The South African section is also primarily discursive in nature, drawing on various strands of research that are cited in the accompanying references. It presents data on how the old apartheid preoccupation with the physical body and racial classification to some extent lingers on; but is mostly controverted by young peoples’ use of metaphors that help them make sense of, and navigate through, a complex post-racial present. Information concerning evaluations of new migrants from other African countries to South Africa is presented, showing a surprising degree of “othering.”

Language and embodiment: Norwegian perspectives and realities

Background

Previous research indicates that “whiteness” (still) is perceived as an essential part of what it means to be “Norwegian” (Guðjónsdóttir 2014; Røyneland 2018), and that “whiteness” may be mitigated in the case of immigrants’ acquisition and use of local dialects, which are typically seen

as an index of integration and “Norwegianness” (Røyneland and Jensen 2020). The use of local dialects is generally highly acclaimed in Norway, dialect diversity is seen as an egalitarian and democratic ideal, and an ideology of authenticity building on a strong relationship between dialect and place is characteristic of the Norwegian linguistic landscape (Røyneland and Lanza 2020, 9). Dialects are generally used within all social domains, and there is no oral standard proper in Norway. However, the spoken variety in Oslo and its surroundings has high prestige and is often referred to as “Standard” or “Urban” Eastern Norwegian (e.g., Mæhlum and Røyneland 2012). The language education programs for migrant “new speakers” of Norwegian only to some extent include training in the use of traditional dialect features (Røyneland and Lanza 2020, 13). As such, the ideological expectation tends to be that migrants with a skin color darker than the stereotypical Norwegian (white, blond, and blue-eyed) would speak another language, L2 accented Norwegian, multiethnolectal Norwegian, or Urban Eastern Norwegian, but not a rural Norwegian dialect.

Immigration to Norway dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, when migrant workers – particularly from Pakistan – started arriving. Today, 14.7% of the Norwegian population are labeled as “immigrants,” and 3.5% are labeled as “Norwegian-born to immigrant parents” (SSB 2020). Gullestad (2002) shows how the term ‘migrant’ typically invokes images of people with dark skin, often of third-world origin, with values that differ from those of the Norwegian majority. The majority of migrants to Norway today, however, come from Eastern European EU countries, such as Poland and Lithuania. Still, the conceptualization of “migrant” described by Gullestad remains salient (cf. Cutler and Røyneland 2015), and some migrants themselves take part in constructing the Norwegian society as ‘white’ (Guðjónsdóttir 2014, 180). Dark skin color, therefore, seems to be a prominent factor in the connotations associated with “immigrant” in Norway, mirroring the stereotypical notion of ‘whiteness’ as an integral part of the concept “Norwegianness.” Notably, adolescents with only a slightly darker skin colour than the traditional Norwegian, such as young people with an eastern-European or Middle East background, may be labelled and self-label as ‘black’ and as ‘foreigners’ (Røyneland 2018, 160). It should be noted, however, that the very notion of a Norwegian skin colour has been extensively and critically debated for some time (e.g., Sibeko 2019). In the next section, we turn to three case studies of how “Norwegianness,” “whiteness,” and “dialect” are intertwined and connected to stereotypes which may – or may not – be contested.

Performing the authentic local

It is just incredibly beautiful when you sing in that dialect of yours ... and when you enter the room and stuff, I’m thinking: “OK, who’s

that?” like “Cool guy!” So, I believe that you’ve got it, and this feels completely authentic and real.²

(Guest judge, NRK, *Stjernekamp*, episode 6, 43,12)

This quote is only one of several instantiations of the juxtaposition of body (“when you enter the room”), dialect performance (“when you sing in that dialect of yours”), and notions of authenticity (“completely authentic and real”) presented by the national public broadcaster, NRK. The quote is an excerpt from the feedback presented to Sondre, a contest participant, by one of the guest judges in the eighth series of the musical talent show *Stjernekamp* (*Battle of the Stars*) (2019). Further inspection of discourses and interactions involving Sondre reveals a case where stereotypical notions of identity are both contested and confirmed. In the show, ten artists are invited to perform in a variety of musical genres, from heavy metal to hip-hop to opera. Performers continue or leave the programme based on votes cast by the television audience. The contestants represent a diverse group of artists and genres, and the number of different local dialects represented in the series is striking.

At the time of the TV programme, Sondre had already been an active musician for some years on several online platforms and had gained recognition by a larger audience in 2016 when he participated in *The Stream*, a talent show. Sondre was born in Kenya, but after his mother died a Norwegian missionary couple adopted him and his twin sister. When they turned six, the family returned to Norway and lived in a small inland municipality in the southeastern part of the country. According to Sondre, the transition from Kenya to Norway included several experiences of exclusion and harsh feelings of otherness. In a photograph (Figure 3.1) taken from the programme, Sondre talks about his rationale for choosing to perform the song “Butterfly in Winterland.” According to him, the song symbolized the contrast he and his sister felt coming to Norway – the bodily experience of being different and being bodies that did not belong.

Sondre’s Norwegian hometown is traditionally a farming and logging community, which is known in recent times for recreation and ski tourism. The valley where the town is located, Gudbrandsdalen, is a region with rich traditions, and the idea of being a *døl* (person from the valley) has always yielded abundant connotations with respect to history, legend, and stereotypical notions of Norwegianness. The strong traditions of the valley are also evident in the local dialect, which for a long time has managed to resist strong forces of standardization. Although the dialect is marked by some levelling, a number of characteristic dialect features are still in use by young people in the area (e.g., Mæhlum and Røyneland 2012).

Sondre lives and works in Oslo. He has hopes of an international breakthrough and often chooses to sing in English. During his appearance on *The Stream* (2016), he spoke Urban Eastern Norwegian, practically without any trace of dialect features. However, when he appeared on *Stjernekamp*



Figure 3.1: “We felt the contrast. The two of us were the butterflies coming to the winterland.” (Screenshot from *StjerneKamp*, NRK, episode 6, 39:02) (Rights purchased from Monster Productions and approved by the artist).

three years later, it became clear that his repertoire also included mastery of the traditional dialect of Gudbrandsdalen. Close reading of the show reveals that this part of his linguistic repertoire was strategically used as a commodity – both by the television producers and by Sondre himself – to portray a certain persona related to the idea of being an authentic *døl* – and by extension “Norwegian.”

Repeated narratives and interactions during the programme establish Sondre as a dialect expert and authentic local. In the very first episode, the series’ host introduces Sondre as an ambitious and talented artist, for whom music had been a safe haven in times of trouble. More importantly, the host presents him as an artist from Gudbrandsdalen. After Sondre’s performance of Bruce Springsteen’s “Dancing in the Dark,” the local valley persona is shaped in several ways. One of the two regular members of the three-judge panel expresses enthusiasm about “how he moves” and says, “You charmed me deeply,” before ending her comment with an attempt to use a traditional expression from Gudbrandsdalen: “*Kolossalt frekt, eller?*” (“Exceptionally good, or what?”). Sondre corrects her with a smile and utters the actual traditional dialect expression, “*Abraksle frekt,*” which is followed by laughter and applause from the audience. His effort is further evaluated by the two other judges: the guest judge, a musician from a neighbouring area, states, “I thought I knew the dialect before you said that thing,” while the second regular judge remarks, “I didn’t even understand what it meant,” after which they both go on to praise

Sondre's performance. The host then asks Sondre where he had acquired his confidence. While looking flirtatiously into the camera, Sondre says with a strong dialectal tone, "*Ja det kjæm vel frå oppi dar'n de' vettu*" ("Yeah, that probably comes from up there in the valley, you know"), which stands out from what he had presented up to that point, creating an impression of stylization. The host immediately echoes him in an equally stylized manner.

As discussed by Woolard (2016), the value and legitimacy of a dialect and its speakers are typically measured against degrees of authenticity. In this case, we may observe how Sondre is co-constructed as an authentic dialect user in order to secure his identity as a legitimate local. The establishment of Sondre as an expert dialect user also illustrates a duality characteristic of his appearance throughout the show, whereby certain stereotypes are contested and confirmed at the same time. It is simultaneously a contestation of the stereotype of the traditional dialect user being a white person, and a confirmation of the stereotype of the "trustworthy and good-natured fellow from the valley." It also has the very important effect of situating Sondre firmly as a local Norwegian, thereby subverting the label "foreigner" – something which may be beneficial in the effort to collect votes from the TV audience. During previous series of *Stjernekamp*, accusations of racism had been levelled in (social) media debates because contestants of visible mixed or non-Norwegian backgrounds tended to leave the show early after receiving the fewest votes (e.g., VG Debate, 2017). In Sondre's case, initially the pattern seemed to be repeated; however, he reached the semi-final.

Whatever its effect on Sondre's fate in the program may have been, it is striking that embodiment and identity remained an explicit theme of his participation. Another example is his use of the phrase "*brun og blid*" ("brown and blithe"), which is the slogan of a chain of tanning salons. It is deployed by Sondre on two occasions to describe himself, both times evoking a strong and immediate positive response from the audience. While there may be humour in this recontextualization of the familiar slogan, Sondre is drawing on a range of stereotypes typically invoked by the category of "Norwegian." This is evident, too, when at one point he gestures toward his own body and remarks that it is evidently not made for the harsh temperatures of the local winter. In these performances, Sondre makes explicit the tension between stereotypical expectations produced by his physical appearance and those produced by his speech. His performance illustrates how the stereotype of Gudbrandsdøl as dialect user is deployed to work against the stereotype of Norwegian as white, while also serving to highlight Sondre's individuality and the complexity of his identity and belonging. However, as pointed out by Bucholtz and Hall (2005, 602), complex identities like the ones negotiated here may be vulnerable to denaturalization or illegitimization. When an identity violates ideological expectations, it may be accused of being inauthentic or even false.

Performing the immigrant persona

Unlike Sondre, Ola Halvorsen is a fictional character. He was created by Herman Flesvig, a comedian and actor, and is one of the main characters in the very popular TV series, *Førstegangstjenesten* (*Compulsory Military Service*) (2019), in which Flesvig himself portrays all of the main roles. The Ola Halvorsen character, a rapper from a multiethnic suburb in Oslo, soon became popular and has appeared on several occasions outside of the TV series in short, often humorous clips commenting on current affairs. Most recently, he appeared in a witty campaign video, encouraging people to obey infection control measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ola's fair skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes add to the impression of a "stereotypical Norwegian." However, his hairstyle, which includes dreads, braids, and pearls, as well as his clothing, such as oversized tracksuits, create strong connotations in the direction of other stereotypes. An urban, hip-hop-inspired (wannabe) "streetwise" persona is underscored further by a laidback physical style and posture, a preference for exaggerated handshake routines, dabbing, and gestures typically associated with (gangsta) rappers.³

The dialectal features used by Ola are not associated with traditional rural dialects, as was the case with Sondre, but with Norwegian urban, multiethnolectal speech styles (e.g., Svendsen and Røyneland 2008; Opsahl 2009). A connection between hip-hop culture, the use of multiethnolectal features, and the play on gangster stereotypes to establish a sense of belonging in multiethnic urban settings is well documented (Cutler and Røyneland 2015; Opsahl and Røyneland 2016). The linguistic characteristics that Flesvig uses to build his character are first and foremost loan words and slang from immigrant languages as well as salient discourse markers and fixed expressions, such as "*wallah*," "*belt ærlig*" (quite honestly), and "*bror*" (brother); but he also uses characteristic staccato intonation and the exaggerated pronunciation of certain vowels. The clash between Ola's body and appearance, on the one hand, and his striving to belong among "the cool, streetwise foreigners," on the other, is further reinforced by his first name. "Ola" is a traditional name used as a national personification of male Norwegians, used to describe trends in the population (akin to "average Joe"), or used as a placeholder name, such as Ola Nordmann (Ola Norwegian, which is like John Doe).

The Ola Halvorsen character and the speech style that he allegedly promotes have also received criticism. In a much quoted TV interview, the Norwegian-Ghanaian rapper Britz asserts that Ola's lack of authenticity and inaccurate speech style feed harmful stereotypes: he claims that nobody speaks like that, and it frustrates him that youth from multiethnic suburbs are constantly forced to contest it (Haus 2020). In response to the criticism, the producers state that the exaggeration in style is intentional, and "missing the target" and a lack of authenticity are exactly what create the comic effect of this wannabe character (Midtskog 2020). While this may be true,

it would be hasty to conclude that Ola thereby contests the stereotype of the foreign-looking, multiethnolectal speaker. Rather, the effect of the pathetic display of illegitimate crossing (in the sense of Rampton 1995) may itself be perceived as an implicit affirmation that the body-language stereotype exclusively belongs to those who look foreign.

Performing the other and hierarchies of class

The third example we would like to discuss is from yet another highly popular comedy series broadcast on NRK in 2019, *Kongen av Gulset* (*The King of Gulset*), a fictionalized portrayal of the teenage life of Jonis Josef, a Norwegian-Somali comedian and creator of the series. He grew up in a multilingual suburb marked by pronounced class and ethnic distinctions, where language was an important marker of group identity. Several linguistic practices are displayed in the series, including Somali and a wide range of Norwegian varieties. In addition, there are constant switches from the multiethnolectal speaking voices of teenage Jonis and his friends to the Urban Eastern Norwegian speaking voice of young-adult Jonis. In a humorous yet critical manner, Josef describes the conflicts between his own group, “the working-class foreigners,” and “the upper/middle-class Norwegians.” His own group, “the foreigners,” does not consist only of people with an immigrant background. One of the main figures in his group, Don Tommy, is a white boy described as a “100% Wigga.” The term “Wigga” is often used to derogatorily refer to white teenagers who unsuccessfully emulate the perceived style, language, and fashion associated with urban black (hip-hop) youth. In Don Tommy’s case, it is used more as an honorific. He is a highly valued member of the group – a “bro.” He is also the only white kid at the school who studies Norwegian as a second language and who, like Ola Halvorsen, speaks multiethnolectal Norwegian. Another cherished member of the group, and Jonis’s best friend, is Charky. Although Charky is described as “the darkest member of the gang,” he is often mocked as “white,” and labelled a “Kinder Egg.” In the series’ first episode, Jonis describes how the very worst thing anybody could call you is a “Kinder Egg” – it is the equivalent of being a “Quisling”⁴ a traitor of the worst sort. As such, we see two types of crossings portrayed in the series. Whereas crossing from white to black is positively presented, movement in the opposite direction is deemed traitorous.

The attempt to cross by adopting salient competing identity features may be taken as an act of disowning and rejecting a certain group identity. However, the social significance and perception of such crossings depend on dynamics of power and status as well as the direction of movement in terms of hierarchies of class. In the eyes of a privileged majority, such identity crossings may be regarded as mostly comical. In contrast, when seen from the point of view of a minority, the implicit devaluation of recognized characteristics of the group carries a potential threat insofar as the value of these

features is already made precarious by social and economic disadvantage. These findings support claims that it is necessary to situate multilingual practices, such as crossing, within a broader economic analysis that seeks to understand how practices reinforce and challenge racial and class inequities (Rosa and Flores 2017).

The identity features displayed by Jonis and his group reflect and thematize their status as members of a minority. Much of the show's power and humor lies in its display of how these features are harnessed in the production of an identity with a positive valence, a form of *cool*. A deliberate attempt to establish group membership by invoking these features may be perceived as an inauthentic pose or even as a form of cooption and exploitation, as the term “Wigga” typically conveys. However, if conditions are right, it may also be accepted as an act of solidarity, as in the case of Don Tommy. Yet, both Don Tommy and Charky pay a price for their identity crossings, which serve to illustrate a fundamental motif of the programme: *body matters*.

Contesting and confirming stereotypes

In different but overlapping ways, Sondre, Ola Halvorsen, and Don Tommy contest existing stereotypes and ideological expectations of identities connected to language use and embodiment within the contemporary Norwegian context. Both Ola and Don Tommy use linguistic features, fashion, and body movement in an attempt to belong in a community of ‘foreigners’. Sondre, on the other hand, has an appearance that at first sight indexes as “foreigner,” but he uses linguistic features to negotiate belonging in a local “Norwegian” community. Both Ola and Sondre use exaggerated, extreme, or stylized versions of their chosen linguistic repertoire. To different degrees, they both take part in some level of parody or at least performance. By doing so, they succeed in creating a strong sense of belonging within the mainstream Norwegian community, where a dominant cultural model foregrounds valorization of monolectal and traditional geolectal behaviour. The balance is restored, so to speak, and the ideology of authenticity still prevails when a young man from a rural valley speaks a traditional dialect or when a young man from an urban multiethnic suburb speaks “Kebab-Norwegian” (a lay term for multiethnolectal speech).

The ability to juggle and switch between different varieties of Norwegian (and other languages) is typical of contemporary language practice in Norway. Nevertheless, these speakers are forced to suppress this ability to be able to succeed in their striving for belonging and success in the mainstream entertainment market. Although we may say that both Sondre and Ola contest body-language stereotypes (“white/Norwegian dialect speaker” and “black/foreign multiethnolectal speaker”) through their linguistic behavior, they clearly use these same stereotypes to create surprise and amusement. Moreover, by using stereotypes of the “good-natured,

harmless dialect speaker” and the “streetwise multiethnolectal speaker” to this effect, they simultaneously offer a certain confirmation of the stereotypes’ power. In Josef Jonis’s semi-autobiographical series, many stereotypes are simultaneously contested and confirmed, not least with regard to Don Tommy. Throughout the series there is constant switching between the multiethnolectal speaking voice of 13-year-old Jonis and the Urban Eastern Norwegian speaking voice of the young-adult Jonis who provides an overarching narrative. Thus, built into the very framing of the show is a demonstrable command of a wide linguistic repertoire, countering the idea of the multiethnolectal, single-repertoire speaker.

While all of these artists and comedians appear to be able to juggle and switch between different personae, the colour of their skin remains a constant and important factor in ideological expectations regarding their respective linguistic behaviors. These complexities have some obvious, and perhaps some less obvious, parallels in the South African data to which we now turn.

Embodiment and language: South African perspectives and realities

In this section we have three foci: (a) past practices, expectations, and stereotypes under apartheid as a brief backdrop to current changing practices; (b) post-apartheid fluidities in respect of embodiment and language; and (c) new migrant perspectives and complexities compared to Norway. Our treatment of these themes will be discursive; the detailed sociolinguistic work behind many of the observations will be given in the accompanying references. Comparisons with Norway work in terms of the acquisition of Norwegian, but they become much more complicated (and interesting) if we factor in the essentially multilingual nature of South Africa’s population (and its 11 official languages). The writings of Trevor Noah (2016) will be cited as a bridge between issues of race, colour, language, and the body in Norwegian and South African contexts.

The Apartheid era and language embodiment

Between 1948 and 1994, South Africa enshrined in law a rigorous system for the social separation of groups identified allegedly by skin colour and historical background. Such compartmentalization was hardly watertight since neither pigmentation nor history can be easily separated into four (or any other number of) groups without entanglements, especially since relationships and marriage across colour lines were not precluded prior to 1948 or going back to the start of the colonial era in the seventeenth century. Though the groupings were tinkered with in different Acts, they were essentially Whites, Coloureds, Blacks, and Indians (sometimes “Asiatic”). Race was constructed as an essential rather than a contingent category. As Posel

(2001, 64) put it, “Bodies became signifiers of status, power, and worth in a hierarchy that privileged whiteness (as both a biological and social condition) at its apex.” Language was not part of a direct definition of the groupings, but there was an expectation that Whites spoke English and/or Afrikaans, Coloureds spoke mostly Afrikaans and/or English, Blacks spoke a Bantu language, and Indians spoke an Indian language (such as Tamil or Hindi) plus English. In fact, a word misused by the regime was “Bantu” (from Nguni *abantu* [people]), which was generalized to mean “a Black person” expected to speak a Bantu language (isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, etc.). The regime tried to block off economic and social mobility for Black people by limiting access to English and a good education (see Hartshorne 1995). It tried instead to promote Afrikaans, resistance to which led to the famous Soweto Uprisings of 1976 and, in fact, expedited the road to ultimate liberation.

Mention must be made of two phenomena relevant to the themes of language and the physical body: “passing” and “folk race-testing.” The harshness of restrictions on people of colour meant that people occasionally tried to subvert the race classifications. The difficulties experienced by those who tried to “pass” unofficially as White were documented by Watson (1970). Some people classified as “Coloured” applied for official reclassification if they had straight hair and fair skin. The South African colloquialism that arose out of this was “to try for White.” To do so they had to convince the authorities that they had European ancestry (Portuguese ancestry was a popular possibility) and spoke English. It was a soul-destroying exercise that often meant having to disown or sever ties with family and links to the Afrikaans dialect, which had gained particularly strong cultural and identity value in the Cape context. One of the hurdles was a so-called “pencil test,” which, contrary to its name, was not a test of literacy but of hair texture. Passing a pencil through the hair allegedly gave an indication of whether the person had European or Coloured hair, which depended on whether the writing implement in question stayed in place or rolled to the floor (Watson 1970). Another complementary test was equally famous for its crassness. Rather than conducting a sociolinguistic assessment of the vernacular, the candidate was given a sudden pinch to evoke an exclamation of pain. If the involuntary cry was “ouch,” a claim to be “English-speaking” White was apparently upheld; whereas *eina* placed one in the Afrikaans-speaking and therefore Coloured camp. There was a small measure of “passing” and reclassification from the Bantu grouping to “Coloured” too, mainly for economic reasons. The linguistic correlate was that one had to demonstrate a knowledge of Afrikaans and disavow adherence to an indigenous African language.

Sociolinguistically speaking, apartheid policy constrained social networks and, by doing so, minimized the sustained social interactions that result in dialect and language acquisition and convergence. To some extent the stereotypical link between speech and ethnicity that the policy espoused

then became something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Where English was concerned, there were about five easily recognizable sociolects and main groupings: (a) L1 English-speaking Whites, (b) L2 Afrikaans English (of White Afrikaners), (c) L2 Black South-African English, (d) Coloured bilingually based English in most parts of the country, and (e) Indians involved in special kinds of bilingualism with an Indian language or in various degrees of language shift.

Post-apartheid fluidities of language and embodiment

The statutory end of apartheid in 1994 finally delivered a free democracy to South Africa. It also freed the body. In theory there were no longer restrictions requiring the carrying of documents “establishing” one’s race and, hence, the right to visit, live, or work in particular areas. There was a new freedom of association, and segregated schooling was no longer enforced. A policy of Black empowerment also saw the rise of a class and status hierarchy that was stronger than what had been the case under the old order.

The most visible linguistic correlate of the sweeping changes was found in middle-class English speech. In the mid-1990s a number of terms arose among working-class Black students to describe their new middle-class counterparts, who were often well-heeled and clothed, were comfortable in multiracial social groupings, and spoke an English that sounded White (see Ngcobo 2007). The terms that arose to describe this new class were sometimes humorous, sometimes mocking, and occasionally envious. They included: “model Cs,” “cheeseboys” or “cheesegirls,” and, above all, “coconut.” The “model Cs” label refers to the middle classes metonymically in terms of the former “Whites-only” schools that they attended, where they absorbed their ethos, ethics, and accents. The “cheeseboys” and “cheesegirls” labels mockingly associate new, young, middle-class-to-be individuals with a type of food connected with the middle classes, because, for reasons of cost, cheese was not traditionally part of Black schoolchildren’s sandwiches. Trevor Noah (2016, 243) gives some salient descriptions of the posturing that took place in some townships over who was “hood” and who was “cheeseboy.” The term “coconuts” refers to individuals who have allegedly assimilated to the ethos of White schools and Western values to the extent that they are no longer culturally Black. They remain Black on the outside but purportedly White on the inside. (The term has analogues elsewhere: e.g., “Oreo” [biscuits] in the USA “choc-ice” in the UK, and “Kinder Egg” [chocolate] in Norway). The “coconut” label thus speaks to the theme of authenticity, which was outlined in the first part of this article, more in terms of ethnicity than region. It encapsulates, for the first time in Black South-African life, a very salient class split and also a metaphoric split in the body (see Blommaert and Makoe 2011). Social change among young people became a salient theme in young Black writing, notably in the novel *Coconut* (Matlwa 2004) and

in the accounts of Ngcobo (2007) and Noah (2016). To link with the first half of this paper, a major achievement of the “coconut generation” (as we might call them) was to challenge the old associations of race, language, accents of English, and the embodiment of language. They may be credited with deracializing South-African English, or at least middle-class English, since it could no longer be associated with only one ethnicity (Whites) (Mesthrie 2017). On the other hand, there is the counter-charge that this has come at the cost of fluency in an African language and the loss of traditional culture (i.a., Mesthrie 2017; McKinney 2007; Blommaert and Makoe 2011).

At the time of South Africa’s transition, the new class accent among young Black people was novel enough to attract frequent comment. Today it is unremarkable (more so for females, as demonstrated in Mesthrie 2017). The terms invented by young people are not limited to Black-White relations and expectations; they appear in Coloured and Indian communities as well. Take, for example, the word “twang.” Rather than denoting a particular feature of an accent (as in an older established sense), the term “twang” is used as a critical comment on the adoption of a more-or-less White way of speaking.⁵ To speak with a twang is to go against past racial expectations, which as we have seen are largely (but not solely) based on physical appearance. But speaking with a twang also goes against an older sense of loyalty to specific communities. More positively, from a gender perspective it grants young women (mostly of the new middle classes) the opportunity to experiment with and forge new styles that raise the possibility of greater independence and freedom from old racial, community, and gender arrangements.

Speaking with a twang is highly indexical of participation in a new societal order, especially among younger people. Following Carmen Fought (2006) and others referred to there, we might think of this as “re-racing.” This process, which is underwritten largely by changes in economic possibilities, is manifested in sociolinguistic projection (accompanied by changes in gesture, posture, dress, and so forth). In this way the old certainties of race in South Africa have been contested and overturned – at least at the middle-class level. While the working classes may initially resist these crossovers and/or simply lack the means that foster entry into new social networks, the lifestyle often proves desirable and attractive, particularly given the force of the commercial world and its advertising wing. Caroline McKinney (2007) noted the term “Luis Vuitton English,” which emphasizes the allure and prestige of Black middle-class females’ English as well as the envy felt by other young Black women. This change, which goes beyond the body to include its accoutrements and accessories, saliently speaks to the theme of commodification of accent and style previously outlined in this article. It is the English used in television advertising to promote the most upmarket products, such as fashion and credit cards. Accent, dress, accoutrements, accessories, style, and consumption come together simultaneously in the make-believe world of advertising and marketing.

A final term worthy of consideration is “litchi,” which extends the fruit metaphor in a playful and mostly tolerant way and cautions against the heavy pursuit of a political or ideological analysis. Mesthrie (2017) provides a lively recital of the coining of this term by a young Indian female and her peer group in Durban when they were talking about a male school friend, who was White but, according to the account, desperately wanted to be “Indian.” He was highly knowledgeable about Indian culture, loved the (vegetarian) food, dressed in Eastern-style clothes, and knew more about Hinduism than the young Hindus in class. He was, in short, a *litchi* – white on the outside, dark on the inside, and turns red in the sun. “Litchi” may also be a suitable term for describing Ola Halvorsen, the Norwegian character discussed earlier. The parallel is ambivalent, however, since the mainstream perception of the character as playful and harmless has been met with critique from “insiders,” who point to his linguistic practices as being illegitimate and potentially harmful, thereby evoking what we refer to in the next paragraph as the fine line between participating and stereotyping.

The changes evinced in the English of young, Black members of the middle class (or the middle-class-to-be) reflect a crossover (and not just temporary crossing into a new accent space). The trajectory of change does seem to be one “from above” in the sense used by Labov (1972). One might wonder whether there are counter-flows, given that South Africa has its Black majority in parliamentary power, and in charge of the media. The country has seen a major swing in the last 30 years from the prominence of Whites in public media spaces to the predominance of Black people. To authentically perform “Blackness,” one would have to demonstrate an “African multilingualism” (one which demonstrates proficiency in at least one Bantu language, and an openness to others via township experiences). Trevor Noah (2016, 66–67) again proves an exemplar *par excellence*:

language even more than colour, defines who you are to people. So I became a chameleon. My colour didn’t change, but I could change your perception of my colour. If you spoke to me in isiZulu, I replied in isiZulu. If you spoke to me in Setswana, I replied to you in Setswana. Maybe I didn’t look like you, but if I spoke like you, I was you.

Where English is concerned, such “chameleon-crossing” (to marry Noah’s insights with those of Rampton 1995) is more difficult if one is White. The individual’s multilingualism would have to involve subtle influences from a Black-oriented English (hence the older L2 variety) as well as proficiency in an African language. This is not so easy, especially given that there is a fine line between participating and stereotyping. If, for example, L2 English features are used by an L1 speaker, there is a risk of stereotyping. One striking example of chameleon-crossing is the late musician-cum-anthropologist Johnny Clegg, “the White Zulu” (*le Zoulou blanc*) as he came to be known internationally for his immersion in the world of African music, culture,

and language. The physical body is indexed by the colour term (“White”) whereas culture and identity (and not, strictly speaking, color) is inherent in the term Zulu (rather than “black” or African). Other cases are not so common. Trevor Noah (2016, 174) himself speaks of colour and the body as being relative to place, community, experience, and expectations (at least in his own case as a young boy of black and white ancestry): “In Soweto I was the only white kid in a black township. In Eden Park I was the only mixed kid in a coloured area. In Highlands North I was the only black kid in a white suburb.” Noah has introduced a new differentiation here between “mixed kid” and “coloured,” showing the latter to be a term concerning culture and community, as against race implicit in the former.

Multilingualism, embodiment, and migration

The South African situation cautions against overgeneralizing from monolingual expectations (as in the US) or multilingualism in which one language is clearly dominant (and associated with the nation, as in Norway). In much of Africa and Asia there is little reason to assume that bodies are associated with a single language. In urban settings – and elsewhere – people have multilingual repertoires and seldom keep their languages apart in casual styles and “insider” speech. In postcolonial contexts, particularly, it is expected that educated and urban citizens command an indigenous language as well as the ex-colonial language. There is no expectation of language shift; equally, there is no expectation of language “purity” in everyday speech (see Blommaert’s 2007 account of variation in Central Africa).

In his book *On the Postcolony*, cultural critic Achille Mbembe stresses that people can “be several in a body” (2015, 202). For Mbembe the post-colonial African “subject” has inherited a position from which one had to juggle between the traditional world and that imposed by the colonizer. This juggling involves handling “several temporalities,” including the “compact time” of a traditional past, slavery, colonialism, and now postcolonialism. It therefore spawned an ontology that persists into the present as these selves “proliferate” and produce the “chaotically pluralistic” nature of the postcolony (Mbembe 2015, 102). For Mbembe (2015) this pluralistic world is a highly creative one involved in “flouting, repudiating, [and] remaking European templates.” Migration to a Western country forces some of these identities and traditional African “templates” to be played down. As the Norwegian section of this chapter shows, local language and dialect integration is expected, often leading to language shift. Movement into the upper-middle classes, as embodied in the South African coconut theme, is a parallel of sorts. In the next paragraph we turn to a discussion of current xenophobia in South Africa, which links in unhappy ways to the theme of the absence or presence of integration of African migrants.

The fall of apartheid also resulted in an opening of the borders to the rest of Africa. For mainly economic reasons, South Africa proved an

attractive destination to millions of migrants (some of them temporary or cyclic migrants) from neighbouring countries like Zimbabwe and Malawi but also further afield from the Congo (DRC), Cameroon, Nigeria, and so forth. Expectations of being welcomed as fellow Africans, many of whose countries had contributed to the anti-apartheid struggles, were not exactly met. Matters of language and embodiment are part of the stereotyping of migrants, though again issues of economics and class are at the core. Many Black South Africans (mainly of the working and under-employed classes) considered the newcomers as unwelcome competitors for jobs, often at lower rates than for which the locals had fought hard, via trade unions and collective bargaining. Unexpectedly, outsiders were stereotyped in terms of language and, amongst other things, skin colour. Newcomers from the equatorial regions were felt to be “dark skinned” – in this context a darker shade of black (Mesthrie, Nchang and Onwukwe, 2020). They were labelled *amakwerekwere* – an apparently onomatopoeic word meant to mimic the foreign sounding utterances. Here the theme of indexicality turning to a stereotyping iconicity, as raised by Bucholtz and Hall (2016), seems relevant.⁶ Mesthrie, Nchang, and Onwukwe (2020) dwell on the consequences of such poor relations for language learning and societal integration.

Concluding reflections

The reinforcement of specific stereotypical links between speech and ethnicity was a mode of operation of the apartheid regime. A politically controlled naturalization of perceived relations between language and embodiment served as a tool to enforce policies of ethnic separation and repression. In the wake of the statutory end to apartheid in 1994, rapid and complex social change is reflected in dynamic and ongoing change in the indexicalities and metaphors marking expectations of connections between language and body. Perhaps surprisingly, the Norwegian context, with its dramatically different social history, provides an illuminating parallel. Arguably, expectations of the relation between language and embodiment were both deep and largely unthematized – and in that sense naturalized – in Norway prior to the onset of large-scale immigration in the second half of the twentieth century. This situation did not significantly change until the first generation of Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents came of age and in a range of ways – directly and indirectly, deliberately and not – challenged and thereby made visible linguistic mechanisms of social regimentation and exclusion. Thus, in Norway as well, rapid social change has made visible the plasticity and even fluidity of expectations of language-body relationships. Indeed, in both of these settings, the types of performances, crossings, and labels that we have presented would have been difficult to conceive a generation earlier. At the same time, the power of such expectations as simultaneous agents of change and instruments of social control – when contesting

and confirming stereotypes – attests to their significance as determinants of human interaction. We have seen that to authentically perform “Blackness” in some contexts one has to demonstrate multilingualism, while “Whiteness” may be performed through (dialectal) monolingualism. Yet we have also seen that such expectations may be inverted and denaturalized. The practices and performances highlighted in this chapter are a strong reminder of the inseparability of language from the racialized body. However, as we have discussed, individual embodiments and language practices must be situated in relation to broader structures and patterns of power. As such, in the contemporary Norwegian and South-African contexts, speaking voices can creatively challenge stereotypes and thereby contribute to a denaturalization of the language/body relationship. Returning to the initial quote by Trevor Noah, one may say that the case studies presented in this paper, including that of Noah himself, show that language and racial barriers are there to be overcome.

Notes

- 1 This work was partly supported by the Research Council of Norway through its Centers of Excellence funding scheme, project number 223265. We are very grateful to the two reviewers and Bjørn T. Ramberg for comments and very valuable input.
- 2 «Det er jo heilt fantastisk vakkert når du syng på den dialekta di ... og når du kjem inn i rommet og sånn, så tenkjer eg: “Ok, kem e han? Kul type,” liksom. Så e meine at du har alt, og detta kjenst veldig ekte og reelt.»
- 3 A photo of the character Ola Halvorsen could not be included in the article because the artist’s agent did not approve of the reuse of a screenshot. However, the character’s style and bodily appearance may be observed on YouTube (Flesvig 2020).
- 4 The word ‘Quisling,’ a byword for ‘traitor’ in several languages, comes from Vidkun Quisling, the collaborator who headed the Norwegian Nazi government during World War II.
- 5 The phrase *Southern twang* from the USA is perhaps the best known of this usage. The word ‘twang’ was previously used in Britain to refer to colonial accents of English settlers abroad. Thus whereas ‘twang’ in the older established international sense comments largely on regional difference of accent, in South Africa it was co-opted by Black speakers to critique those who were imitating a White accent.
- 6 It must be emphasized that not all Black South Africans feel this way, and many have spoken out against the discrimination of fellow Africans.

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4 Narrative, Identities, and Experiences in Discourse Practices of Migrants

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Introduction

The study of narrative has fascinated scholars in many different areas of the social sciences, including linguistics, psychology, social work, history, and sociology, as it provides one of the most powerful tools to convey and shape human experience. Indeed, for researchers interested in understanding the intersections between language and social phenomena, narrative opens a window into identities, ways of life, moral systems, learning practices, ideologies, and all kinds of cultural constructs. Narrators build story-worlds in which they or others act as protagonists and/or antagonists. By doing so, they also present specific causalities and temporal connections between events, which project certain interpretations of those events. By placing themselves and others within story-worlds, they also choose categories related to agency (such as victims, perpetrators, and more generally, agentive or not agentive roles) (Bamberg 1997) and belonging (such as ethnicity, age, race, or origins), which afford a glimpse into ways in which narrators perceive social roles, social groupings, and their relation to social actions and the emotions evoked (Relaño Pastor 2014; Van de Mierop and Clifton 2012). Often constructions of identity in narratives are shaped by – and in turn help shape and reshape – common understandings about typified social personas and situations. These links between narratives and identities have been recognized and investigated by many scholars in sociolinguistics and discourse studies (for a detailed discussion see De Fina 2015). Such investigations have greatly contributed to knowledge about migration as a process and immigrants as individuals and groups, which often undergo emotionally charged experiences.

In this chapter, we focus on the ways in which narrative as a tool for research and analysis has contributed in our own work to illuminating issues related to identities constructed and deployed by migrants and related to their multilingual practices. We embrace a context-sensitive and practice-based orientation to the study of narratives, and we show how this approach can shed light on new and interesting aspects of migrant identities by studying two different groups in two specific contexts: undocumented

youth in the United States and adult language learners in Norway. In the study of adult language learners in Norway, we illustrate how a practice-oriented analysis can be used in research on second-language trajectories of learning through narratives elicited in a focus group, a context in which participants and researchers develop an open and intimate dialogue. We discuss how the migrants' different learning contexts and negotiations of identities are expressed in dialogue with the researcher. In the study of undocumented youth in the United States, we highlight how a practice-oriented approach to narratives allows researchers to put forth highly nuanced views of migrant identities. In particular, we show that through the investigation of narratives as embedded within communicative practices, researchers are able to point to the inventories of identities that are deployed by migrants in specific communities, thereby illustrating the ways in which such identities emerge, are embedded, and are negotiated in context as well as escaping essentialist views of who migrants are. We start with narratives from a group of young, undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Narratives and migration: A practice-based approach

In the study presented in this section, we highlight the importance of advancing investigations of storytelling practices among migrants in everyday, non-conversational contexts, therefore identities as emerging in action. Before presenting the study, we will briefly review research on migrants and identity within discourse studies and sociolinguistics as well as revisit the main tenets of narrative as a practice approach to stories.

Past research on identities has focused mostly on self-representation and other depictions in discourse produced by mainstream media, by representatives of dominant political ideologies and majority groups, or by the migrants themselves in interviews and focus groups (for a review, see De Fina and Tseng 2017). In the case of public discourse on migrants, investigations of news stories have illuminated the ways in which tropes and stereotypes about migrants are circulated in political discourses and in the media (see, for example, Busch and Krzyanowski 2012; Charteris-Black 2006; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008; Zhu 2014; Simmons and LeCouteur 2008), where they are portrayed through negative metaphors and tropes, related to criminality and ignorance, and compared to animals and floods. Other work investigating everyday narratives and accounts (Perrino 2019; Gotsbacher 2001) has revealed that people who belong to dominant and majority groups in different parts of the world often depict the same negative positioning about migrants found in the press, portraying them as criminals or unwilling to work, while at the same time ideologies diffused in public discourses, such as those that place on migrants the responsibility for integrating, are often taken up by migrants themselves (Cederberg 2014).

The literature on self-representations is very vast, including work on representations in interviews, focus groups, and written texts. Scholars have

investigated how much and to what extent different groups of migrants present themselves as agentive protagonists of their lives or as victims of circumstances (De Fina 2003; Baynham 2006; Golden and Lanza 2013a; Miller 2014; Relaño Pastor 2014); how they perceive their own social inclusion or exclusion in relation to language experience (Barkhuizen 2013) and racial prejudice more generally (De Fina and King 2011; van de Mieroop 2012; Hatoss 2012); as well as the many ways they define their national, ethnic, and territorial belonging (Clary-Lemon 2010; Liebscher and Dailey O’Cain 2006; Archakis 2016). Studies often take an interactionist approach to narratives, looking at positioning processes rather than merely at the discourse of migrants and, in some cases, reflecting on the co-construction of experience that takes place through the contributions of all participants to storytelling. Regarding narratives as discursive and interactional practices is particularly important for the development of the field of migration studies. Therefore, it should be extended to other contexts beyond the interview and other kinds of interactions, such as the investigation of semiotic processes and practices that take place in domains and situations that include both migrants and members of local communities.

Before we present the first study, let us briefly summarize what we see as some fundamental ideas behind a narrative-as-practice approach. Alexandra Georgakopoulou and Anna De Fina sketch the main principles behind this orientation, called “social interactional” (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008; De Fina 2021). The denomination reflects the combination of a close attention to the details of local communication with an awareness of the social, historical, and cultural connections that link storytelling practices to other semiotic practices and a variety of contexts at different scales. The concept of practice captures the habituality and recognizability of meaning making within communities – including the use of genres and the recourse to chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981, 84), that is, well-established and socially recognized frames involving specific time-space-identity connections (Blommaert and De Fina 2017) – while also pointing to emergence and transformation as inherent to social action. Thus, from this perspective, identities are built and negotiated within plural and often conflicting contexts as people simultaneously participate in different communities. Fragmentation, plurality, and emergence are central notions here, as opposed to homogeneity and continuity, especially as sociolinguistics starts to incorporate the notion of transient (Mortensen and Hazel 2017), virtual, and light communities (Blommaert and Varis 2015) together with the traditional construct of speech communities and communities of practice. Indeed, sociolinguists recognize that being rooted in the same geographic place or social category does not necessarily define a linguistic community, and communities sharing linguistic and semiotic resources may be formed around emergent practices and then disappear. A practice-oriented approach also involves proceeding from the bottom up through an ethnographic methodology. Hypotheses are formed from close observation of how different communities organize their

storytelling activities, who produces the stories, who receives them, and how they are circulated. In the case of interviews or other interactionally based research, as we will see in the second study, a practice-based approach also implies a heightened attention to researcher reflexivity on the research process itself and the situation of communication with informants (see De Fina and Perrino 2011).

This kind of practice orientation can open up a new understanding of transnational and migrant individuals and groups, both as they communicate with each other and as they establish links with others. In the last decade work focused on new contexts for storytelling practices among migrants has already started to emerge. For example, a study on how space and spatial movement is incorporated into talk about self by migrants during “walk alongs” (see Sabaté i Dalmau 2015) reveals ways in which these mobile individuals define themselves and create boundaries around specific safe spaces. Research on online practices of migrants, ex-refugees, or generation 1.5 youth, including digital stories (Alexandra 2008), instant messaging (Yi 2009), and social media engagements (Baran 2018; Evers 2018), has also opened a path to nuanced understandings of the ways in which different groups express and negotiate belonging with their peers within close-knit groups.

Here we will draw some reflections from a project involving a study of online storytelling practices by members of the Dreamers movement in the United States within a context of political activism (for details, see De Fina 2020) in order to show how research on narrative that is practice-oriented and pays close attention to contexts and participants can deepen our understanding about identity processes and reveal their complexity. Dreamers are young migrants who came to the country with their undocumented parents and stayed over a period of years as undocumented individuals.

The Dreamers movement was born in 2008 when young migrants sought to convince Congress to enact legislation to protect migrants. Since then, it has become a significant grassroots movement involving almost half a million registered participants in 25 states (Nicholls 2013). It is interesting to see the kinds of images of themselves the Dreamers presented through social media, as well as the tools they used to build images, the different forms of story production on media, and how stories were shaped by the audiences to which they were directed. Two studies were conducted – one in 2015 and one in 2017 – in order to assess whether changes in the political landscape, specifically the advent of the Trump government, affected the way Dreamers presented themselves. The two studies compared identity presentation in autobiographical stories. In the first case, the narratives were video biographies from the Obama era posted on the movement’s website. In the second case, they were autobiographical stories posted on *Medium*, a digital magazine and online blogging platform accessible through both free and paid subscriptions that publishes posts from a variety of organizations. The narratives were analyzed in terms of segments defined by topic (for example,

the presence of demographic information or a “crucial moment” when undocumented status was exposed), in terms of moral stances expressed by the narrators through linguistic indexes, and in terms of the kinds of visuals presented in both the videos and the photographs accompanying stories. In the stories on *Medium*, hashtags and repetitions across stories were also taken into account.

For the Dreamers, storytelling is embedded and imbricated within a variety of other practices, and it is a centerpiece of their activism. By paying attention to the varied semiotic activities that are linked through activism, it is possible to see the interplay between “conditions of production” (who creates the stories, in what medium, with what affordances, and for what kinds of audiences), conditions of circulation (where are the stories told or posted), and conditions of reception (who has access to the stories). This kind of analysis has important implications for the way we understand identities. Thus, the personal video narratives that constituted the first corpus from 2015 were told by different individuals (2015 corpus). They were also highly curated since they were solicited and edited by members of the United We Dream (UWD) organization with the objective of convincing President Obama to enact new legislation in favor of undocumented migrants and getting people to take action. This made the personal video narratives relatively homogeneous in terms of the themes and strategies used to argue in favor of migrants, although the fact that the narratives were embedded into arguments also made them hybrid in terms of genre. In the narratives Dreamers shared details about their families and about how they arrived to the United States. Some narratives emphasized the narrators’ lives and trajectories, some focused more on the parents’ histories or how parents’ dreams were crushed, and yet others devoted space to the reasons for individuals’ activism. Because they were grouped together in a specific space on the website, these narratives had another layer of unity that helped form a collective message. What was found to be prevalent in those stories was the construction of a non-threatening persona, a kind of “good immigrant” image, which was fostered through the themes touched upon by the narrators when telling of their lives; visual elements, such as photographs or the environments in which narrators were filmed; and other semiotic components, such as musical accompaniment. This persona was highly functional to the aim of showing the President and the general public that young immigrants were “deserving” and assets to society because they possessed desirable qualities. At the same time, the narratives sought to stir the interest of possible future members of the movement by highlighting how activism changed the lives of many of the featured narrators, giving them a reason to live and be hopeful.

The second group of stories were all autobiographical narratives posted on the *Medium* platform under the UWD logo between 2016 and 2017 (2017 corpus). Some of these biographies were also reposted on Facebook. Compared to the stories published on the UWD website, this group of narratives present a clear picture in terms of production, reception, and

circulation. *Medium* is a relatively closed platform, but it still has millions of readers and a potentially wider, more varied audience than the UWD website. In terms of production, the narratives published on *Medium* were clearly curated, meaning they were reviewed or even rewritten by UWD activists. Indeed, even though they are written in first person, often the photos accompanying narratives are labeled using third-person references (e.g., “X with her parents”). Because the narratives on *Medium* were not directly elicited in relation to a campaign, they do not feature the homogeneity found in the 2015 corpus of video narratives. Not only are the formats and contents of the *Medium* narratives more varied than in the 2015 corpus, they also make more room for the expression of negative and conflicting personal feelings like anger and frustration. In some narratives students talked about how they had achieved their educational aims. Others focused on the present moment and the impact of Trump’s presidency on their lives. Finally, some featured more traditional life stories. This second group of narratives is constituted of hybrid stories combining narrative sections and arguments. Thus, possibilities for building a collective positioning in these texts are related to the incorporation of slogans, such as “Not this time,” and hashtags, such as #HereToStay or #nobannowalluids, across narratives, which create intertextual links with other actions and stances expressed by the movement.

The collective identity that emerges in the narratives from the second period (2017) incorporates many of the elements of the “good immigrant” image discussed in relation to the video narratives. However, it also includes a stronger “activist” self-construction, with shades of being combative and uncompromising. Space constraints prevent us from presenting examples of full narratives, but differences between the narratives on the UWD site (2015 corpus) and on *Medium* (2017 corpus) can be seen. For example, the conclusions have a different tone even where the theme is similar (e.g., parents’ situation). While the narrators in the following examples both discuss family, note that the UWD website (2015) narrative includes an appeal to President Obama.¹

2015 Corpus

I think I will tell him [President Obama] that my mom
just like all all mums deserves deferred action
she deserves the same chance that I
have been able to get in life
so she deserves to be able to live without fear
she deserves to be able to fulfill her dreams
and for my mum America is her home
she really has no plans to go back or living though
this is where she wants to stay and this is where she should be allowed
to stay

2017 Corpus

I continued to fight for our communities. I fight for the vision and hope of liberation for the undocumented community. My mother and my loved ones deserve a life without fear and with dignity, and I will not stop fighting until all of the undocumented community are liberated.

#HereToStay

Both similarities and differences in identity construction and presentation remit us to contexts at different scales (see Blommaert 2015), ranging from more general to more local/particular. One scale is bounded by present time: it is the scale of general, repeated, and widely shared ideas and prejudices about who migrants are, what their role in society is, and more generally the qualities and predispositions that are desirable for those who belong to the community of United States citizens. A second scale refers to the political moment: the political climate at the national level, present battles being fought among social groups, and the kinds of organizations that movements put in place. The 2015 political environment was such that reform and the advancement of migrant rights appeared possible; in 2016–2017, however, the climate had changed with the advent of Trump, and high anti-immigrant tensions were in the air. A third scale involves the conditions of local production, including authorial roles; the format and kind of narratives that make it onto platforms, such as the one curated by UWD; the extent to which different individual voices penetrate various media; the affordances media have for conveying voices; and the audiences expected to access media. Finally, a fourth scale involves individual choice, whether it be the register, images, or story organization. No matter how curated a narrative is, there is also always a person talking in these stories.

When we look at all of these different factors and scales, a very complex picture emerges. We can clearly see that the identities constructed through narratives are embedded within many different contexts, which interplay with them. The level of granularity employed in making sense of narratives also determines the kind of picture that is produced. If we look at collective identities, then there are clear trends in the inventories of identities that were deemed relevant by the UWD movement. However, if we focus on the stories of specific migrants, then we see a much wider spectrum of identities in terms of degrees of agency, responsibility taken for one's life, degrees of optimism or pessimism regarding the future, degrees of identification with a combative or activist stance, emphasis on specific ethnic or religious affiliations, and so forth. The narratives reveal how different factors can impinge on the construction and negotiation of identities through narratives, while at the same time they can give access to a wide inventory of identities and of narrative strategies to present them.

In the next case study discussed in this chapter, the focus is on the co-construction of narratives by a different group of migrants in a different

context: namely second language learners in focus groups. Conversation is seen as a meaning-making practice that illuminates individuals' learning processes, showing how they build and negotiate their identities alongside other participants in a context of migration, including inviting the other participants into emotionally loaded events in the learning process.

Elucidating emotions and language-learning experiences through narratives

Since the turn of the century, language-learning memoirs and autobiographical interviews have been used by researchers to understand how L2 learners experience and make sense of language learning and educational matters in a new country. The stress on collecting personal experiences may be seen as a response to several researchers' underscoring of the powerful relationship between identity and language learning (Norton and Toohey 2011) as well as Norton Peirce's early call for a "comprehensive theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context" (Norton Peirce 1995, 12). The study of language learners' narratives has contributed to new images of learners, who are presented not as "unidimensional abstractions" (Pavlenko 2007, 164) but as human beings with feelings and the ability to exercise agency in the learning process (Kanno 2003; Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000). Pavlenko (2001, 167) made a strong claim for integrating narratives in second language acquisition (SLA) research:

L2 learning stories ... are unique and rich sources of information about the relationship between language and identity in second language learning and socialization. It is possible that only personal narratives provide a glimpse into areas so private, personal and, intimate that they are rarely – if ever – breached in the study of SLA, and at the same time are at the heart and soul of the second language socialization process.

The aims of narrative studies in SLA research vary. Some examine differences in learner beliefs and learning strategies (e.g., Kalaja and Barcelos 2003), some study affective factors (e.g., Pavlenko 2006; Pavlenko 2013; Kramsch 2009; Prior 2011; Relaño Pastor 2014), and others analyze agency and identity constructions (e.g., Kanno 2003; Norton and Early 2011; Miller 2014). In several studies, language learners reveal through their narratives that they possess an arsenal of multilingual practices, thereby providing insight into their learning experience. Data can be collected through literary autobiographies, diaries, classroom assignments, and audio-recordings. Pavlenko (2007, 165), inspired by Denzin (1989) and Nekvapil (2003), classifies narrative studies within applied linguistics into three categories based on the type of information that researchers collect from the narratives: (1) subject reality, where researchers are interested in the narrators' experiences and familiarity with certain phenomena or

events; (2) life reality, where researchers are interested in what has actually happened in the narrators' lives; and (3) text reality, where researchers are interested in how events are told, i.e., how the narrator positions herself or constructs different identities through the narrative. Pavlenko points out that the three approaches partially overlap. She situates herself in favor of the latter approach by pointing out that narratives are primarily discursive constructions (Pavlenko 2007, 181). In our narrative-as-practice approach (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008; De Fina 2021), we see these three aspects as intertwined. Indeed, in the analysis of the second case, we are concerned with text reality. We are interested in how the narrators position themselves or construct different identities through their narratives, as well as how they are constructed by (signifying) others in the language-learning process. However, we also focus on subject reality (i.e., the circumstances of the narrators' lives) and life reality (i.e., the types of actual events experienced by narrators and what they highlight as being decisive for their emotions).

In language-learning research it is not common to gather data about learners' experiences in focus groups, where the co-construction of narratives is evident (although some of the studies in the SKI project, e.g., Golden and Lanza's work, are exceptions).² The advantages of encouraging narratives in such studies is clear. As the stories emerge, both the learners and the researchers reflect on different parts of their stories and make meaning about a complex learning process, where identity, agency, and belonging are central.

In the second case study, two migrant doctors, Nadia and Milena, together with a researcher, "A," participated in a focus group in A's apartment. Nadia was originally from a former Soviet Republic, and Milena was from an Eastern-European country. They both came to Norway in the mid-1990s to get married, although Milena had visited Norway prior to that time.³ Both learned Norwegian as adults in Norway. In the focus group conversation, the two compared their life trajectories and discussed the expectations, frustrations, and joys they experienced during the time their home countries and attaining their present positions as well-settled medical doctors in Norway. Their language learning – in and out of the classroom – was a recurrent topic. We show how their narratives provide insights into how learning is experienced by learners of Norwegian. Such experiences are emotionally charged, even for very successful learners.

The elucidation of emotionally charged data, which is interesting for illuminating the language-learning process, is made possible here through a focus on the co-construction of narratives in the interaction involved in the focus-group context. The interactional perspective is important. Such accounts are recipient designed. Recapitulations of past events are constructed in response to explicit or implied why or how questions asked by an interlocutor (De Fina 2009, 240). In this way they are dialogic – they "shape and are shaped by the different contexts in which they are embedded" (De Fina 2009, 233).

In the storytelling context of the second case study, researcher A starts out by telling the participants about the SKI project, which was the reason why the two learners were invited. She then positions the participants as resourceful by saying, “It’s very interesting to talk to someone like you, who is highly educated and very reflective.”⁴ Subsequently, A invites them to freely share their views of and experiences with migration, learning a new language, and encountering a new culture. At the same time, by indicating that participants’ experiences and reflections are valuable, A positions herself as somebody with power, for example the power to influence school authorities. The importance of the context where the narratives play a central part becomes evident at the very end of the conversation. Nadia exclaims, “Wow, today was very exciting!” Then Milena suggests that the title of the study should be “*Scheherazade*,” which highlights the significance of both their stories and storytelling.

Both Nadia and Milena came to Norway to meet and live with their husbands. However, as seen in each participant’s opening remarks, their realities and experiences were complex and contrasting. In response to the invitation to share her views of and experiences with a new language and culture, Nadia starts out in a somewhat unexpectedly open way, which explicitly shows a high level of confidence in the (Norwegian) researcher:

Excerpt 1

Nadia: I don’t know if I can be completely honest [...] I was a postal bride [...] a bride, yes? I met my spouse via correspondence.

A: Yes.

Nadia: Yes. This I usually do not say to Norwegians.

A: No, no @@@. That’s fine. [...]

Nadia: But the fact is that I am one of those who come, yes.

A: But did you meet him (..) he announced?

Nadia: Yes, I didn’t really advertise here, but in Sweden. It’s actually very ‘dirty business’ (said in English). [...] It is very embarrassing to say this @@@. Therefore, it is nice that it is anonymized.

A: Yes.

Nadia refers to herself as a *postbrud* (postal bride) when explaining how she came to Norway. In Norway in the 1990s, postal brides were seen as a low-status category of women viewed negatively for being willing to “sell” themselves to a husband. By revealing and sharing her personal history in the focus group, Nadia constructs herself as vulnerable, yet brave and confident. She discloses something that she usually hides. By laughing and admitting that it is embarrassing, she disowns her action and constructs herself as somebody with values other than those put forth in stereotypical Norwegian discourse of the time: “foreign” girls advertising for husbands were dishonorable. She negotiates a strong degree of agency by admitting

that this action was central to her migration. In a subsequent narrative part she further explains her rationale for relocating: in her home country medical doctors are paid very low salaries. By pointing to her professional history, she constructs herself both as a hardworking person and an idealist. In her country of origin, she says, the medical profession “is the profession for idealists.”

Milena, in contrast, starts by telling the story of her first trip to Norway to see her brother, who was a political refugee. She explains that her visit was instigated by her mother’s sudden death. Her brother had not been allowed to enter his home country for the funeral. In telling about her travels, Milena constructs herself as full of emotions. She remembers the grief and pain as well as the happiness of being outside of her country for the first time. Then she focuses on her next positive experience in Norway – how she met her husband, which is told with a lot of passion:

Excerpt 2

Milena: [...] But then I met [...] then I met my husband.

A: He sat on the same table as (...)

Milena: Same table, yes.

A: as her.

Milena: And then, right. It was just eye contact. And it was like you say, love at first sight.

Everyone: @@.

A: How exciting! This is fun!

Milena: I fell. But, you know, it was very (..) of course tall, blond, with green eyes @@@. Who wouldn’t have fallen.

Milena’s voice is almost ecstatic as she evaluates this first encounter with her future husband as something almost unreal. The audience’s joy, expressed in laughter and co-construction of the story through questions and comments on details, shows that her stance in presenting the situation as romantic encountered appreciation. In contrast, Nadia’s evaluation of her husband – at least in retrospect – is different:

Excerpt 3

Nadia: I was a bit unlucky with [my] man, who was kind of (...) Looking at it now (..) a bit depressed and anti-social. [...] A guy who sits in front of the PC all the time. Yes, so everything that I achieved, it’s like, it’s just mine.

A: But did you get to know any Norwegians or others, then, in the beginning?

Nadia: Those that I know, is through work.

In revealing this depressing situation, and her way out of it, Nadia constructs herself as independent, strong, and self-sufficient.

Both Nadia and Milena went through difficulties and successes of different kinds while learning Norwegian. Their reactions also vary. Nadia describes how she experienced differences between her mother tongue and Norwegian, her knowledge of these languages, and the feedback she received from her husband:

Excerpt 4

Nadia: I don't know how it is in x-language (Milena's first language), but x-language has [a lot of] grammar, like y-language. In that way, Norwegian is much easier. And this was also difficult for me because I knew many, many words in my language. And it's very, very nuanced. X-language is very nuanced. [...] No fixed rule, it just has to adapt to time and gender.

A: Grammatical marking, yes.
[...]

Milena: Oh dear.

A: And you miss that in Norwegian? You prefer.. @@@

Nadia: No, but I missed flexibility also when we started writing [...] essays in the Norwegian course [...] so I give it to my husband to correct it, [he] says like: "There are so many words here somehow, you can say just 'ninini'" (making a sound). (...) And for me: "No, but it will not be that nice." [He said:] "But this is sort of over-decorated," and I learned [...] Although I tried to say, "Can you speak Norwegian to me?" [I] also try to speak in Norwegian. Then he says, "You are so very broken," so he thought he understood better if ...

When Nadia reports on how her husband evaluates her writing in Norwegian, she constructs him as someone who devalued her attempts to express herself in Norwegian in a way that she considers nuanced and nice. Both the researcher and Milena comment, question, tease, and laugh, which spurs Nadia to continue elaborating on how she had to unlearn the style of x-language to sound Norwegian, and how her husband was unwilling to speak Norwegian to her. In her story Nadia uses direct speech, and thus allows the focus group participants into her story-world. For example, she narrates her husband's comment that she is "so very broken" ("*så veldig gebrokket*"), which means he will have difficulty understanding her when she talks Norwegian. The Norwegian adjective "*gebrokket*" has a negative connotation (as opposed to having an accent). Her husband's utterance might be interpreted as an instance of "iconization" (Irvine and Gal 2000, 37), which links linguistic forms to a social phenomenon: he does not want to listen to her "conspicuous foreignness" (40). Nadia constructs him as unaffected by or unaware of her feelings and her struggle. She reveals how all of these obstacles led her to not speak Norwegian for a long period:

Excerpt 5

Nadia: But I could not speak the first three years.

A: You found speaking the most difficult?

Nadia: Actually, yes, I had a blocking here. I was so unsure how I (...) It was like, I started to understand dialects. I understood everything, in a way. I watched TV, understand everything; listen to radio, understand everything. But I was not able to perform, to get it out.

By calling it a “blocking,” she points to a serious psychological diagnosis. Second language anxiety has been vividly discussed in the literature (Macintyre 2017). In particular, classroom speaking is reported to be the most affected by anxiety. Lately, researchers have pointed to the need for “[a]dding a narrative component to our understanding of language anxiety” as “[l]earner stories can be *re-narrated*, which in turn can affect the whole tenor of the anxious self” (Şimşek and Dörnyei 2017, 66). Furthermore, Nadia tells that she worked with a voice recorder in class, listening to herself and then re-recording her voice, which helped her through the “blocking.” She eventually gained more confidence in her competence. In this way, she constructs herself as both vulnerable to her husband’s criticism and her own perception of otherness, but also agentive and empowered in her ways of overcoming these obstacles.

Milena tells about her experience in a very different way. She claims that, for her, the most difficult period in learning Norwegian was when she did not understand people. But her husband provided feedback and support. Milena constructs him as very caring. However, she declares that the “best compliment” she ever received was when a patient evaluated her Norwegian, saying: “I thought you came from Northern Norway. You speak dialect, see.” To sound like a “Norwegian” seems to be the target of many learners. Research indicates that there exists a stereotypical notion of ‘Norwegianness’ that is connected to language practice, such as the use of a local dialect (Mesthrie, Opsahl and Rønneberg, Chapter 3 in this volume; Rønneberg and Jensen 2020).

When the researcher asks Nadia if she has had a similar experience, she claims that her psychological boost happened when she was (re-)constructed as a doctor by her teacher:

Excerpt 6

Nadia: We started talking just a bit and asking “What are you doing?” or “Who are you?” Like that. Then I said, “I was a doctor.” She then corrects me, the teacher: “You are a doctor.” “Yes, I was a doctor.” “But you’re still a doctor.” And it was like that (...) It was real, [I] remember it was such a psychological boost. I’m actually that – once a doctor, always a doctor.

Receiving the correction that she still is a doctor helps her to construct herself, not just as a pitiful person unable to speak the language, but rather as someone with resources and with all of the knowledge a doctor possesses. Later she constructs herself as somebody who has developed over time in Norway, moving from struggling emotionally when asked for clarifications to accepting her way of speaking. “[O]k, I’m a foreign doctor, I can make small mistakes like that communicatively.” Norwegians’ once upsetting requests for repetition or their questions about her origins and how she likes it in Norway are no longer felt as threatening. Rather, she considers them as a type of Norwegian small talk, not primarily meant to position her as a foreigner or as somebody who does not belong.

Various aspects of the narratives of Milena and Nadia trigger understanding and reveal different representations of the self that would not have been apparent through statistics, questionnaires, or sample interviews. As immigration is a process that critically involves a continuous definition and redefinition of one’s identity, we see how the two doctors construct different identities in the story-world. As they position themselves as both vulnerable and agentive, included and excluded, clever and not so clever, they are sometimes almost contradictory. The analysis of learners’ narratives uncovers the centrality of emotions in language learning. The participants use feelings to represent their life experiences, and the two narrators point to emotions and support as being fundamental elements in successful learning experiences. Their openness is likely due to the context. A small, informal focus group allows for and encourages comments and reactions, which provides rich opportunities for support and reassurance from the other participants. The participants’ engagement in telling their stories is evident. Storytelling gives them a means to reflect on the process of immigration as well as on language learning, as highlighted by Milena’s suggestion to name the narrative study *Scheherazade*.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have presented different ways in which narrative as a research tool and as an instrument for analyzing talk can be used to illuminate aspects of migrant identities. We have exemplified our views through two different projects: one focused on narratives posted online by Dreamers, a movement of young, undocumented migrants in the United States; and a second centered on learners of Norwegian interviewed in a focus group. We have argued that both types of studies, which have in common a storytelling-as-practice orientation, show how narrative analysis allows for a deeper understanding of phenomena related to migration, particularly in the study of identity. Indeed, the picture that emerged from the analysis of the identities constructed by narrators pointed to complex and contradictory constructions, always highly contextualized within specific practices and interactions. In the first case, Dreamers were shown to

have developed strategic collective self-presentations that were in line with the need to respond to political circumstances and attuned to the imagined audiences addressed through their stories. We also saw that identities and their interpretations are shaped by a variety of factors at different scales. As the analyst goes from a level of generality that involves collective self-presentations to greater specificity, many new facets of identity start to become visible, thus offering a nuanced understanding of the experience of being an undocumented youth in the United States. In the second case, we discussed how identities are co-constructed and negotiated in focus groups and how the analysis of talk provides insights at different levels. From the perspective of the interactional level, we showed how the learners negotiated different degrees of agency and different inventories of identities with the researcher, and the researcher contributed to that construction by aligning with them and showing understanding. From the point of view of the construction of knowledge about the learning process, the narrative analysis demonstrated the emotionally charged nature of the migrants' experiences, how people close to migrants may have a pivotal role in their development as learners, and the kinds of experiences that appear to define different learners' trajectories. Migration is one of the landmark events in the lives of individuals and groups. Without input from immigrants regarding their realities, it is hardly possible to understand this process. Narratives about the learners' trajectories divulge information about migrants' experiences in a way that resonates with researchers' meaning-making capacity as well as displaying the power that voicing experiences has to shape and transform individual and collective realities.

In brief, the study of stories, and particularly the focus on storytelling as practice, leads to reflections on how identities are constructed and performed by migrants in relation to specific contexts of communication. It fosters a heightened awareness of the need to attend to different storytelling arenas in order to capture the complexity of migrants' experiences. Indeed, in the face of discourses – mainstream and academic – that reduce migrants and transnational individuals to an amorphous and homogenous mass, narratives reveal the variety of inventories of identities that may be relevant to these individuals and groups in different circumstances. What they say and show about themselves as well as how they say it is tightly imbricated with interlocutors, listeners, personal histories, and public moments. Summing up, we have shown that narrative analysis provides a point of entry into nuanced and context-sensitive understandings of migrants identities viewed as complex, individualized, and emergent.

Transcription conventions

- (.) (..) (...) Pause
- ? Question intonation
- [...] Deleted single word when marked in a turn or deleted utterances when marked between turns

[word]	Text added by transcriber for the ease of understanding
@	Laughter
Bold	Emphasis
“ ”	Reported speech
(())	Transcriber’s comment

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Notes

- 1 The transcription of the story from the 2015 Corpus is based on intonation units, while stories from the 2017 Corpus are presented in their original arrangement.
- 2 Elizabeth Lanza at the University of Oslo led the SKI project, and Anne Golden participated and collected data in several focus groups with adult migrants, mainly doctors. Golden had previously met the doctors at a venue for international doctors, where she had lectured on the Norwegian language. Data from two of the focus groups have been analyzed in several studies (Golden and Lanza 2013a, 2013b, 2019). Data for the present study was also collected within the SKI project but in another focus group with participants other than those from the mentioned studies by Golden and Lanza.
- 3 Securing the doctors’ anonymity in a Norwegian context restricts us from giving further background information.
- 4 All of the citations as well as the excerpts were translated from Norwegian by the authors.

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5 Securing Understanding in a Second Language

Communication of Rights in Investigative Interviews in the US and Norway

Pawel Urbanik and Aneta Pavlenko

Introduction

In 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), subsequently signed and ratified by 168 states. Article 14 of the ICCPR declares that suspects have a fundamental right to be presumed innocent and outlines several concomitant rights, including the right to be informed about the charges in “a language which [the suspect] understands” and the right “not to be compelled to testify against himself or to confess guilt” (United Nations 1966). To ensure a common standard across member states in safeguarding these rights, in 2012 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (EU) issued a Directive on the right to information in criminal proceedings. Article 3 of the EU Directive requires member states to provide suspects under arrest with a letter outlining the following procedural rights, as they apply under national law: (a) the right of access to a lawyer; (b) any entitlement to free legal advice and the conditions for obtaining such advice; (c) the right to be informed of the accusation; (d) the right to interpretation and translation; and (e) the right to remain silent (European Union 2012).

Many non-EU states have similar provisions, but there is also great jurisdictional variation, within and outside of the EU, involving: (a) mandatory rights; (b) the mode of communication (in the US the rights are scripted, while in Norway investigators articulate them in their own words); (c) negative provisions (England and Wales require a provision that outlines the negative consequences of remaining silent, while in Denmark and the US the right to silence is unconditional); and (d) rules that govern invocation of the rights (in the US police are required to stop the interrogation when suspects invoke their right to silence, while in Canada and the Netherlands investigators are allowed to continue questioning).

The variation across jurisdictions makes it unreasonable to expect all individuals to be familiar with their rights. Instead, article 14 of the ICCPR declares that suspects should be informed of their rights in a language they understand. The 2012 EU Directive restates this requirement and adds further provisions: suspects should be given the Letter of Rights, written in

simple and accessible language. Unfortunately, the EU Directive offers no definition of simple and accessible language. In fact, the very sentence on language rights in its model letter violates plain language precepts: “If you do not speak or understand the language spoken by the police or other competent authorities, you have the right to be assisted by an interpreter, free of charge” (European Union 2012, 8).

Similar sentences, articulated with lawyers in mind, appear in scripted rights used in Australia, England and Wales, and the US. Not surprisingly, research conducted in these settings shows that even native speakers of English do not always fully understand their rights and the consequences of waiving them (Rock 2007; Rogers et al. 2013). When it comes to second language (L2) speakers, the prevailing assumption is that they are well-served by existing procedures: those who do not understand the language in question get an interpreter, and those who do comprehend the warnings. Recent studies contradict these assumptions and show that many L2 users fall into a grey area: able to communicate on a variety of everyday subjects, they lack the background knowledge and language skills to understand their rights and the consequences of waiving them (Bowen 2019; Eades 2018; Innes and Erlam 2018; Pavlenko, Hepford and Jarvis 2019). This research, however, has been limited to English-speaking countries that rely on scripted rights. The present study takes a further step: we compare communication of scripted (US) and unscripted (Norway) rights. First, however, we need to tackle a tricky question: what does it mean to understand one’s rights?

Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Approaches to the Study of Understanding in an L2

The legal standard for informed consent is satisfied when suspects are formally advised of their rights. An affirmative answer to the yes-or-no question “Do you understand?” and a signature on the waiver of rights count as evidence of understanding (Ehrlich, Eades and Ainsworth 2016). Psychologists who evaluate understanding of rights have more exacting standards: their conclusions are based on the adequacy of paraphrases, recall, inferences, and answers to comprehension questions (Rogers and Drogin 2019).

In the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), L2 listening comprehension is defined as an ability to process spoken L2 automatically and in real time and to understand the information relayed by the interlocutor (Bloomfield et al. 2010; Ellis 2008; Vandergrift and Baker 2018). Factors that affect L2 comprehension are divided in this research into three categories. *Individual* factors include working memory capacity, vocabulary size, strategic competence, extent of previous L2 exposure, background knowledge, and listener anxiety, shown to negatively affect the ability to understand what is being said. *Text* characteristics encompass passage length, morphosyntactic complexity, information density (i.e., the number of ideas per passage), redundancy, concreteness, directness, idiomaticity, and word

frequency. *Context*-wise, L2 comprehension is negatively affected by time limits, background noise, unfamiliar accents, and fast speech rates. SLA studies also show that listening comprehension can be facilitated by repetition and presentation in two modes, oral and written.

The factors particularly pertinent to communication of rights include anxiety (extremely high in the context of police interrogation) and the wording of rights. Research shows that scripted rights are distinguished by (a) information density; (b) reliance on legal jargon and low-frequency terms; and (c) syntactic complexity (Berk-Seligson 2009, 2016; Eades 2010, 2018; Eggington and Cox 2013; Pavlenko 2008; Shuy 1997). This is not to say that L2 speakers draw a blank, when faced with complex stretches of talk. Listening comprehension, as Ellis (2008) reminds us, is not just a bottom-up process of matching sound to meaning – it is also a top-down process, in which L2 learners make inferences, using their background knowledge.

To see how the two processes interact, Pavlenko, Hepford and Jarvis (2019) compared understanding of the US rights, commonly known as the *Miranda* warnings, among first language (L1) ($n = 41$) and L2 speakers of English ($n = 59$). Most of the L2 speakers were deemed advanced, i.e., level B2 or higher, according to the Common European Framework (CEFR), and were enrolled in upper-level English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. The warnings, recorded by a state trooper, were played one sentence at a time, and students had to write each sentence down in their own words. The analysis revealed that only two L2 speakers (3.4%) reached the minimum comprehension threshold on the task.

To tease out the factors that affect the understanding of rights, Pavlenko and associates (2019) administered a word definition task and a listening comprehension task with sentences involving legal and non-legal content to L1 ($n = 82$) and L2 ($n = 183$) speakers. The analysis confirmed the negative effects of sentence complexity and low-frequency words on L2 comprehension, but three findings were utterly unexpected. First, the researchers found a difference between L1 and L2 speakers in comprehension of high-frequency polysemic words, such as “right” and “exercise.” Both groups were familiar with their concrete meanings (right/left, right/wrong; physical exercise, academic exercise), but only a few L2 speakers were aware of their abstract and collocational meanings (human rights, exercise one’s rights). Second, to fill gaps in understanding, L2 speakers inferred meanings from context based on phonological similarity and approximate semantic fit. Unfortunately, in the context of legal warnings, these compensatory strategies led them astray: the phrase “You have the right to have a lawyer present” was paraphrased by some as “You have the right to have a lawyer in prison”; the term “waiver” was interpreted as “a document that safeguards your rights” and the collocation “exercise rights” as “workout rights” or “rights to physical exercise.” The third and the most disconcerting finding was that these paraphrases made perfect

sense to the participants – when a subgroup of L2 speakers was asked to rate their confidence in their own comprehension, they gave themselves consistently high ratings.

These findings raise great concerns regarding understanding of scripted rights by L2 speakers, but they are limited in two ways. Firstly, they do not tell us anything about understanding of unscripted rights; and, secondly, they treat comprehension as a solitary pursuit. Studies of communication of rights in police interviews remind us that understanding is a joint discursive accomplishment that relies on verbal and non-verbal strategies and cues (Berk-Seligson 2002, 2009; Bowen 2019; Eades 2018; Ehrlich, Eades and Ainsworth 2016; Heydon 2005; Pavlenko 2008; Rock 2007, 2016). What makes this accomplishment challenging is the power asymmetry: investigators control the timing and the mode of the delivery of the rights, while suspects follow – or, for that matter, fail to follow – suit. Researchers have not yet examined conversational strategies that could potentially facilitate understanding of rights, such as repetition, reformulation, elaboration, comprehension checks, and clarification requests (cf. Svennevig et al. 2019, on reformulation and simplification in L2 interaction). The present study, therefore, has a dual aim: (a) to compare communication of scripted (US) and unscripted (Norway) rights in police interviews; and (b) to examine the use of conversational strategies that shape the understanding of rights.

Communication of Rights in Investigative Interviews

Communication of Rights in the US

Legal and Procedural Foundations

The main purpose of investigative interviews in the US is to obtain the suspect's confession (Inbau et al. 2013). The perilous side effect of such orientation are false and coerced confessions, obtained through physical abuse, intimidation, threats of harm or punishment, deception, deprivation of basic needs, prolonged and exhausting interrogations, and manipulation of suggestible suspects (Gudjonsson 2018; Leo 2008). To ensure due process and to safeguard suspects and the court against false and coerced confessions, in 1966 the US Supreme Court made the following decision in the case of *Miranda v. Arizona*:

The person in custody must, prior to interrogation, be clearly informed that he has the right to remain silent, and that anything he says will be used against him in court; he must be clearly informed that he has the right to consult with a lawyer and to have a lawyer with him during interrogation, and that, if he is indigent, a lawyer will be appointed to represent him.

(*Miranda v. Arizona*, 1966, 437)

Once informed of their *Miranda* rights, suspects may invoke them, in which case the investigator must stop the interview, at least until the lawyer's arrival. Alternatively, suspects may choose to waive their rights, "provided the waiver is made voluntarily, knowingly, and intelligently" (*Miranda v. Arizona* 1966, 444), i.e., "with a full awareness of both the nature of the right being abandoned and the consequences of the decision to abandon it" (*Moran v. Burbine* 1986, 421). If the defense can prove later that the defendant waived their rights unknowingly, unintelligently, or involuntarily, inculpatory statements may be deemed inadmissible by the judge, thus weakening the basis for a conviction. Nevertheless, overviews of cases involving L2 speakers show that judges tend to find waivers valid, even if an individual later required an interpreter (Berk-Seligson 2009; Einesman 2010; Pavlenko 2008; Villalobos and Davis 2016).

The warnings, however, aren't as simple as they are purported to be. For starters, the *Miranda* warnings are scripted but not standardized – each jurisdiction has its own version, which means that at any given time there are more than a thousand texts in circulation. Analyses of 945 *Miranda* texts revealed substantive variation in (a) length (between 49 and 547 words); (b) content; (c) vocabulary; (d) sentence complexity; and (e) comprehensibility (grade 2.8 to post-graduate) (Rogers et al. 2007, 2008). Furthermore, investigators are allowed to use manipulation, deception, and trivialization strategies that frame the waiver as a routine bureaucratic procedure and steer the suspect towards consent (Leo 2008; Scherr and Madon 2013). In the view of the leading legal expert, Richard Leo (2008), misrepresentation of the nature and purpose of questioning is one of the most fundamental and overlooked deceptive strategies in US police interviews. To compare different approaches to communication of rights in the US, we will analyze excerpts from two video-recorded police interviews.

*Data Analysis*¹

The first extract comes from a police interview of a Russian national, which was retranscribed and reanalyzed for the purposes of the present study by the second author, who appeared as a forensic expert in the case (Pavlenko, 2008). Analysis that triangulated the suspect's (S) linguistic performance with her test scores and grades placed her English proficiency at the high-intermediate level. To conceal gaps in understanding, she relied on her interactional competence, i.e., the ability to derive meaning from verbal and non-verbal cues. The investigator, however, was adept at manipulating such cues. The suspect was invited to the police headquarters as a witness in an ongoing investigation. Following an informal exchange, the investigator (I) shifted into the formal mode to introduce the Consular notification, obligatory in cases of the arrest or detention of foreign nationals, and managed to present it without alerting the interlocutor to the fact that she was in custody. To keep her talking before she was formally charged, he followed the same tack in delivering her rights.

Extract 1

- 01 I there's another one I have to do =
 02 S = OK ((smiles and nods)) =
 03 I = I want to read you that one (.) OK? (.)
 04 S ((nods silently))
 05 I then we'll we'll get by all of that (.)
 06 and then you will sit (.)
 07 and I'll have my coffee (.)
 08 and you can have some more water (.)
 09 what do you think?
 10 S all right=
 11 I = OK ((laughs)) (.) here let me read this one to you (.)
 12 uhm (.) if there's any part of this that you don't understand let me
 13 know=
 14 S = OK =
 15 I = OK (.) this is who I work for (.) ((name of police department
 16 omitted)) and this says Miranda Warning Form (.)
 17 and this is just your name (.)
 18 and then there are some numbers I'll fill in ((waves his left hand in a
 19 dismissive manner)) [there
 20 S [you like read this for everybody↑ (.)
 21 not the (.) for foreigners only?
 22 I this is when we're sitting and talking (.) anybody (.
 23 whether [it's
 24 S [like Michael signed this? =
 25 ((here a short segment is omitted to prevent identification))
 26 I we do this for ((state name omitted)) (.) I mean (.) people in the
 27 United States too =
 28 S = OK so they do the same thing?
 29 I yeah ((nods several times))
 30 I you have the right to remain silent (.)
 31 anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law (.)
 32 you have the right to talk to a lawyer and to have him present with you
 33 while you are being questioned (.)
 34 if you cannot afford to hire a lawyer (.
 35 one will be appointed to represent you before any questioning
 36 if you wish one (.
 37 if at any time during this interview
 38 you wish to discontinue your statement
 39 you have the right to do so (.)
 40 do you understand each of these rights I have explained to you?
 41 S ((suspect nods silently))
 42 I (.) OK good ↓(.)
 43 having these rights in mind do you wish to talk to us now? =
 44 S = right (.) of course =
 45 I = OK (.) let me give you [that
 46 S [° how can you be silent
 47 if you brought me here to talk?° =
 48 I = let me give you to sign right there on the top line (.) thank you

In the view adopted here, this interview is an example of what Rock (2016) terms “tick-box consent.” Aware that he is being video-recorded, the detective is delivering the rights “by the book” – slowly and with the written text visible to the suspect. At the same time, he frames the waiver as a formality that applies to all interviews (line 22). When the suspect, unfamiliar with the *Miranda* warning, checked to see whether this form was also for foreigners (line 21), the investigator replied that they do it for people in the US too (lines 26–27), without specifying that it is only used with suspects in custody. To reinforce the misunderstanding, he told the suspect that her friends, interviewed as witnesses, also signed the form (in court, he was forced to admit it was a lie). When she signaled her lack of understanding of the right to silence (lines 46–47), the detective ignored her question and asked her to sign the document. Unfamiliar with US law, the suspect signed the waiver under the false impression that witnesses are required to do that. When the suspect’s attorney filed a motion to suppress her statements based on the second author’s testimony that she did not have sufficient proficiency to understand her rights, the Superior Court of Delaware denied the first part of the motion. “I find that her comment ‘[h]ow can you be silent if you brought me in to talk,’” wrote Judge Vaughn in his opinion, “was simply a choice of words on her part indicating that she wished to answer questions” (*State v. Malinovskaya* 2006).

The second interview exemplifies a dialogic approach to communication of constitutional rights. The excerpt comes from a repeat encounter between an investigator and a suspect awaiting a trial in jail. Given the fact that the defendant had already been advised of her rights during preceding interviews and had retained an attorney, it would have been tempting to treat the delivery of the *Miranda* rights as a formality. Instead, the investigator re-delivered the rights according to his own “playbook.”

Extract 2

- 01 I I gotta go through a couple more things here:↑
 02 that I have to get out of the way↑
 03 and we can talk freely OK? ((open gesture with both hands)) so (.)
 04 S ((nods))
 05 I ((starts filling out the paperwork))
 06 this is the Miranda Warnings again
 07 but I do it a little different when we are in this type of setting (.) OK?
 08 I’m ask you/I’m gonna ask you some questions ((enunciates very precisely))
 09 whatever you tell me I’m gonna write it down (.) OK?
 10 so the time now is gonna be: (.) twelve oh one pm ((writes down))
 11 ((stops writing, turns to S))
 12 when can you have an attorney?
 13 S when?
 14 I when can you have an attorney?
 15 S when I needed it↓
 16 I when you need it?

- 17 S yeah::
 18 I when I needed it?
 19 so basically you can have an attorney any time that you want one
 20 any time you want an attorney ((open gesture with both hands)) =
 21 S = oh no when I get in trouble↑
 22 I so when can you have an attorney?
 23 what would be your answer to that question?
 24 S when you get in trouble?
 25 I well (.) I would say (.) I'd say any time you want one
 26 S oh ((laughs)) any time if you want one↑
 27 I so: when can you have an attorney?
 28 S any time if you want one! ((laughs))
 29 thank you for helping me! ((giggles))
 30 see: I am not that good↑
 31 I'm not a good liar either↑
 32 I can you have an attorney any time that you want one including right now?
 33 S right now? yes↓
 34 I can you use my telephone (.) free of charge (.) to call an attorney?
 35 S yes↓ ((nods))
 36 I what will happen if you want an attorney but you can't afford one?
 37 S the state will offer it to you↓
 38 I the state will appoint one?
 39 S aw: yes↑ ((nods enthusiastically))
 40 I I'll put "the state will offer it to you"↓ ((writes down))
 41 do you have to answer even one of my questions or say anything to me at all?
 42 S no↓
 43 I if you start to answer my questions and then decide that you wanna stop
 44 can you stop any time that you want?
 45 S I don't know? ((looks at the investigator)) yes ((giggles))
 46 are you OK?
 47 I yeah: you don't ... you don't have to talk to me if you don't
 48 you do not have to talk to me at all OK?
 49 this is completely voluntary
 50 do you understand that if I am called into court
 51 to testify about what both you and I say
 52 that I will be placed under oath and I will tell the truth?
 53 S yes↓
 54 I would you want me to tell the truth or would you want me to lie?
 55 S I want you to tell the truth↓
 56 lying does not help you↓
 57 I do you understand that I will tell the complete truth
 58 regardless of whether it helps/helps or hurts the police or helps or hurts you?
 59 ((points to her)) yes?
 60 S yes↓
 61 I now that you know all of your rights do you wish to continue with this
 polygraph?
 62 S yes ((nods))
 63 I what I need you to do is to look down through that
 64 make sure that's what we talked about
 65 what I wrote down is what you told me
 66 put your initials at the bottom if you agree with the front page

- 67 and then read the back of it ((gives her the pad with the document and a pen))
 68 S ((takes the pad, looks at it)) so: how long you are doing this one?
 69 I what's that?
 70 S how long you've been doing this one?
 71 I this? some many years↓
 72 S so, if I have a felony charge↑ =
 73 I = hold on (.) hold on (.) let's get this out of the way first ((both laugh)),
 74 I know you are excited to talk but I gotta get this done first
 75 go through this (.) make sure that's all what we talked about
 76 I need you to read through that and I need you to put my name down right here

This segment shares several similarities with the previous interview: both investigators speak in a brisk professional manner, frame the documents as something *they* have to complete (Extract 2, lines 1–2, 7, 73–74), and refer to them in a casual manner as *things* to get *out of the way* (Extract 2, lines 1–2, 73). The difference lies in securing understanding: the first investigator satisfied the *Miranda* requirement with formal delivery of the rights, while the second one adopted an active dialogic approach. To ensure that the suspect understood her rights, he asked numerous comprehension questions (lines 12, 14, 22, 27, 32, 34, 36, 41, 43–44, 50–52, 54, 57–58, 61), and when she displayed hesitation or a lack of understanding of a particular right, he offered further explanations, repeating and/or rephrasing the same information (lines 19–20, 25, 47–49) and adding additional vocabulary (line 38).

Together, the extracts show that US investigators have a variety of strategies at their disposal: some may trivialize the *Miranda* waiver as a routine procedure, and others scaffold understanding through explanation, elaboration, and repetition and evaluate it with the help of paraphrasing, comprehension checks, and clarification requests. In the cases above, the two distinct approaches led to the same outcome: both suspects signed the waiver, with the difference that the second suspect actually displayed understanding of her rights.

Communication of Rights in Norway

Legal and Procedural Foundations

In Norway police investigators are expected to follow an investigative method known as KREATIV (Fahsing and Rachlew 2009).² Based on the PEACE framework developed in England and Wales in the 1980s and 1990s, this approach aims to move away from the confession-oriented, confrontational, and coercive interrogation style favoured in the US and towards research-based and information-oriented interviewing (Fahsing and Kepinska Jakobsen 2016; Fahsing and Rachlew 2009; Gudjonsson 2018, 45–48; Shawyer, Milne and Bull 2009). According to the KREATIV model, the purpose of the interviews with suspects is to gather information

by giving the suspects an opportunity to tell their own version of events, listening actively, and building trust and rapport through interaction (Fahsing and Rachlew 2009).

The acknowledgment of the suspect's rights is one of the key elements of rapport building and respectful communication, and it is explicitly manifested early on during the interview, namely when the suspect is being formally familiarized with his/her legal rights. The recommended way of securing their understanding is to (1) present the rights in a way that is understandable for a given suspect, and (2) ascertain that the rights have been understood correctly (cf. Bjerknæs and Fahsing 2018, 219–220). This becomes even more important when suspects belong to one of the vulnerable populations (juveniles, individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities, L2 speakers, etc.) for whom the KREATIV model is meant to show special concern (Bjerknæs and Fahsing 2018; Fahsing and Rachlew 2009).

In the information phase of Norwegian investigative interviews, suspects receive a package of rights, obligations, and other cautions. In the KREATIV model this phase is called “*Kontaktetablering og introduksjon*” (Contact Establishing and Introduction), which corresponds to the “Engage and Explain” stage in the PEACE framework. The main purpose of this phase is to familiarize suspects with formal requirements and procedural steps, but also to build trust and create good atmosphere (Bjerknæs and Fahsing 2018, 216).

The procedure in this phase basically follows the regulations of the *Straffeprosessloven* (Criminal Procedure Act [CPA]), the *Påtaleinstruksen* (Prosecution Instructions [PI]), the *Rundskriv fra Riksadvokaten* (General Prosecutor Directive on Police Interview [Directive]) of 2016, and the *Straffeloven* (Penal Code). According to the CPA, PI, and Directive, the interviewee should be informed about several issues. First, s/he should know that the interview is being recorded. Next, s/he should be given the reason why s/he is being interviewed and what his/her legal status is (i.e., victim, witness, expert, suspect, or charged). Third, the suspect or charged party should be informed about his/her right to silence and a defense counsel. Fourth, s/he should be made aware of the possibility of a reduced sentence (typically called a “sentence discount”) for cooperation. Fifth, if s/he is willing to testify, s/he should be encouraged to give truthful statements. In addition, the suspect can be discouraged from giving false statements, if this is relevant to the case. Table 5.1 presents the components of the information phase with their legal bases in the order they usually appear.

In Norway the right to silence is formulated as a lack of obligation to give a statement. This right, together with the first two components of the information phase, is worded in the PI as follows:

Før det foretas avhør med mistenkte, skal han gjøres kjent med hva saken gjelder og med eventuell siktelse. Han skal gjøres kjent med at han ikke har plikt til å forklare seg.

Before an investigative interview with a suspect is carried out, he shall be informed about the case and a possible charge. He shall be informed that he has no obligation to give a statement.

(Prosecution Instructions § 8–1, first paragraph,
translated by PU)

The right to counsel is formulated as the possibility of engaging the assistance of a defence attorney, chosen by the suspect, at each stage of the investigation:

Mistenkte skal dessuten gjøres kjent med at han har rett til å la seg bistå av en forsvarer etter eget valg på ethvert trinn av saken, herunder ved politiets avhør av ham. Siktede bør spørres om hvem han ønsker oppnevnt som sin offentlige forsvarer når han har krav på slik forsvarer.

The suspect shall in addition be informed that he has the right to be assisted by a defence counsel of his choice at each stage of the investigation, including the police investigative interview with him. The charged should be asked whom he wishes to be appointed as his public defender when he is entitled to such a defender.

(Prosecution Instructions § 8–1, second paragraph,
translated by PU)

Unlike in the US, legal rights in Norway are not scripted, which means that police officers can articulate them in their own words. As a result, one might expect lexico-grammatical variation. Furthermore, although the interviewer is required to deliver the information package in an understandable way

Table 5.1: Legal bases for the components of the information phase in police interviews in Norway

	<i>Criminal Procedure Act</i>	<i>Prosecution Instructions</i>	<i>The General Prosecutor Directive</i>	<i>Norwegian Penal Code</i>
1. Recording (audio/video)		X	X	
2. Status (suspect or charged)	X	X	X	
3. Case (reason for interviewing)	X	X	X	
4. Right to silence	X	X	X	
5. Right to counsel	X	X	X	
6. Possibility of sentence reduction			X	X
7. Warning against false statement				X
8. Encouragement to give a truthful statement	X	X	X	

and secure the comprehension of its components (Bjerknes and Williksen 2015; Riksadvokaten 2016; Bjerknes and Fahsing 2018, 216), there is no guidance on how to determine the need for an interpreter or how to adapt the wording of the rights to the perceived language proficiency of a suspect.

*Data Analysis*³

Norwegian investigators informing suspects about their rights and obligations tend to stick to the wording of the PI. This shows that, despite the absence of a scripted formula, the delivery of the rights to silence and to an attorney is not “unscripted” – to fulfil their obligations, investigators rely on the language of the law (cf. Bowen 2019). The analysis examines two different approaches adopted by Norwegian investigators.

In the first approach, exemplified in Extract 3, the information phase is treated as a formality that needs to be checked off, what Rock (2016) terms “tick-box consent.” The interview is conducted with an L2 speaker of Norwegian. In the sequence below, the investigator (I) informs the suspect (S) about his rights after having notified him of recording and having collected his personal details.

Extract 3

- 01 I klokka e:r, (0.5) null tre femten;
The time is zero three fifteen;
- 02 (1.8)
- 03 I å så: ønsker je::g e: først å gjøre deg oppmerksom
And I want to first inform you
- 04 på dine rettigheter;
about your rights;
- 05 (0.4)
- 06 I du har ingen plikt til å forklare deg for politiet;
You have no obligation to give a statement to the police;
- 07 (.)
- 08 S mhm,
- 09 (0.5)
- 10 I du har rett >til å la dæ< bistå av en forsvarer;
You have the right to be assisted by a defence counsel;
- 11 (.)
- 12 S m[::_]
- 13 I [på ethve]rt trinn av saken;
At each stage of the investigation;
- 14 (.)
- 15 S ↓m::,
- 16 (0.6)
- 17 I å så vil jeg fortelle dæ at (0.9) nå:r man
And I want to tell you that when one
- 18 forklarer seg for politiet om e noe man e::
gives a statement to the police about something one

- 19 (0.8) blir mistenkt for;
is suspected of;
- 20 (.)
- 21 S ↑m::
- 22 I så kan man få en (0.8) strafferabatt; (0.6) en
then one can get a sentence discount a
23 mildere straff; (0.8) dersom man: innrømmer,
lighter sentence if one admits,
24 (0.7) det man har [gjort_]
the thing one has done_
25 S [dje-] ↑jeg ikke har (gjort)
I not have done
- 26 noen feil.
anything wrong.
- 27 (0.5)
- 28 I ↓nei.
No.
- 29 (1.0)
- 30 I jeg skal forklare deg hva jeg ønsker at du skal
I will explain to you what I want you to
31 forklare ↑deg om;
give a statement about;
- 32 (.)
- 33 S j:a_
Yeah_

In lines 03–04, the investigator marks a new phase of the interview by announcing what he is going to do next. Right after that, he starts listing the suspect’s rights. He does that incrementally, marking prosodically each unit as an incomplete part of a larger structure and separating it from the other ones with longer pauses. This way of presenting information (in instalments) has been described as a pre-emptive comprehension strategy, often used by L1 speakers in interaction with L2 speakers (Svennevig 2018). The purpose of the chunking is to give the recipient an opportunity to signal understanding problems after each separate unit. Thus, the formulations of the legal rights in our example are identical to those found in the PI (see above), but they are delivered in a way that opens a slot for the suspect to react. Having received a back-channelling signal (a continuer) from the suspect (“mhm” or “m:”), which normally encourages the continuation of the turn, the investigator simply goes to another component of the information phase without checking the understanding of the right that has been presented or even asking whether the suspect is willing to exercise it. This may be the result of a stronger sequential interdependence between the conversational turns, whereby the design of instalments may prompt continuers as cooperation markers that indicate absence of understanding problems (Schegloff 1982). Thus, since the suspect does not display any comprehension difficulties or exercise his rights at this point, the investigator continues,

revealing his assumption that the suspect is willing to give a statement (line 30). This leads to questions (not quoted here) to which the suspect does not give clear answers, claiming he did not do anything wrong by having an imitation firearm in his car. The investigator eventually interprets the suspect's responses as refusal to give a statement, although the latter had not been asked whether he wanted to give it at all.

The information phase also displays several procedural shortcomings. First, it lacks other components, i.e., information about the possibility of a reduction in sentence length and encouragement to give a truthful statement. Furthermore, the order of the components deviates from the policies and the usual practice (cf. Bjerknes and Williksen 2015). The suspect is informed of the reason for being interviewed not at the beginning but at the end of the information phase, after which the investigator starts asking questions. Consequently, what becomes locally relevant for the suspect is to answer to the accusation rather than relate to the rights since these are already relegated sequentially to less significant information.

The second way of informing suspects about their rights and obligations is characterized by contextual adjustment of the wording. Investigators still formulate the components in legalese, but they reformulate and simplify them attempting to secure comprehension by engaging the suspect in the clarification process. This is exemplified in Extract 4 where the investigator interviews a juvenile L2-speaking suspect.

Extract 4

- 01 I e:::
 02 (1.1)
 03 I du er mistenkt;
 You are suspected
 04 (0.5)
 05 S ↑ja,
 Yes.
 06 (0.7)
 07 I for å (.) gå med kniv,
 of walking with a knife
 08 (0.5)
 09 S j[a:
 Yes.
 10 I [på offentlig sted.
 in a public place.
 11 (0.3)
 12 S m:. (0.3) og det var ikke med vilje.
 And it was not on purpose.
 13 (.)
 14 I ↓nei. jeg skjønner. (.) .h men vi kommer til e det
 No. I understand. But we will get back to that

- 15 etter hvert, (0.5) .h e:: (.) du har ikke plikt
later. You do not have obligation
- 16 til å forklare deg for politiet;
to give a statement to the police.
- 17 (0.5)
- 18 S ↑mh_
Mhm.
- 19 (0.9)
- 20 I skjønner du hva det betyr;
Do you understand what it means?
- 21 (.)
- 22 S (↓nei) jeg tror det.
(No), I think so.
- 23 (.)
- 24 I ja. (.) du må ikke forklare ↑deg, (0.7) du må ikke
Yes. You do not have to give a statement. You do not have to
- 25 svare på mine spørsmål.
answer my questions.
- 26 (.)
- 27 S ↑j_o jeg kan (det).=
Yes, I can (do this).
- 28 I =åkej. (.) .hh e:: (0.8) og du har rett til å ha
Okay. And you have the right to have
- 29 en advok[↑]at,
a lawyer.
- 30 (0.6)
- 31 S ↑m:_
Mhm.
- 32 (1.0)
- 33 I og du har også rett til å ha en advokat til stede
And you also have the right to have a lawyer present
- 34 når du snakker med politiet;
when you are talking to the police.
- 35 (.)
- 36 S ↑ja det vet jæ.
Yes, I know that.
- 37 (.)
- 38 I ja. (.) .hh e:: (0.4) men du har ikke noe advokat
Yes. But you do not have any lawyer
- 39 her (0.3) nå;[‡] (0.6) e: så da er spørsmål om du er
here now, so the question is if you are
- 40 villig til å forklare deg (0.9) ↑nå uten advokat
willing to give a statement now without a lawyer
- 41 til stede.
present.
- 42 (.)
- 43 S ↑nei ↑jeg kan: si:: det som jeg tenker.
No, I can say what I think.

After notifying the suspect that he will record and collect his personal details, the investigator first informs him about his status and the reason for why he is being interviewed. Then, the suspect receives information about his rights. In contrast to the previous extract, the investigator explicitly asks him whether he understands the right to silence and having received a positive but epistemically downgraded response that reveals uncertainty (*jeg tror det* [I think so]), he reformulates the right (lines 24–25). A simplified wording leads to a resolute response in which the suspect waives his right (line 27). Then, the right to counsel is presented in three parts. The first part is a simplified version of the official wording (lines 28–29). Here the investigator does not directly employ the formulation from the PI but makes use of simpler expressions and terms, such as an internationally recognizable term “*advokat*” (“lawyer”) instead of “*forsvarer*” (“counsel”). The second part is a simplified specification that explains the applicability of the right during investigative interviews (lines 33–34). The third part narrows down the right to the local situation (lines 38–41). This contextualization serves as a point of departure for a direct question about whether the suspect indeed wants to waive this particular right together with the right to remain silent. Consequently, the investigator creates yet another opportunity to ascertain that the suspect has understood his rights and that his responses are consistent in this matter. Only after this part is finished does the interviewer provide simplified information about sentence discount, which is followed by additional questions from the suspect.

The comparison of the two approaches leads us to several observations concerning the Norwegian investigative system. First, although this system does not offer scripted cautions, the investigators tend to rely on the official formulations in the law (the PI). Second, variation in the wording depends on the extent to which the investigator engages himself and the suspect in the information phase by adjusting the formulations to the local context. Yet, any conflict between procedural and interactional orientations that might be noticed here seems to be illusory. Investigative interviews are necessarily delimited by the legal procedures and institutional norms that standardize and stiffen the overall structural organization of the whole activity and each of its components. In practice, the regulations help investigators to navigate through the interview’s phases, build coherence (Robinson 2013), and follow the procedures. At the same time, they may hamper the interactional character of the interview, which assumes a more local orientation and, in the Norwegian settings, less formal and rather relaxed communication. However, this is a trap that seems to paralyze those investigators who treat the information phase as a procedure of its own. When reduced to the recitation of the law (even simplified), it gives no space for comprehension checks and poses a great challenge to the assumptions of the KREATIV framework.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our comparative analysis shows that the problems inherent in the delivery of scripted rights are equally apparent in “unscripted” communication, and L2 speakers’ inability to understand their rights may pass undetected in both types of communication. Asked directly “Do you understand?”, they may answer “yes” out of fear, compliance, or deference to authority and sign the waiver in a mistaken belief that they are giving up the rights to a prison lawyer and exercise in a prison yard (Pavlenko, Hepford and Jarvis 2019).

In 2015, a group of 21 linguists, psychologists, lawyers, and interpreters in Australia, England and Wales, and the US, known as the Communication of Rights Group (CoRG), articulated a set of workable recommendations for best practices in communicating scripted rights, titled *Guidelines for Communication of Rights to Non-Native Speakers of English* (CoRG, 2015). Our study allows us to expand these recommendations to contexts where delivery of rights is technically “unscripted” and to articulate recommendations for linguistic training suggested by the EU Directive (European Union 2012).

To begin with, we suggest that investigators need to be trained to slow down their presentation of rights – the information familiar to them may be very new to the interlocutors. Second, they need to learn how to rephrase the legal wording in more accessible language, i.e., by reducing density and complexity of the texts, splitting sentences with multiple clauses into shorter utterances, increasing the amount of repetition, and replacing legal jargon, low-frequency terms, and idiomatic expressions with high-frequency equivalents (additional suggestions can be found at <http://plainlanguage.network.org>). Having said this, we want to stress that we do not share the traditional belief that institutions can produce universally “comprehensible” texts. The fact that L2 speakers experience problems interpreting the very term “right” suggests that simplified wordings are a step towards securing understanding but not a magical solution.

Our third recommendation is to treat understanding as an interactional accomplishment and to train investigators on how to engage the suspects in the clarification process through contextualization and the use of reformulations, clarification questions, and comprehension checks. Most importantly, to comply with the aims of the ICCPR, we contend that understanding should not be determined by means of direct yes-or-no questions, such as “Do you understand?”, or inferred from continuers, such as “mhm” or head nods. Following the *Guidelines* (CoRG, 2015), we recommend the adoption of an in-your-own-words requirement, whereby after presenting each right, investigators ask suspects to explain in their own words their understanding of that right and the consequences of waiving that right.

The adoption of such a requirement also serves another useful purpose – determining when the suspects need an interpreter. Since lay-people are rarely able to accurately assess their linguistic needs and the police lack the expertise to determine independently whether the suspect

has sufficient understanding of the language in question, the adoption of an in-your-own-words requirement offers a working solution to this dilemma. When suspects have difficulties restating the rights in their own words (e.g., when they remain silent or repeat the statement verbatim), a professional interpreter with expertise in legal interpreting should be brought in, even if the suspect had earlier declined the offer of interpreting services. Then, the dialogic procedure needs to be repeated anew, because in and of itself the provision of interpreters and translations does not guarantee comprehension, especially among people unfamiliar with the very cultural assumptions underpinning the right to silence in police interviews.

Transcription Conventions

<i>Common</i>	(Extracts 1–4)
:	Lengthening of the preceding sound
/	Cut-off of the preceding word
<u>yes</u>	Stress or emphasis
YES	Noticeably louder speech, raised volume
°yes°	Parenthetical comments made in a different tone
[Onset of overlapping speech
=	Latched utterances, with no break or gaps between them
(.)	Brief untimed pause
(1.2)	Pauses with the duration in brackets in tenths of a second
((smiles))	The transcriber's descriptions
<i>US Interviews</i>	(Extracts 1 and 2)
↓	Falling intonation contour
↑	Rising intonation contour
?	Question intonation
<i>Norwegian Interviews</i>	(Extracts 3 and 4)
↑↓	sharp changes in pitch (rise or fall)
?	strongly rising intonation
¿	rising intonation
,	a slightly rising intonation
–	level intonation
.	falling intonation contour
><	faster talk
.hh	audible inhaling
(word)	uncertain fragment/alternative hearing

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Notes

- 1 Since the interviews in question were part of public suppression hearings, they are now in the public domain. Nevertheless, the second author also obtained permissions to use the data from the defendant (in the first case) and the District Attorney (in the second case).
- 2 KREATIV is an acronym for *Kommunikasjon, Rettssikkerhet, Etikk og empati, Aktiv bevisstgjøring, Tillit gjennom åpenhet, Informasjon, Vitenskapelig forankring* (Communication, Rule of law, Ethics and empathy, Active awareness, Trust through openness, Information, Valid scientific foundation).
- 3 The Norwegian data come from the “Communicating Rights in Police Investigative Interviews” project at the Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan, University of Oslo. The recordings of interviews have been collected by permission of the Director of Public Prosecutions (Riksadvokaten), the Norwegian Center for Research Data, the Data Protection Officer at the University of Oslo, and Oslo Police District. The collection and management of the data are in accordance with the rules outlined by the Norwegian Center for Research Data and the guidelines of the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees.

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Part III

Linguistic Landscapes



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6 English in Norwegian and Ethiopian Linguistic Landscapes

Returning to Symbolic Language Use

Robert Blackwood, Janne Bondi Johannessen, and Binyam Sisay Mendisu

Introduction

The question of the role of English has been considered within Linguistic Landscape scholarship for as long as researchers have been using the term to describe or categorise their work. Remarking on the visibility of English in the public space did not, of course, start with the earliest LL publications. In the same year that Landry and Bourhis published their landmark paper, Ross (1997, 31) – in a paper almost as totemic for his field of applied linguistics as the milestone article by Landry and Bourhis is for LL studies – discusses a stroll around the suburb in Milan where he lived, where “shops, bars, restaurants, and more besides flaunt English names.” Twenty years later, Bolton (2012, 31) refers to this flaunting as “the intrusion and use of English in the public spaces of the world’s cities.” A cursory glance at Troyer’s excellent resource, the Linguistic Landscape Bibliography on Zotero, reveals 88 journal articles, nine book chapters, six dissertations and theses, and two monographs which feature “English” in the title, attesting to the prominence given to this line of enquiry in Linguistic Landscape research.

We seek in this chapter to understand what we mean when we refer to the symbolic use of English in Norway and Ethiopia. At first glance, comparing sites as disparate as Oslo and Addis Ababa might seem problematic, given their divergent histories, lived experiences, and trajectories, but the comparison is – we contend – productive and fruitful, not least because of the transformations underway in both cities. The transitions in Oslo and Addis Ababa are very different, not least in their motivations, public articulations, and visible consequences. However, at their heart social, economic, and cultural transformations are felt (to – we acknowledge – differing extents and in contrasting ways) in both cities where the visibility and use of English is accelerating, and the functions performed by what we understand as English are increasingly complicated. In this chapter, where we interrogate the blurring of the boundaries between the functions of languages as they appear in public spaces, we are acutely aware of the socio-economic underpinning of positionality, and therefore the potential for the function(s) of signs in

English to be construed in conflicting ways by different categories of people and groups. It is widely held in Ethiopia, for example, that the use of English is intertwined with the country's so-called "modernisation," whilst in Norway English echoes successful economic growth. In tribute to the work that Elizabeth Lanza has done in invigorating research connectivity between Norway and Ethiopia, we attend to the relationship between the symbolic and communicative values identified with English in the Linguistic Landscapes of Oslo and Addis Ababa.

Within Linguistic Landscape research, Landry and Bourhis (1997) identified two complementary functions for languages as they appear in the public space: informational and symbolic. They contend that the informational function ranges from demarcating the territory of specific ethnolinguistic groups (or, more likely, some of the groups who inhabit a particular space and enjoy some level of power) through to indicating the languages in which services can be accessed or are expected to be accessed. This is contrasted with the symbolic function, which is "affectively charged" (1997, 27) and symbolises the strength of respective ethnolinguistic communities. These functions have been internalised in much Linguistic Landscape research to the extent that they are largely unproblematised; indeed, in much scholarship within the humanities and social sciences, symbolism (when not referring, for example, to Russian or French schools of symbolism in art or poetry) is seen as uncontroversial and does vital work as shorthand for meaning, exemplification, and signification. Nevertheless, there are some important contributions to the discussion regarding symbolic language use. Before the coalescing of scholars around the concept of Linguistic Landscape, Kelly-Holmes (2000, 71) identified what she refers to as a "competence hierarchy," within which the value of a named, bound language is independent of its utility or its communicative function, but – through fetishisation – has become symbolic. By way of example, Kelly-Holmes (2000, 72) cites SEAT-brand cars, whose erstwhile advertising slogan, "German engineering, Spanish design," stresses the technical competences of Germans in contradistinction to Spaniards' artistic and aesthetic insights. Kelly-Holmes's point serves as an important foundation stone for understanding symbolic language use in the public space, and one upon which Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) build. They scale up from the symbolic and/or communicative function of individual signs to argue that the Linguistic Landscape *in toto* can be seen as the symbolic construction of the public space. Drawing on Lefebvre (1991) and Spolsky and Cooper (1991), they contend that the Linguistic Landscape "carries crucial sociosymbolic importance as it actually identifies – and thus serves as – the emblem of societies, communities, and regions" (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006, 8). When referring to named languages, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006, 26) conclude that the emplacement of, for example, English in the public space does not imply any knowledge of the language; we nuance this to note that recognition of the language *as* English is an essential part of its symbolic role.

When looking to apply an understanding of the symbolic use of English in the Linguistic Landscape, we recall Leeman and Modan (2009, 351), who remind us that, crucially, “the extent to which the perlocutionary force of [the] signs is symbolic depends in part on the viewer,” calling upon us to pay attention to the potential range of interpretations of language use in the public space. Leeman and Modan (2009, 350) also note that the symbolic and informational functions are not mutually exclusive; for example, they note that Chinese is sometimes used in establishments to provide information (such as food on menus) but at the same time to signal authenticity (in this case of the cuisine served) to Chinese customers. The use of English, therefore, can be both symbolic and informational at the same time to the same individual or group. In short, function lies in the eye of the beholder. The functional load may well shift between languages within the public space, a conclusion which returns us to the now well-established principle in Linguistic Landscape research that we must attend to the extent to which individuals *read* the range of languages on display. Analysing the Linguistic Landscape of Thai restaurants in Hamburg, Androutsopoulos and Chowchong (2021) neatly distil the explorations of use of language by noting (in their case, in Germany) that English enjoys high symbolic value, and – crucially – “its choice does not presuppose an international audience.” In other words, the use of English can, unlike in Ben-Rafael et al.’s (2006) case, address an audience who cannot produce (in speech or writing) the language. This is not using the language in order to communicate with a group whose repertoire includes English, but more precisely to reach individuals who recognise English as English. Androutsopoulos and Chowchong (2021) go on to note how the use of a given named language indexes origin and, by extension, authenticates claims made by the sign-owner, despite the fact that its “practical, communicative value ... is quite low.” In this chapter, we set out to explore the correlation between symbolic and communicative values.

When we began this chapter, it emerged that, as authors, we had broadly similar interpretations of the “symbolic status” of English, which was a term to which we frequently returned. For both Johannessen and Mendisu, “symbolic” equates to a conscious decision to obtain a certain effect, rather than a need to reach a certain audience or a lack of confidence in writing in Norwegian. This echoes Spolsky and Cooper’s (1991, 81–84) Sign Rule 3, which is predicated on the symbolic value condition, but not necessarily the preference “to write signs in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified.” Subtly nuancing this, Johannessen contends that the motivation is to shape and influence a response. In considering this symbolic role for English, we look to Giddens’s conceptualisation of disembedding, or the “‘lifting out’ of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space” (1991, 21). Giddens explicitly challenges the inclusion of language as a disembedding mechanism on the grounds that language, along with power, are

“intrinsic features of social action on a very general level, not specific social forms” (1991, 23). However, in this chapter, we discuss the potential for language (as recognisable, named languages, such as English, Norwegian, Amharic, etc.) to act as “symbolic tokens” (Giddens 1991, 22), which cross a wide spectrum of boundaries (literal, imagined, and metaphorical) and whose power and value is activated for a range of different purposes above and beyond the content message.

As such, we look in this chapter at the situated practices of the use of English in two very different settings. To do this, and in recognition of Lanza’s considerable body of work in Norwegian and Ethiopian settings, we first provide some contexts to scaffold the discussion of the symbolic use of English in Oslo and Addis Ababa.

Contexts: Norway and Ethiopia

Norway has generally been considered a monolingual country where everybody uses Norwegian, a North Germanic language. This is actually a misconception, as there have always been other groups living in Norway. The indigenous Sámi population speak Sámi languages (from the Uralic language group), and there have also been phases of Finnish (another Uralic language) migration into Norway over several hundred years. In addition, Norway is known for its dialect diversity, competing written standards, and lack of any unified and agreed upon oral standard (Røyneland and Lanza 2020, 4). Equally, according to Statistics Norway (2020b), in twenty-first-century Norway, people from Europe, Asia, and Africa make up 15% of its population of 5.4 million. While English used to be a language spoken and used by an educated minority of the population, it is now a language that everybody feels that they know to a certain extent. The reach of English extends across many, if not most, parts of life in Norway. Although there are immigrants from English-speaking countries, the numbers are comparatively few in contrast to those from non-English-speaking countries. For example, in 2020 there were (including immigrants’ Norwegian-born children) 16,000 from the United Kingdom and 10,000 from the United States, compared with 115,000 from Poland, 43,000 from Somalia, and 39,000 from Sweden (Statistics Norway 2020a). At the same time, whilst all pupils learn English at school, according to information from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, four out of five pupils choose an extra foreign language at school from grade 8; most choose Spanish, followed by German and French. These languages have little visibility in the public space in Norway. It is clear that the widespread presence of English witnessed today is not due to migration or education, but rather due to other factors that we explore here. Norway’s capital, Oslo, is home to approximately 700,000 souls, of whom 34% have an immigrant background. Until very recently, a formally recognised official language for Norway has not been explicitly identified;

but, in the context of a perceived threat from English, a new language law was proposed in May 2020, and voted on in 2021. The aim of the new law is to strengthen the status and legal protection of Norwegian in Norway. The law also defines the status of Sámi, other national minority languages, and Norwegian sign language. According to the law, Norwegian and Sámi are to be recognised as the two official languages of Norway.

Ethiopia, located in the Northeastern part of Africa, is the second most populous country in Africa with a population of almost 110 million inhabitants. It is a highly multilingual country in which close to 90 languages are spoken; of these languages, the most widely spoken ones include Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, Afar, Sidama, Wolaytta, Hadiya, Gamo, and Gurage. Amharic and Afaan Oromo each account for 30 million speakers. The 1994 Constitution of Ethiopia grants all Ethiopian languages equal rights and identifies Amharic as a working language of the federal government. As recently as March 2020, however, a new language policy has been adopted, and it increased the number of working languages to five, adding Afaan Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, and Afar. English is one of the most important foreign languages in the country, even though, as noted by Lanza and Woldemariam (2014a, 109), “there is a recognized general low degree of proficiency in the language.” English is considered the main language of international communication, and a majority of government documents are translated into it. In addition, it plays a key role in the country as a main language of secondary and tertiary education, as most subjects are taught in English.

Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia with close to 3 million inhabitants, of whom almost 20,000 are foreigners according to the 2007 population and housing census. The city hosts the headquarters of the African Union and many other international organisations; as such, it is considered the diplomatic capital of Africa. Nevertheless, the great majority of the city’s residents are Ethiopian, and most speak Amharic as a first or second language. Amharic is one the working language of the federal government of Ethiopia, and it has more than 30 million speakers in the country. The Amharic language has a long tradition of written culture, and it is actively used in the media, administration, and education. English is mainly used as a language of instruction, beginning in secondary schools and extending to university level. Given the global profile of Addis Ababa, English is also the main language of communication for diplomacy and international relations.

Contexts: Linguistic Landscapes Research in Norway and Ethiopia

Although Lanza has been involved with Linguistic Landscape research since before the first formal workshop in Tel Aviv in 2008, her contribution to this field of scholarship is intertwined with her work in Ethiopia rather than in her adopted Norway. This is not to say that little research has examined

language use in the public space in Norway; there is an important and growing body of work on multilingualism in the country, in particular in relation to indigenous Sámi languages and languages – such as Russian – which make the far north of the country visibly multilingual. In their study, which crosses several national borders, Pietikäinen et al. (2011) conclude that there are several competing language orders for signage that includes Sámi languages: the national order, the minority language order, and the global order. This global order, which brings English (and other languages) into view, is part of the process of creating “an international space of mobility” (Pietikäinen et al. 2011, 296), and it is a phenomenon attested in both the Norway and Ethiopia data explored here.

The presence of English in Oslo is explored, in particular, by Stjernholm (2015) and also Berezkina (2016), who considered Norwegian, English, and the languages of minority groups in Oslo’s Grønland district. Stjernholm’s study (2015) is particularly pertinent for this chapter, since she compares language choices in the Linguistic Landscapes of two Oslo districts (Majorstua and Grünerløkka) from the perspective of businesses’ globalisation and localisation strategies. According to Stjernholm’s findings, shop names in English in Oslo are typically examples of disembedding, and they are often – but not always – found in international chains, where owners’ economic profit interests lead to the streamlining of many printed signs and information as well as the use of only one language, English (see also Cenoz and Gorter 2009, 58). Stjernholm (2015, 17) gives the example of an Oslo-based bakery chain, “United Bakeries,” which is Norwegian but uses an English name. Glocalisation, on the other hand, is considered to signal something that was originally global or transnational that has been adapted or translated using local semiotic resources, such as a take-away burger shop that uses elk meat rather than beef.

There is a significant body of work on Sámi in place names and road signs (with some space devoted to the Kven language), much of which has been published by Puzey. This includes discussion of the contested emplacement of Sámi in the Sámi administrative area in northern Norway (Puzey 2011) and the recognition of the tension between regional and national authorities in northern Norway. There, the former continue to emplace Sámi in the public space, whilst “some top-down actors on the national level act in a restrictive capacity” (Puzey 2012, 132), and there remains evidence of hostility and violence towards bilingual boundary signs (Puzey 2009). Not all Linguistic Landscape research in Norway has been limited to the far north or the capital. Berezkina (2018), looking at Norway’s state-managed virtual Linguistic Landscapes, concluded that the websites are becoming less multilingual, with consistent use of Bokmål Norwegian and English, whilst Nynorsk Norwegian and Sámi are relegated to cursory translations undertaken to comply with legal requirements.

In Ethiopia, the last few years have witnessed the flourishing of Linguistic Landscape research, mainly due to the highly productive collaboration of

Hirut Woldemariam and Elizabeth Lanza, who have produced a series of publications on the topic (Lanza and Woldemariam 2009, 2011, 2014b, 2014c; Woldemariam and Lanza 2012, 2014, 2015). One of the major topics treated in some of their studies is the place of English in the LL of some of the major cities of Ethiopia, mainly Addis Ababa. For example, earlier studies analysing the Linguistic Landscape of Addis Ababa (Lanza and Woldemariam 2011, 2014b) acknowledge the prominence of English in the capital. The growing use of English has been explained through the concept of “sociolinguistic consumption” suggested by Stroud and Wee (2012). Although globalisation and the commercial value of languages play a role in the choice of languages, it only explains one aspect of the decision-making process. This is mainly because the choice of language in this case is related to social and epistemic authority of one over the other. In this case, the choice of English is associated with the choice of a particular archive of knowledge and experience.

Several studies have been undertaken on Linguistic Landscapes in Ethiopia, mainly looking at the relationships among local languages and their relation to policy. For instance, Mendisu, Malinowski, and Woldemariam (2016) interrogate the absence of local languages in the Linguistic Landscape in some of the towns closely identified with speakers of these languages. Even though language policy encourages the promotion of local languages in public life, the arrangement of the public space does not reflect the intentions of the policy. This echoes the conclusion reached by Fekede and Gemechu (2016), who scrutinised the Linguistic Landscape of the regional city of Jimma, where they detected a notable absence of the region’s main language, Afan Oromo. Others, such as Raga (2012) and Yigezu and Blackwood (2016), have looked at linguistic identities articulated in the Linguistic Landscape. Raga (2012) considers the city of Jimma and the relationship between language attitudes and visibility in the public space, whilst Yigezu and Blackwood (2016) tackle the uneven use of Harari alongside other languages (including Amharic and English) in the ancient regional capital of Harar.

The Present Study

By contrasting the data collected in Oslo and Addis Ababa, we explore in particular the notion of symbolic use and discern the competing influences which drive our understanding of what English comes to mean in these two cities. The differences between the histories and profiles of Oslo and Addis Ababa are as striking as they are productive in terms of teasing out what is meant by the symbolic use of English. The key considerations in what follows are the extent of the correlation between symbolic and communicative values, and the socio-economic realities which underpin the use of English. For the purposes of our analysis, we highlight the typology devised by Amos (2016, 133), and, in particular, the system for classifying signs

that he designates as “field,” referring to the “associated discourse of the text,” which has gradients such as food and drink, traffic, security, and finance. In his study of Liverpool’s Chinatown, Amos focuses on the communicative function of the text and teases out the opposition set up by some between symbolic signs and authentic representation (Amos 2016, 148). In our chapter, we take his “system” of field to probe the extent to which the English used in a sign in Addis Ababa or Oslo makes a reference (however obliquely) to the domain of experience to which the sign is attached. In other words, we consider whether the use of English words, such as an abstract term like “taste,” shifts the functional load when referring to a café, for example – where there is a communicative intention – in contrast to a property management business – where the resonance does not seem immediately apparent.

In approaching the Linguistic Landscapes of Oslo and Addis Ababa, we organise our discussion through three sets of comparisons. We open with two main city-centre streets, which cater to international travellers as well as domestic passers-by on their way to work. The second comparison is of two local marketplaces and, in particular, places where shoppers go to have some kind of experience in addition to purchasing something. The third comparison takes as its setting one of the exemplifications of consumerism in late modernity: the shopping mall.

Henrik Ibsens Gate, Oslo, and Africa Avenue, Addis Ababa

Henrik Ibsens Gate (Henrik Ibsen Street) in central Oslo is in an upmarket part of town; it starts at Norway’s National Theatre, runs alongside the Royal Palace, and takes in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its site, therefore, resonates as national, particularly given the Norwegian landmarks that punctuate its route and its naming after the country’s arguably most famous playwright. At the same time, the street includes central Oslo’s busiest metro station, Nationaltheatret, which includes a stop for the airport express train, Flytoget. The street is therefore visited by locals and tourists alike, and the use of English also targets an international audience. A highly desirable commercial location, Henrik Ibsens Gate is dotted with a high number of small shops, although some are part of bigger chains. Within the genre of shopfronts, the field of the premises (Amos 2016, 133) emerges as particularly salient, as does the socio-economic orientation of the business and its expected customer base. There is a clear orientation towards the use of English and an absence of Norwegian in the high-end businesses on Henrik Ibsens Gate.

By way of example, we highlight the Bolia furniture shop to explore the tension between the communicative and symbolic uses of English. English has a particularly high symbolic value in Bolia, which presents a choice of the very latest furnishings and fittings of the most modern and highest quality. Signs in Bolia promise handmade quality, sustainable materials, and always

the newest fashion. Key phrases are in English: “The New Collection has arrived” or “Hello Spring Collection and goodbye Winter.” Given the prestige of the shopping location and the higher socio-economic profile of the expected clientele, including locals, tourists able to afford pricey Norway, and diplomats visiting the city, the balance between the communicative and symbolic function of the signs is relatively even. There is an expectation that Norwegian passers-by will not only recognise “Hello Spring Collection and goodbye Winter” as words from the English language, but they will also understand the invitation to revive their interior decoration. For the tourist or the diplomat, English clearly fulfils a communicative function, inviting them to admire Scandinavian furniture and maybe even invest in it. To adapt Modan and Leeman’s framing (2009, 315), the perlocutionary force of such signage is both communicative (in that the propositional content of signs in English is understood) and symbolic (in that the use of English activates a shared series of associations for groups).

Henrik Ibsens Gate is not a gated street and does not limit access to only well-heeled shoppers; some businesses recognise that the communicative value of Norwegian is high. These are typically shops that deal with more basic needs, such as health (opticians and chemists), or the Ark bookshop (meaning “sheet of paper” in Norwegian). Whilst there is a market in Norway for books written in English, the majority of titles on the shelves of the Ark bookshop are in Norwegian, and the social reality of Oslo’s bookworms is that Norwegian is the preferred language for reading. To this end, signage in the window of Ark is in Norwegian (Figure 6.1) since the association between the English language and the novels on sale is unhelpful from the perspective of sales.

Africa Avenue, also popularly known as Bole Road, runs from Meskel Square in central Addis Ababa, to Bole International Airport. Its route, therefore, is a key artery in the city, and one along which visitors to the city travel on arrival; when fused, its name and its route underline its significance. Diplomats and business representatives heading to the African Union Commission travel down Africa Avenue on arrival in the city, and several embassies are found on the street, including Morocco’s and Namibia’s. The street’s credentials as African, therefore, are foregrounded in a way that echoes Henrik Ibsens Gate’s resonance as Norwegian. Equally, the street sees tourists, diplomats, and African civil servants in the way that Henrik Ibsens Gate does in Oslo. Africa Avenue is also an area of high footfall for local and temporary residents, and it caters to these groups with cafés, restaurants, banks, and so on. With its mix of public, official signage (including directional signage and those on national and local government buildings) and signs on private businesses, Africa Avenue is as multilingual as other capital cities, but the visual arrangement of languages does not reflect the linguistic ecology of Ethiopia. The two most widespread languages on display – as per our estimation – are Amharic and English, often in combination with one another, but with at least as many signs in English alone.



Figure 6.1: Ark bookshop with a sign reading “Fyll opp til lave priser. Populære nyheter!” (“Fill up at low prices. Popular news!”).

English appears most widely in signage associated with commercial properties, such as shops, cafés, and restaurants; in comparison with Henrik Ibsens Gate, the use of English is more widespread. More significantly, English on Africa Avenue is consistently used to name premises, often drawing on North American or European toponyms. These range from London and Amsterdam to New York (used as the name of a supermarket). Even more numerous than the toponyms are the nouns, expressions, and abstract ideas, which draw to varying degrees on English to present businesses. From more transparent, does-what-it-says examples (such as “World Fiberglass and Water Proofing” or “Fashion Point”) to those where the use of English is not obviously associated with the business (such as “Princess,” “Honey Dream,” or “Impact”), there are both symbolic and communicative values attached to English, although the distribution can be uneven. To illustrate this, we take two examples: “Book World” and “Day & Night.” Both use English, and, more precisely, both use English for its symbolic value. This symbolic value includes the fact that English is not the language of any of the ethnolinguistic groups of Ethiopia. However, the communicative value of English in the name “Book World” is higher than it is in “Day & Night” since the propositional content of “Book World” as a fragment indexes directly the domain into which the establishment falls. For passers-by with

little clue as to the business of “Day & Night” (a home furniture, garden, and appliances shop), the name of the premises does symbolic but little communicative work.

The distinction between the use of English on Africa Avenue and on Henrik Ibsens Gate points to another dimension of the value of English. On Henrik Ibsens Gate many of the shops did not have English names (nor did many of them have particularly Norwegian names), but English was used in slogans, taglines, and short texts to convey a certain modishness. On African Avenue the communicative acts performed by English sometimes signal the purpose of the premises – as in the case of “Book World.” At other times – as in the case of “Day & Night” – the fact that English is used is its value, regardless of what the expression means if translated.

Bærums Verk, Greater Oslo, and Haya Hulet Market, Addis Ababa

Bærums Verk is a shopping centre which was developed in the 1990s from a former iron works where labourers both worked and lived. The main factory building was converted into a modern shopping centre, and the ground floor is occupied by two big shops for designer furniture and decorative items. Small houses, which used to be workers’ family homes, now contain little shops and workshops. For example, a confectionary shop sells special chocolates without individual wrapping to make them look locally made, although they are imported from Belgium. There are crafts shops that sell knitwear and wooden articles, which are made partly in Norway and partly abroad, again without plastic wrapping. The mostly car-free area lies by an idyllic river and a waterfall. There are modern sculptures between the buildings. In winter there is a Christmas market with family activities, such as horse-and-sledge rides for the children. The small shops, despite some of their names, do not sell mundane household items. They are almost like museum artefacts. Indeed, this is what they look like, both outside and inside. They sell small things like special food items, crafts, and art. Bærums Verk looks like a typical area of re-embedding or glocalisation. This is even true when it comes to the language of the shop names which are all in Norwegian. The arrangement of the site in conjunction with the deployment of Norwegian is intended to convey an idea of local cottage industries or farm buildings, which have names that mean “shed” or “factory” even though hardly anything is made there (see, for example, Figure 6.2, a cottage named *Snekkerbua* (“The Carpenter’s Shed”) in Norwegian). The use of English here would have undermined the effect that Bærums Verk’s owner, Carl Otto Løvenskiold, sought to achieve, which was to create an idealised shopping centre with sculptures and family experiences and a local affiliation, as conceived by Løvenskiold’s mother, Ingegjerd Ebba Dagmar Løvenskiold Stuart (Harnes, 2014). In other words, the symbolic value of Norwegian rises significantly, to the extent that the value of English in these circumstances would impact negatively on the associations sought



Figure 6.2: *Snekkerbua* (“The Carpenter’s Shed”).

by Bærums Verk’s owner-managers. Norwegian is clearly commodified and performs the role of glocalising products made in Norway but also products imported from abroad. From the perspective of Norwegian and non-Norwegian visitors to Bærums Verk, Norwegian takes on an unambiguously symbolic function.

There is no site in Addis Ababa that is directly comparable to Bærums Verk, and so we turn our attention to the markets of the city in order to consider the symbolic use of English, building on Lanza and Woldemariam’s work on English in Ethiopia’s LL (Lanza and Woldemariam 2009, 2014b; Woldemariam and Lanza 2014, 2015). The market in the Haya Hulet district of northwest Addis Ababa is radically different to Bærums Verk. It is not a repurposed industrial site that has been aestheticised and commodified for the purposes of retail, but rather an archetypal roadside market, where stalls line both sides of a street and wares are displayed during opening hours to passing trade. In stark contrast to Bærums Verk, this is not an idealised shopping experience where local identity is augmented. Instead, it is a widely known street market, which is particularly renowned within the city and beyond for the sale of clothes. Recalling older consumption practices, and therefore standing in contradistinction to larger Western-style department stores and supermarkets, Haya Hulet market is a place for direct retail



Figure 6.3: “Yitem Shake Juice” sign in Latin script with no Amharic text.

alongside a busy road where neighbouring stalls actively compete for business and noisy personal exchanges are part of the experience.

The signage in Haya Hulet market is sparse and usually limited to a sign which identifies the stall and, often but not always, conveys its wares. Using Amos’s (2016) typology, there are usually up to two “communicative functions” undertaken in the signs. First, the role performed by the text identifies the establishment name (the interpellating signage, which Stroud and Jegels (2014) note “bring[s] them into existence”). Second, the sign lists discursively the products on sale. Signs in the market often include two named languages, Amharic and English, and often – but not always – two scripts: Ethiopic for Amharic and Latin for English. There are stalls, such as “Yitem Shake Juice” (Figure 6.3), which only use the Latin script; the word “Yitem” is not a proper noun in Amharic, but it may well relate to a name in another Ethiopian language.

Going through the market, there is an uneven pattern for the distribution of labour between Amharic and English. Amharic is often used in interpellating signage, but this role is also taken on by English for some stalls. At some stalls, Amharic is completely absent. The relationship between the two codes is often close in terms of the visual arrangement and, thus, in the associations fostered. This is most acute in the sign for “NY KIDS



Figure 6.4: Sign for “NY KIDS FASHION” stall.

FASHION” (Figure 6.4), where the close positioning of the Amharic text above the English text suggests some level of translation. Indeed, the English version is a direct translation of the Amharic. The identification of English with the United States is instantiated by the almost universally recognised NY acronym for New York, and it is indexed by the image of a child who is supposed to represent, we argue, a North American girl.

The symbolic use of English here is complemented by the picture of the girl, and they work together through fetishising the language to index “competence” (Kelly-Holmes 2000) in fashion. The Amharic and English texts are translations of each other, as is the case of Azeb Perfume (a case of the personalisation signage genre, in Stroud and Jegel’s (2014, 192) terms). In the Azeb Perfume sign, the traditional understanding of code preferences is disrupted; the text in Amharic is larger and centred, but the English text appears above the Amharic. The ways in which the potential consumer reads the text are multiple, and within this understanding of the symbolic use of English, the signs at the market exemplify the process of disembedding. Equally, there is extensive evidence of a reliance upon Amharic as a localising agent.

The Rykkinn Senter, Greater Oslo, and Friendship Business Center, Addis Ababa

The last pairing that we consider involves suburban shopping centres, which can be found in many parts of the world now since they are no longer the preserve of the Global North. Traditionally, in late modernity shopping malls are enclosed centres housing a range of shops with different owners and often anchored by one or two larger department stores. The businesses are

joined by pedestrianised promenades, which are often balconies overlooking terraces or small stalls. The physical organisation of shopping centres follows a broadly shared pattern; the layout is recognisable in both Norway and Ethiopia. We compare two suburban shopping centres precisely because of their target clientele. These centres are not primarily frequented by the wealthiest residents of Oslo or Addis Ababa; rather, they target the lower-middle classes, in other words, individuals with some disposable income but not from the wealthiest socio-economic bracket. We do this comparison in order to consider whether social-class positioning contributes meaningfully to our discussion of the symbolic use of English. In this section, we examine the Rykkinn Senter, which is located 20 km from central Oslo and 2.5 km from Bærums Verk, and the Friendship Business Center, which is only 4 km from central Addis Ababa. Both sites attract publics that differ from those targeted by the other locations discussed here: there is little overlap between shoppers at the Rykkinn Senter and consumers on Henrik Ibsens Gate; and the Friendship Mall (as it is often referred to locally) is frequented by a wealthier section of Addis Ababa society compared to the Haya Hulet market. The Friendship Business Center is one of the few shopping malls established in the city. However, the development of shopping centres has become more common over the past 15 years as part of Ethiopia's social transformation in the wake of the growth of what is understood locally as a new middle class.

The Rykkinn Senter may be only 2.5 km from Bærums Verk shopping centre, but it has a very different profile to the repurposed iron works. It is the local centre for a densely populated suburb, and it also attracts customers from further away. The socio-economic profile of the clientele of the Rykkinn Senter is, we contend, less affluent than those who shop on Henrik Ibsens Gate, but the businesses in the shopping mall still target what might be described as a Norwegian middle class, by which we refer to those with some level of disposable income. The shops at the Rykkinn Senter are mainly chain stores with very little local affiliation, and many of the businesses have English names even though the chains are Norwegian or Scandinavian (for example, Buddy, Kid, FitnessRoom, Clas Ohlsson Compact Store). Confirming our assertion regarding the widespread ability of many Norwegians from different socio-economic backgrounds to understand, at the very least, some English, in the Rykkinn Senter there is evidence of English being used for communicative and symbolic purposes. For example, in KappAhl, a clothing shop, the slogan on an advertising poster reads – in English – “Every body is a beach body,” illustrating the process of disembedding and counting on the English language to take on some of the communicative load in addition to its symbolic role. This, we argue, is on the basis that the propositional content – referring to body positivity – relates directly to the product on sale.

Not all texts in KappAhl are in English. The chain store's owners recognise the expectations and abilities of their customers as well as the need to convey more complex details. Less prominent in the shop, but containing

important information, a sign in Norwegian reads “*Alle varer til herre. Gjelder ikke i kombinasjon med andre tilbud eller rabatter*” (All goods for men. Not in combination with other offers or reductions). Even globalised, disembedded businesses that use English to showcase on-brand messaging and trendiness resort to Norwegian when they feel the need to convey necessary information.

In Ethiopia, the Friendship Business Center is a shopping mall located outside the centre of Addis Ababa, in a way not dissimilar to the Rykkinn Senter’s peripheralisation in Greater Oslo. The Friendship Business Center is found in the southwest of the capital, within the city’s ring road, and near Bole International Airport. Whilst the spatial organisation of the Friendship Business Center is akin to that of the Rykkinn Senter, with a broad range of privately owned businesses leasing retail space, the kinds of shops are very different. This difference lies not in the kinds of products on sale – there is a comparable range of clothing, sporting goods, interior furnishings, and cafés – but in Addis Ababa there are fewer chain stores and a higher proportion of small, independent business. By way of example, we look at the sign above Etbas Boutique, which sells clothing and shoes for women (Figure 6.5).

There is much to be said about the arrangement of this sign, including the resonance of the term “boutique” (a French word borrowed into English), the representation of two women in different styles of clothing, the double evocation of the United Kingdom, and the non-standard plural marker (“size’s”). However, our interest lies here in the disembedding of English within the specific social and economic reality of the Friendship Business Center. No Amharic or any other Ethiopian language is used in the signage here, and the text is all presented in Latin script, with no place accorded to Ethiopic. The expectation is that when the customer understands the propositional content, the linguistic choice is – from the sender’s perspective – by definition communicative. There is a clear interdependent relationship between the symbolic and communicative values of English here.



Figure 6.5: Etbas Boutique sign in English.

Conclusions

It is unsurprising that English saturates the public space in Oslo and Addis Ababa. In a globalised world with hyper-mobile travellers, the reach of the English language crosses all continents and extends into peri-urban shopping centres in Norway as well as roadside markets in suburbs in Ethiopia. What we have sought to do in this chapter is use a set of comparisons in Oslo and Addis Ababa to tease out the correlations between the symbolic and communicative values attributed to English by those who manage the public space in the two cities. In the cities' important downtown streets, English is emplaced for the needs of international visitors as well as locals, fulfilling a communicative function for the former whilst also activating symbolic associations of modernity and trendiness. In local marketplaces like Bærums Verk and Haya Hulet, where experience is as important as consumption, English is not as visible and assumes a largely symbolic, rather than communicative, role. Finally, in the suburban shopping centres that cater to the local middle classes, there is both streamlining use of English for communication as well as for a symbolic function to convey fashionableness and a specific style.

There are important similarities between what we have identified in Oslo and Addis Ababa to note in these concluding remarks, not least in our revising of Giddens's (1991) disembedding process to include English (and potentially other named, bound languages) as "symbolic tokens" (Giddens 1991, 22). English, we argue, now has the currency that money does, as per Giddens's illustration of the disembedding mechanisms at play, as it can be taken out from its earlier social relations and reapplied elsewhere, where its value and power is (re)activated in radically different contexts.

When we consider the data gathered in Norway and Ethiopia, we can see that English is emplaced in a range of businesses in both Oslo and Addis Ababa as part of an intertwining with globalisation and the drive for sales. In addition, in the Ethiopian capital, the inclusion of English is a reflection of a wider social and cultural change experienced not just in Ethiopia but more widely across Africa. This, we contend, is part of a more fundamental process that is sometimes glossed as "catching-up," but which serves to dislocate well-established and grounded African languages that already successfully perform communicative functions in education, government, media, consumption patterns, and culture. At the same time, and specifically in Addis Ababa, English performs functions that Amharic and other Ethiopian languages cannot yet do in terms of symbolic value. In Oslo, the same functions are undertaken by English, but, crucially, the accent is placed on the significance, the resonance, and the associations with the English language (and therefore Anglo-Saxon culture) whereas in Addis Ababa, English is a vehicle for an abstract modernisation process. Lanza and Woldemariam (2009, 202) first noted this "symbolic function as a marker of modernity" in their study of the remote Ethiopian city of Mekele, often in tandem with

international brand names and labels. Over a decade on, and despite the transformation underway in Ethiopia, this phenomenon persists.

In this chapter, we explicitly have not sought to consider the potential for English to authenticate the products or services on offer in the premises we studied. Whilst there is evidence (such as Etbas Boutique, Figure 6.5) of English being deployed to index origin and convey a sense of authenticity, our primary concern has been to attend to the relationship between symbolic and communicative values. The bond between these two functions is, inevitably, fluid, and there are clearly no grounds to argue for specifically distinct Norwegian or Ethiopian understandings of the role that English plays. We contend that the viewer construes the extent to which English plays a symbolic or communicative role, rather than this function being inherent in the text itself. In both cities examined here, the balance between the symbolic and the communicative use of English shifts, and it bears repetition to note that we argue that a language can – and usually does – perform both functions at the same time. The accent may well be on the symbolic function in the market stalls in Haya Hulet, whilst in Henrik Ibsens Gate the significance tips towards the communicative role. In both of these examples, nevertheless, both functions are activated. Based on our analysis here, social, economic, and cultural factors contribute to the activation of the values we have identified, and our understanding is enhanced by the comparison between sites in Norway and Ethiopia.

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7 “High Culture at Street Level”

Oslo’s *Ibsen Sitat* and the Ethos of Egalitarian Nationalism

Adam Jaworski and Kellie Gonçalves

Preamble

According to Anderson (2006 [1983]), the slow decline of sacral monarchy and the rise of nationalism in Western Europe in the seventeenth century generally had a democratizing effect. The rise of print capitalism and the strengthening of state languages in the eighteenth century led to the proliferation of novels and newspapers as new forms of imaginary for representing national imagined communities (24–25). In nineteenth-century European states, the old-time feudal hierarchies dependent on religious communities and dynastic realms gave way to structures dominated by the bureaucratic middle classes, commercial and industrial bourgeoisies, and the middle-class component of the officer corps (75–76). Literacy was on the rise, and the print market grew to include the old and new ruling classes, mid- and lower-ranking officials, professionals, and the bourgeoisies (76). How much the urban and rural masses participated in the reading culture varied greatly, but the increase in literacy tended to foster popular support for the imagined national communities (78–80). Having said that, nationalism, and the modernist project more broadly, created new centres of power, inequalities, and served specific class interests (Heller 2013, 18–21). Likewise, with regard to print culture, Bauman and Briggs (2003, 221) assert that “[t]he act of reading the daily newspaper ... often excluded or marginalized women, children, the poor, and people who have enjoyed less access to education.” More recently, in post-1989 discourses on post-Cold War transition to democracy, a tension was created between the pursuit of democratization, under the guise of “civil society,” and the pursuit of economic development (Calhoun 2007, 78–79). Yet, as Calhoun suggests, nation-states “remain the highest level of institutional structure at which programs of democratization themselves can consistently be advanced” (80). It is in this spirit that we set out to examine the semiotics of a literary-national monument, *Ibsen Sitat*, in Oslo, Norway, as an attempt by a Western democratic state to project the idea of egalitarianism to its citizens.

Introduction: A Literary Monument at Street Level

The aim of our chapter is to examine the semiotics of a linguistic object, a literary monument, in the production of an egalitarian ethos in the nation-building context. We focus on *Ibsen Sitat*, a typographical installation (Saccani 2013) embedded in the pavement in Oslo's city centre (Figure 7.1).¹ According to the Visit Oslo website, the artwork is a collection of sixty-nine

Henrik Ibsen quotes in stainless steel that have been placed on the sidewalks of Oslo. The quotes follow the route of Ibsen's daily walk from his home in Arbins gate, along Henrik Ibsens gate, and up Karl Johans gate to the Grand Café, where he used to eat lunch every day.²

The monument was designed by the artists Ingrid Falk and Gustavo Aguerre, also known as the FA+ collective (Figure 7.2). It was installed in 2006 (the centenary of Ibsen's death) and was modelled on FA+'s previous piece, *Strindbergs Citat*, created in Stockholm in 1994 (see Saccani 2013, 116–123). As stated by both artists, the quotations were selected by school pupils and other members of the public, including the homeless.³ Several maps of the monument's location in bronze relief are placed at eye level alongside the route, each accompanied by a trilingual text – Norwegian, English, and Braille – accounting for a different episode from Ibsen's biography (Figures 7.3 and 7.4). Other than this, the monument – a collection



Figure 7.1: *Ibsen Sitat* (detail).



Figure 7.2: *Ibsen Sitat* (title and artists' names).



Figure 7.3: *Ibsen Sitat* (map).



Figure 7.4: *Ibsen Sitat* (map, close-up).

of quotations in Dano-Norwegian, the language in which Ibsen wrote his plays – is resolutely monolingual and intentionally so. As Aguerre states, “this is a piece for the local people ... we wanted the people to understand, not to guess.” Therefore, in a narrow sense, its audience design (Bell 1984) is quite limited. However, we believe that the installation needs to be considered as something more than a list of isolated monolingual quotations. Rather, it is a spectacle of Norwegian national literary language, hence an emblem of Norwegian nationalism. This is why we do not attempt any form of close linguistic, literary, or content analysis of the installation. Rather, we consider it as a piece of visual art and thus “language to be looked at” (Kotz 2007, 2).

Monuments tend to conjure up images of elevated and imposing structures that dominate public spaces (Lefebvre and Régulier 1996 [1984], 237).⁴ Since ancient times, some of the most commanding architectural structures have been covered with commemorative or celebratory inscriptions, typically exuding power and triggering awe and wonder (e.g., Coulmas 2009; Eastmond 2015; Petrucci (1993 [1980])). Recently, regenerating city centres, water fronts, and commemorative spaces have seen a proliferation of monuments with a different orientation to the viewer. Many are positioned at ground level, so that the viewer is able to engage with the represented person or object on an equal footing or even from the position of superiority if the sculpture requires the viewer to look down, for example when the figure is that of a seated person on a bench (see Abousnoug and

Machin 2013, 43). Numerous contemporary public art projects take the form of text-based sculptures (Gonçalves 2018; Jaworski 2015), or “letter-scapes” (Saccani 2013). Hence, in this chapter we are primarily concerned with the meaning potential of *Ibsen Sitat* with regard to its placement, design, and materiality, in particular, in the context of the semiotics of verticality.

In their analysis of signage in the International Finance Centre (IFC), a commercial, business, transportation, and residential complex in Hong Kong, Lam and Graddol (2017) draw our attention to the semiotics of verticality. The authors argue that spatial analysis needs to take into account verticality due to the close connection between architectural verticality and height above and below the ground with status, power, and social hierarchy (Graham 2016, loc. 467). This needs to be combined with a functional analysis of space and its discursive framing, for example by displayed symbolic and material discourse (Lam and Graddol 2017, 527–528). Lam and Graddol demonstrate how IFC’s vertically arranged spatiality and styling manage the access and flow of people in the complex in a socio-economically stratified manner. The lowest (underground) levels, which are dominated by public transport routes and termini, convenience stores, and fast-food restaurants, are accessible to all but dominated by less affluent commuters and consumers; higher levels, which feature expensive shops, restaurants, and hotel and residential complexes, are typically patronized by affluent shoppers and diners, both tourists and locals; the highest levels of the towers dominating the complex have highly restricted access and are the preserve of people with greatest wealth, power, and privilege. These differences are reinforced by the choice of languages on signage and their pragmatic functions (Williams and Lanza 2016). Displayed language in the downstairs areas tends towards instrumental and regulatory usage, while in the upstairs areas it tends towards the symbolic and emblematic (Lam and Graddol 2017, 541).

How then can Henrik Ibsen’s writing, an emblem of Norwegian literature and identity, be apparently shunned through its allocation to “the messy realities of the street-level” (Graham 2016, loc. 3404, following de Certeau 1984, 92)? We propose to resolve this apparent paradox by shifting away from the one-sided and often contested view of verticality as *only* and *always* linking power, prestige, or prominence with height (Allan 2018, 265–266). While height is certainly an important semiotic of power (see below), two-dimensional, flat spatiality also embodies social hierarchy. In this regard, Kress and Van Leeuwen have noted the privileged role of the centre in visual images. They build on Arnheim’s (1982, 73) argument that in visual compositions, centrality, which is not to be reduced to the geometrical middle, is associated with domination, hierarchy, power, and permanence, so that the imagery presented in the centre of images establishes it as “the nucleus of the information on which all the other elements are in some sense subservient” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 206).

Following that logic, embedding the 4,011 stainless-steel letters that make up *Ibsen Sitat* in the pavement of Oslo's main street, Karl Johans gate, bestows the work with instant gravitas. This emplacement of the installation, that is, its position in the material world (Scollon and Wong Scollon 2003, 142), could not be more prominent. Not only is it displayed on the city's grand thoroughfare, it is also surrounded by the capital's "iconic" buildings, such as the Royal Castle, the National Theatre, the National Library, the National Gallery, Stortinget (the seat of the Norwegian National Assembly), the University of Oslo's Faculty of Law, the Grand Hotel, and the Ibsen Museum, the playwright's former home. To the east, the area morphs into Oslo's central commercial district with numerous "flagship" stores of Norwegian and international retailers. Many of these grand and imposing buildings have staffs at their rooftops with Norwegian flags, making the flags, in contrast to *Ibsen Sitat*, the highest points of the cityscape in the area (Figures 7.5 and 7.6). The contrast between the ground-level emplacement of *Ibsen Sitat* and the elevation of Norwegian flags on state buildings is one of the principal concerns of this chapter.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. In the next section we outline our mixed-methodological approach for this study. We then review links between the national literary canon, monuments, and nation building. Next, we outline the elements of the social semiotic toolbox for analysing three-dimensional objects. In the penultimate section, we compare and contrast the semiotics of *Ibsen Sitat's* placement at ground level with



Figure 7.5: Oslo's Karl Johans gate, Stortinget (Norwegian Parliament).



Figure 7.6: Oslo’s Karl Johans gate, view towards The Royal Palace.

the elevated aspect of national flags on the surrounding buildings, and we discuss the meaning potentials of the monument in terms of its design and material affordances. The final section concludes the chapter with a concise restatement of our main argument and a brief reflection on the significance of the monument’s materialization and display of writing.

Mixed-Methodological Approaches of Street-Level Art

Anyone who sets foot on Oslo’s Karl Johans gate is inevitably bound to be confronted with *Ibsen Sitat*. Whether staring down at its matte composition or viewing its shiny quotations from afar, its location, compositional elements, and materiality make the piece a striking spectacle to be visually consumed by most pedestrians. At least these were our first impressions. At the time of our data collection in April 2019, Kellie had been living and working in Oslo for over two years. She had come across, walked across, and gazed or stared at these quotations countless times. Every time she was with visitors to the city, they always stopped to look down at the emblematic display. Questions that continued to emerge – What did it all mean? Why was it on the sidewalk? – ultimately prompted this project, which draws on a mixed-methodological approach. We drew on an array of data resources, including images captured by Adam; interviews with the artists, Ingrid Falk and Gustavo Aguerre, conducted by Kellie; media discourse regarding

the installation from several national Norwegian newspapers; as well as a handful of semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with passers-by from mixed national, cultural, and sociolinguistic backgrounds. For the purpose of this chapter, we focus primarily on the semiotic analysis of the installation. Throughout the chapter, we also incorporate extracts from the artists themselves in order to give voice to their ideas about the artwork and the decisions they made about its emplacement, materiality, and layout, which we believe provides a richer analysis of the monument's purpose and overall interpretation.

Literary-Dependent Culture, Monuments, and Banal Nationalism

Ibsen Sitat combines two important elements in the process of Norwegian nation building: the celebration of Norwegian literature and its emblematic display in the form of a public monument. The creation and celebration of national languages and national literary canons has been an important part of nation-building projects across the world, with writers, grammarians, linguists, and other intellectuals playing an important role in building “symbolic nations” (Casanova 2004, 195) or “national imagined communities” (Anderson 2006 [1983], 67–82; Woldemariam and Lanza 2015). “Literary-dependent culture” has become a basis for the emergence of nations as more or less territorially compact, industrial societies, providing citizens with a source of their shared identity and a point of reference for their loyalty (Gellner 1983, 63, 86), including in transnational contexts (Lanza and Svendsen 2007).

Another important development in the nation-building process has been the construction of monuments, statues, and memorials. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European capital cities bolstered their self-images through ostentatious building projects worthy of new nations and aimed to outshine their competitors. In Rome, for example, in the effort to match the grandeur of Paris, the assertion of national pride and gravitas included the construction of a massive Victor Emmanuel Monument in 1911. In Berlin, the unification of Germany resulted in a large number of massive construction projects, including the Column of Victory. The Eiffel Tower in Paris as well as the Washington Memorial and Lincoln Monument in Washington, DC, are just a few more examples dating back to the same period (Cannadine 1983, 126–127). However, monuments were also erected outside of capital cities. From the late 1860s, a large number of statues of Marianne as well as various male notables and politicians, ranging from modest busts to full-figure statues of varying sizes, were built all across France, tracing “the grass roots of the Republic ... and [demonstrating] links between the voters and the nation” (Hobsbawm, 1983: 272), suggesting that the egalitarian ethos, however

questionable, has been a driving force behind the construction of monuments for some time.

As sculptural and architectural landmarks, monuments draw attention to specific places or events and create symbolic landscapes of power and collective identities, most notably national ones (e.g., Hobsbawm 1995; Osborne 2001; Blackwood and Macalister 2019). They are repositories and anchors of memory (Zelizer 1995, 232), although, despite their apparent durability, their permanence is not absolute (Huysen 1994, 250). They often become sites of contestation, protest, and formation of counter-memories (Sturken 1997; Young 1993; see Szpunar 2010, 381, for a useful overview). Typically associated with immense, elevated statues of heroic masculinity, monuments have been referred to as “an open-air museum of national history as seen through great men” (Hobsbawm 1995, 13, cited in Osborne 2001, n.p.), though questions, concerns, and critiques about statues of women remain a pertinent contemporary issue (Furse 2017; Hauser 2018; Abousnougga and Machin 2013, ch. 7).

Sculptural and architectural landmarks establish specific spatial and temporal narratives for public consumption. Statues and monuments work performatively in tandem with other symbols circulating in public space and within state institutions: flags, anthems, currency, literary canons, national parliaments, museums, archives, libraries, theatres, and much more. In his study of German cultural memory, Koshar (2000, 9) considers architectural landmarks and monuments, together with street names, public squares, historic sites, city skylines, and natural landscapes, a part of the nation’s “memory landscape” (*Erinnerungslandschaft*), with some monuments, such as Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate, holding particularly strong resonance with vast numbers of people.

Following Billig’s notion of banal nationalism, we see capital cityscapes, with all their architectural and symbolic resources of nation building, as backdrops for a “form of life which is daily lived in a world of nation-states” (Billig 1995, 68). In contrast to the spectacular celebrations of national holidays, thanksgiving days, coronations, and other commemorative events that disrupt daily routines (Billig 1995, 45), for the most part state buildings and monuments, despite their grandeur, remain largely unacknowledged or, as asserted by Wells (2007, 137), “simply left in place, ignored, and disregarded like some latter-day Ozymandias, [a]waiting a moment, an anniversary perhaps, when they may be brought back into a line of vision.” Or, to quote Billig’s well-known sentiment, “the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (8). Thus, while on a daily basis *Ibsen Sitat* remains an understated presence, it is co-present, if made invisible by the walking crowds, in more extravagant events on special occasions, such as the Norwegian Constitution Day (*Grunnlovsdagen*), when Karl Johans gate becomes a site

of fervent celebrations “with school units and massed bands under a sea of flags” (Elgenius 2011, 112).

Three-Dimensional Semiotics

In their discussion of the semiotics of three-dimensionality, Kress and Van Leeuwen note that unlike with two-dimensional objects, the third dimension creates “a relation between the representational structure and the position of the viewer” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 248). Though not always possible in practice, depending on their placement, three-dimensional sculptures can, at least potentially, be seen from different angles. If permitted by their dimensions and placement, sculptures can be scaled by viewers, as is often the case with tourists standing next to Edwin Landseer’s four monumental lions surrounding Nelson’s Column in London’s Trafalgar Square or next to *I amsterdam*, the erstwhile place name sculpture in Amsterdam (Jaworski and Lee forthc.). In this position, the viewer not only reduces any symbolic distance between self and the represented object but also asserts a degree of symbolic power over it. This is uncommon with regard to objects of “high art.” In their section on “interactive viewing,” Kress and Van Leeuwen state:

In principle the viewer can decide whether to see the object from close up or from distance, frontally (hence with “involvement”) or from an oblique angle (hence with “detachment”), from above (hence from a position of power over the object) or from below (hence from a position in which the object has power over the viewer). We say “in principle”, because here too the viewer’s choice may be restricted by external factors, by barriers that prevent viewers from coming up close or seeing the object from a different angle. And large objects can make the high-angle viewpoint and the close distance impossible. What towers over us has, by design, power over us, and is, by design, socially distant: the vertical dimension is the dimension of power and reverential distance, the dimension of “highly placed” people, places and things. In this connection it is also significant that sculptures, as works of “high art”, cannot usually be approached from the most intimate distance, the distance that makes touching possible: as soon as the gallery visitor comes too close, a guard will become alert.

(Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 254–255)

In the above quote, Kress and Van Leeuwen link the placement of objects over the viewer as socially dominating (Lam and Graddol 2017). They associate this placement with objects of high art, which are expected to be viewed with admiration and respect. In this general framework (see also Van Leeuwen 2005, 204, 210–215), verticality is metaphorically and experientially associated with power, prestige, and prominence. As far as the

information value of top and bottom is concerned, the upper part is presented as the *ideal*, and what is placed at the bottom is presented as the *real*. As Kress and Van Leeuwen explain,

[f]or something to be ideal means that it is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information, hence also as its, ostensibly, most salient part. The Real [*sic*] is then opposed to this in that it presents more specific information (e.g., details), more “down-to-earth” information ... or more practical information. (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 193–194)

Yet, despite the high symbolic and material value associated with elevated places, excessive elevation may be morally suspect as too ethereal or aloof. Thus, a “low” placement can be associated with a firm, grounded, realistic, and “down-to-earth” attitude. Furthermore, three-dimensional objects can often be identified as having identifiable fronts and backs, such as the human body. Sometimes, the front and back must be “constructed,” for example by attaching a label to a bottle or a can. The front is typically the most prominent and identifiable side of the object. When a three-dimensional object does not have a recognizable front and back, its purpose may be to draw the attention of the viewer to its materiality, or its tactility over its visuality. Finally, to conclude this brief overview of three-dimensional semiotics, while the bottom or the underneath of objects is largely functional and rarely semiotic (with the possible exception of Louboutin’s red soles), the top, constituting the “crowning element,” is typically highly symbolic.

Few things are quite as elaborately and richly semiotic as hats, wigs, hairdos, etc. In addition, the top is often a cover, something which can be taken off to reveal an inside and a content. The lid of a jar can be taken off to give access to the jam. The lid of the box can be opened to reveal the jewellery. The hat can be taken off to reveal the person. But when the object is of equal size or larger than we are, the top will communicate only insofar as it can be seen from the front.

(Van Leeuwen 2005, 213)

The work of the American minimalist sculptor Carl Andre (1935–) is instructive in this regard. Andre has subverted some of the typical associations between sculpture and three-dimensionality. In the late 1950s, he started to work with modular arrangements of simple forms in a variety of industrial materials – wood, metal, stone, concrete, bricks – arranged on the floor. In this way,

he rejected the verticality of sculpture (which reaches back to monuments, the heroic depiction of the figure, the phallic) in favour of

sculpture “which runs along the earth.” The metal plate pieces are, he says, improved by people walking on them with normal soft-soled shoes.

(Stoddart 2000, 9)

Placing sculptures on the floor and inviting the public to walk on them drew attention to the “elemental” materiality of the sculptures, mediating the viewer’s sense of grounding, the gravitational pull of the Earth, and awareness of the surrounding space. A similar egalitarian ethos and links with the quotidian act of walking in the city (de Certeau 1984) are invoked in Lawrence Weiner’s (1942–) project, *NYC Manhole Covers* (2000). In the work, nineteen cast-iron manhole covers with the words “in DiRECT LiNE WiTH ANOTHER & THE NEXT” were installed in Manhattan, replacing the usual ones. The text references the grid of the city and pedestrians queuing, waiting, and walking alongside one another, while the sculpture’s industrial form, materiality, and placement of the sculpture invite (require, even) pedestrians to walk over the piece (Saccani 2013, 276). The work becomes a commentary on the notion of the city’s constructed “stable and grounded horizon” (Graham 2016, loc. 319) and the ground itself.

Ibsen Sitat’s Egalitarian Ethos *Vis-à-Vis* Elevated National Flags

In their heyday between the second half of the eighteenth and the early twentieth century, monuments tended to be grandiose, pompous, and colossal. They were “touching the heavens,” a feature that in the late twentieth century came to be associated with self-aggrandizing cults of personality in dictatorial states asserting regime stability and dominating public space (e.g., Kruk 2008, 35; Osborne 2001). As has been mentioned, late modernity brought about a shift from aloof, highly elevated monuments to ground-level, egalitarian ones that can be seen across newly (re-)generated city centres and gentrified post-industrial areas. For example, new urban piazzas, waterfronts, and pedestrianized shopping streets are commonly dotted with street-level bronze statues of local cultural figures (e.g., James Joyce in Dublin, The Beatles in Liverpool) or “common” men and women representing local heritage (e.g., the *People Like Us* bronze sculpture in Cardiff, which features a mixed-race, working-class couple and a dog; Irish immigrants in Boston). This shift from pomp and gigantism to mundanity and authenticity is reinforced by other co-occurring artefacts and discourses in the same areas that reference the quotidian and the nostalgic, the accessible and ludic, albeit in a highly aestheticized and styled manner: relics of the industrial past (e.g., anchors, cranes, goods wagons); repurposed old infrastructure (e.g., post-industrial buildings turned into galleries, decommissioned trams into bars, churches into visitor centres, barges into pleasure boats); highly narrativized “traditional” food outlets

(e.g., Mapes 2018, 274); street-level “dancing” water fountains; and text-based sculptures (Gonçalves 2018; Jaworski 2015, 2020).

Edensor (2020, 189) talks about the decentering and contestation of authoritative, institutional, and organizational modes of commemoration. He cites Atkinson’s (2008, 381) idea of the “democratisation of memory,” the decline from the latter half of the twentieth century of the “top-down” production and dissemination of hegemonic narratives and assumptions about the past, which

has resulted, according to Atkinson (2008, 385), in the supplanting of a singular “official” history by a “polyphony of voices that start to weave together a complex, shifting, contingent but continually evolving sense of the past and its abundant component elements.”

(Edensor 2020, 189)

Robertson (2016, 10) refers to this trend towards a polyphonic articulation of multiple sentiments, voices, and historical events, which allows for the construction of alternative identities and narratives of place, as construction of “heritage from below” (cited in Edensor 2020, 189). As suggested above, *Ibsen Sitat* presents itself as a prime example of decentred and democratized monumentality.

Because the metal casts of *Ibsen Sitat* letters are inserted into the ground to be flush with the pavement surface, as is demonstrated by an accidentally missing cast of one of the letters in Figure 7.7, they effectively appear two-dimensional. However, we need to consider the installation as three-dimensional with the z-axis made relevant by its reduction to an absolute minimum, although not completely obliterated. Following Karlander (2019, 204), we suggest that the erasure of the sculpture’s verticality is metasemiotic as it accentuates its conformity with the environment (blending with the surface of the pavement) and desirability (facilitating, or not inhibiting, pedestrian traffic). This is in contrast to symbolically transgressive and menacing *Stolpersteine* (“stumbling stones”) installed in different cities across Europe, for example. First laid in 1996 in Berlin by the artist Gunter Demnig (1947–), these commemorative paving stones, each with a brass plaque inscribed with the name and life dates of an individual Holocaust victim, are raised ever so slightly above the street level to create a metaphorical stumbling block, inviting passers-by to reflect on the lives of the victims and their own lives (see Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2016, 295, n. 9; Stevens, Franck and Fazakerley 2012, 956).

Ibsen Sitat is constructed to match the surface of the pavement as closely as possible. While inviting pedestrians to stop and read the quotations, which some do (Figures 7.8 and 7.9), it also allows their seamless, frictionless movement (Figure 7.10), integrating the sculpture with the rhythm of people’s lives that connect different areas of Oslo’s city centre, like Lefebvre’s steps of Mediterranean cities connecting their lower and upper



Figure 7.7: *Ibsen Sitat* (detail).



Figure 7.8: *Ibsen Sitat* (passers-by reading text).



Figure 7.9: *Ibsen Sitat* (passers-by reading text).



Figure 7.10: *Ibsen Sitat* (passers-by walking over text).

sections, their public and private spaces, their different architectures and historical periods, and guiding travellers from the known to the unknown. “More than that of a door or an avenue [the stairs’] blatant monumentality imposes on the body and consciousness the exigency of passage from one rhythm to another rhythm, as yet unknown, to be discovered” (Lefebvre and Régulier 1996 [1984], 237). Likewise, *Ibsen Sitat* serves as a cohesive device, tying up all the architectural elements of the city centre, with their unique rhythmicity and different scale levels, into a unified, national focal point.

This is in contrast to the numerous Norwegian national flags flying on windy days or “hanging limply” (Billig 1995, 155) in fine weather atop the public buildings alongside Karl Johans gate (Figures 7.5 and 7.6). No other symbol expresses nationalist sentiments more commonly and profoundly than the flag. Smith argues that “[t]hrough the process of their deification and politicization, flags have come to be predominant over other forms of political symbolism” (Smith 1975, 56). Nations have made them objects of “special reverence and high regard” through elaborate protocols and ceremonies (32). Flags (on land and sea) are typically “displayed where they can best be seen” (83), which typically means in an elevated position. In fact, other than as a means of political protest, the flag is not meant to touch the ground unless it is being used in a salute, rendering homage to an individual or institution (though touching the flag to the ground in a salute is not practised in all countries) (97, 104).

In the twentieth century flags were commercialized, turned into souvenirs, and used as designs on clothes, accessories, and novelty items (Smith 1975, 58). However, the default expectation is that the national flag is to be elevated, both symbolically and physically, which links it to the ideal position, as discussed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). Thus, flags continue to be sacralized, a process dating back to antiquity. For example, in Roman times, the lines were blurred between “a flag as a sacred object to be worshipped and one rather to be employed simply as an instrument for communication with gods” (Smith 1975, 37). Furthermore, the infrastructure used to display flags, such as staffs and rooftops, or both, help elevate them further, turning them into symbols of power and dominance in their own right:

The staff is a symbol of power; it corresponds to clubs, swords, and other weapons as well as to the erect male organ – which simultaneously embodies regeneration of the race and male dominance over the female, the prototype of other master-slave relationships. From the practical standpoint, the flag staff is an object which can readily be carried aloft in battle, planted beside the throne of a chief, or made the central element in an altar. It is a portable version of the trees under which many societies have traditionally gathered in council or in worship. Its height makes the pole easy to see at a distance, to follow, and to rally around especially in military engagements. In form it expresses

the aspiration of earth-bound mankind towards the heavens, which undoubtedly accounts for the prevalence of the eagle as a finial motif.
(Smith 1975, 37)

Against this background, it is not hard to see the contrast between the elitist ethos of the flags flying over Karl Johans gate (and other similar locations) and the egalitarian ethos of *Ibsen Sitat*. The latter is metaphorically captured by Aguerre, who quoted an art critic’s comment that FA+’s *Strindbergs Citat* signified “high culture at street level.”⁵

In the remaining part of this section, which draws on Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996) multimodal framework and Abousnnonouga and Machin’s (2013) social semiotic analysis of UK war memorials, we comment on the meaning potentials and affordances of *Ibsen Sitat* that underscore its egalitarian ethos, while it at the same time remains a powerful symbol of national identity.

Distance/Proximity

As has been suggested, we consider *Ibsen Sitat* as a three-dimensional structure with the z-axis reduced to zero, yet metasemiotically salient (Karlander 2019). Therefore, it has no front or back, only a top. This allows viewers to walk on and gaze at what is its crown, looking straight at the top and revealing the true nature and content of Ibsen’s writing as it “really” is (Van Leeuwen 2005, 213; though see also the next sub-section). As suggested by Classen (2005, 277–278), in a museum context, touching an object that originates from a distant region or from the past annihilates spatial and temporal distance, thereby uniting the toucher and the touched. Paraphrasing Marinetti’s (2005, 331) 1921 manifesto, *Tactilism*, the feet see *Ibsen Sitat*; the experience echoes that of interacting with Carl Andre’s sculptures at ground level, when the viewer gets

permission of entry into and proximity to sculpture, which transforms it into a material marker [but] is nonetheless infused with a politics of solemnity and intimacy typically reserved for monuments, graveyards, tombs, and shrines, thus transforming the experience of art into a visit to a “place” where one enacts an unrepeatable event.

(Raymond 2014, 247)

In the same vein, *Ibsen Sitat* draws the attention of the viewer to the materiality of its writing, the Ibsen quotations sculpted in metal are hard, permanent, and almost indestructible. Embedded in the ground, Norwegian high literature becomes one with the nation’s territory, providing a foundation for the citizens’ feet and a shared identity.

Angle of Interaction

The emplacement of *Ibsen Sitat* at ground level requires viewers to look down at the text, affording them the position of power and placing the text in a position of vulnerability. However, the downward direction of the gaze is not the sole affordance of this emplacement. Pedestrians walking on/over the installation, just like the viewers of Carl Andre's and Lawrence Weiner's sculptures, unwittingly polish the metal with the soles of their shoes, giving the letters a shiny appearance and making them more reflective. As Falk states, "if it is dark and no light, you do not see it, but because it is in the city centre, it is always light." Thus, walking over the monument and polishing it become part of the iterative, ritualistic embodied practice, alongside stopping to read and photograph the text, that performatively invokes and actualizes the monument's cultural memory (see Assmann 1995, 130, cited in Koshar 2000, 8). The acts of walking, reading, and tracing the quotations add a fourth – temporal – dimension to the installation reminiscent of Stroud, Peck, and Williams's (2019, 5) semio-topological approach, which invokes close synergy and symbiosis between people and place, charting the ways in which different, multisensory forms of semiosis "dynamically and interdiscursively, affectively and aesthetically, link bodies, selves, and memories across times and places."

This is how the quotations exceed their referential function. To paraphrase and appropriate Baudrillard (1981, 69–76, cited in Foster 1985, 79), with its grand scale and reflective surface and its massive and mobile audience, the installation forms a "loss of the real," hence it becomes a theatrical experience. A metonym of Ibsen's work, the installation serves as a spectacle of nationhood, underscored by its prevalent monolingualism, as the default, ideological choice (Røyneland and Lanza 2020).

Shape and Materiality

Other than the elevated bronze maps of the monument and the trilingual episodes from Ibsen's life (Figures 7.3 and 7.4), the entire installation is realized at street level, perfectly aligned with the surface of the granite pavement blocks (Figures 7.11 and 7.12). According to Falk, the quotations are made of solid stainless-steel letters "because of the effect of mirroring." The font used for the quotations is Oslo Sans, a sans-serif typeface based on condensed Helvetica and inspired by the font of Oslo's street signs. The sans-serif font gives the "old" quotations a modern look, its relative narrowness allows for the economical use of limited space (Van Leeuwen 2006, 148), and it adds to Oslo's distinctiveness as the nation's capital city (see Järlehed and Fanny 2021). Following Djonov and Van Leeuwen (2011, 552, 554, who draw partly on O'Toole 1994, 101), we see this font choice and the



Figure 7.11: Ibsen Sitat (detail).



Figure 7.12: Ibsen Sitat (detail).

hard-edged, grey-black, shiny-steel finish of the letters give the installation a contemporary, industrial feel, suggesting extra effort and care (and cost) went into making it. Ibsen's quotations have a sense of being mass produced, yet they are resistant, stable, and durable, hence powerful and authoritative, just as "print culture" (Eisenstein 1979) of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cemented the concept of authorship, "when the vocabulary of 'authorship' was, quite literally, a vocabulary of 'author-ity,' and the word 'author' was a word of power (Jaszi 1991, 270)" (Bauman and Briggs 2003, 12).

In contrast, the names of the installation designers (Figure 7.2), citation sources (Figures 7.13 and 7.14), and the names of the proposers of the quotations (Figure 7.15 and bottom of Figure 7.16) are traced in the granite paving stones with slightly hollowed out letters, resulting in a dull finish and providing less contrast with the background, suggesting a somewhat lighter, more airy, and hence less powerful stance. The names of the proposers of the quotations appear as "handwritten" in the slabs of granite or as remediated signatures (Grusin 2006), giving them a sense of spontaneity and immediacy but, even more importantly, downplaying the institutional and bureaucratic foundations of the monument, underpinning its nation-state symbolism (Noy 2015, 38), and suggesting a "community" feel (Li and Zhu 2021, 80).



Figure 7.13: *Ibsen Sitat* (detail).



Figure 7.14: Ibsen Sitat (detail).



Figure 7.15: Ibsen Sitat (detail).



Figure 7.16: *Ibsen Sitat* (detail).

These slightly sunken letters appear symbolically as lower than the letters of the quotations, hence slightly subservient to them. In contrast to their dull finish, the polished, shiny surface of the steel letters connote

luxury and also the clean minimalism of modernity. Polished objects also literally shine and can be brilliant and reflect as mirrors; Gage (1993) has discussed the use of polished surfaces in design in terms of the way they can increase levels of light and vibrancy in colours to add optimism.

(Abousnougou and Machin 2013, 51)

Yet, the inclusion of the names of the quotation proposers and their rendition as handwritten signatures, which are “based on corporeal presence” (Neef 2011, 239) always indexing their originators, individualizes and celebrates “ordinary” citizens next to their literary hero.

Layout

Unlike *Strindbergs Citat*, which runs in a straight line throughout the pedestrianized street of Drottninggatan in Stockholm, Sweden, *Ibsen Sitat* follows a less linear path (Figures 7.17 and 7.18) due to the complex topography of



Figure 7.17: Ibsen Sitat (detail).



Figure 7.18: Ibsen Sitat (detail).

Karl Johans gate and its mixed uses (pedestrian and motorized traffic). In the words of Ingrid Falk,

How we laid out the texts in Oslo was different because of the river under – the text is not a straight line. There is an underground waterfall; the whole Karl Johans gate, under the castle. There is a waterfall, the Bisse Becken [brook/stream], with these little hills in Oslo. Therefore, the text does not run in a straight line but follows water curves of the waterfall below.

Here, Falk implies a further deepening of the verticality of the sculpture by mapping it onto the subterranean riverbed, conjuring up the imagery of the mythological river Styx, thus, possibly at a stretch, invoking the common idea of every nation originating in an immemorial past and stretching into a limitless future (Anderson 2006 [1983], 11–12). Additionally, some parts of the quotations are set at 45 or 90 degree angles. This “breaking up” of a straight line of the quotations can be seen as creating a kinetic or dynamic effect reminiscent of the early experiments by Futurists and Constructivists (see Van Leeuwen and Djonov 2015, 247). This apparent animation of the quotations invokes a sense of the words being spoken, imbuing them with additional mood and inflection, making the typeface “come alive” (see Bellantoni and Woolman 2000, 44–45, 116), and echoing Aguerre’s own interpretation of the piece as “very much alive” due to its permanence, emplacement, and constant appeal to the public. This creates a sense of Ibsen’s quotations being rendered in the style of concrete poetry, all of which potentially makes the appearance of the text resonate with the contemporary viewer.

Conclusion: *Ibsen Sitat* as Egalitarian Nationalism

This chapter has contrasted the egalitarian ethos of the *Ibsen Sitat* with the reserve and aloofness of the national flags on the rooftops surrounding the monument. Our analysis focused on the street-level semiotics of the sculpture, underscored by the involvement of schoolchildren and other “ordinary” citizens in selecting the quotations and the inclusion of the proposers’ names in the installation. We have argued that while espousing a democratic stance, *Ibsen Sitat* remains a powerful and authoritative symbol of Norwegian high literature in the assemblage of architecture, artefacts, and activities to shape and sustain a national imagined community and its collective memory (Kosher 2000, 18; Woldemariam and Lanza 2015; Blackwood, Lanza and Woldemariam 2016).

Ibsen Sitat contributes to Norway’s memory landscape by drawing on the national literary canon and Ibsen’s authority as a foremost Norwegian

writer, thereby invoking the tropes of widespread literacy, mass education, accessibility, modernity, and scientific civilization (Fisher 1991, 58; Bauman and Briggs 2003). Although the soundbite format in which Ibsen’s plays are re-contextualized renders his work as a piece of pop art, its source in high literature contributes to the formation of the “artistic physiognomy, an intellectual identity” of the nation-state (Larbaud 1925, 233, cited in Casanova 2004, 129). In Nora’s (1989) terms, it acts as a site of [national] memory (*lieu de mémoire*), a collective history existing only in the imagination of individuals and investing it with a symbolic aura (Nora 1989, 19), rather than a tangible environment of memory (*milieu de mémoire*). It is a piece of history that has been transformed “from the tradition of memory ... into the self-knowledge of society” (Nora 1989, 11). Put differently, *Ibsen Sitat* is metacultural in that it repositions Ibsen’s writing from a spectacular acknowledgement of its value to a symbol of the nation (Urban 2001, loc. 744). And its visibility makes people aware of other people as coparticipants in the national project (Urban 2001, loc. 435) that, quite literally, connects and binds them with the shared territory.

We hope to have also added to the current sociolinguistic literature on language and materiality (e.g., Cavanaugh and Shankar 2017) by demonstrating how contemporary artists have been blurring the boundaries between literature and drawing or sculpture (Kotz 2007, 267, n. 3) by directing attention to the spatial, embodied, and affective potential of displayed writing. Writing in three-dimensional space created by contemporary artists can be read, looked at, or walked over and around, adding a fourth dimension to the consumption of art installations – time. The artwork reveals the mobile modality, the footsteps “echo” the layout of the underground river (as suggested by Falk) and the actual footsteps of Ibsen (as indicated by the VisitOslo website).

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Notes

- 1 All images by Adam Jaworski (April 3–6, 2019).
- 2 <https://www.visitoslo.com/en/product/?TLP=1167805>, accessed September 21, 2020.
- 3 Interviews with Ingrid Falk and Gustavo Aguerre were conducted by Kellie Gonçalves on April 9, 2019, and April 29, 2019, respectively.
- 4 Following Young (1992), Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley (2012) discuss “counter-monuments” as a (new) genre of commemorative practice. In a somewhat paradoxical definition, they state: “One type of contemporary monument identified in recent academic literature is the ‘counter-monument.’ This term ... is often used interchangeably with other terms that may have very different connotations, including anti-monument, non-monument, negative-form, deconstructive, non-traditional, and counter-hegemonic monument ... A monument may be contrary to conventional subjects and techniques of monumentality, adopting *anti-monumental* design approaches to express subjects and meanings not represented in traditional monuments” (952). While *Ibsen Sitat* defies some of the traditional features of monuments (discussed in some detail in the “Literary-Dependent Culture, Monuments, and Banal Nationalism” section), we continue to refer to it with the term “monument,” used interchangeably with “installation” and “sculpture.”
- 5 See Jaworski (2017) for a similar argument on how the recontextualization of art (a traditionally elitist pursuit) as part of an educational television programme (TV being considered a “mass” medium) results in a democratizing ethos by presenting art to the viewer.

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8 Small Shops in Hamburg and Cape Town

A Dialogue between Materiality and Atmosphere

Jannis Androutsopoulos and Ana Deumert

Introduction

This chapter has a history. First conceptualized in the second half of 2019, the idea was that we would focus on small shops, most often called “kiosks” in Hamburg, Germany, and “spazas” in Cape Town, South Africa. The plan was to collect data specifically for this chapter, photograph shop signs, and interview shop owners. At least this was what Ana was planning to do in early 2020. At the time, Jannis had already collected photographic data and was starting the analysis. Then, Covid-19 was declared a pandemic and life, including research, changed fundamentally. South Africa went into a hard lockdown in March 2020, and all possibilities for data collection evaporated within days. As a consequence, we had to be creative in rethinking our chapter. We decided to frame it as a dialogue between two different approaches: a material-semiotic approach to signs grounded in systematic data collection, and an atmospheric approach, which challenges the empirical tenets of much work in sociolinguistics and draws attention to affect, experience, and memory. In this dialogue, the focus of Jannis’s discussion and analysis is on the semiotics of shop signs. He adopts a social-semiotic perspective on sign-genres, drawing on a growing, publicly available corpus of photographic data from Hamburg. Ana, on the other hand, reflects, autoethnographically, on her everyday experiences in an inner-city area of Cape Town, where she has lived – with short interruptions – since 1994. She focuses not on the materiality of the shops (and their signs), but on their affective qualities. The central theoretical concept in her discussion is the idea of “atmosphere.”

Our chapter is arranged in three main sections. The first section outlines the conceptual basis of our respective contributions, the second section discusses the “small shops” that form the object of our analysis, and the third section reflects on analysis and findings. In the conclusion we examine the potential of these two – methodologically and epistemologically – quite different approaches for a productive dialogue in sociolinguistics.

Key Concepts

Key Concept 1: Genre and Materiality of Signs

Jannis orients to a semiotic and materialist understanding of linguistic landscape, influenced by geosemiotics, social semiotics, and sociolinguistic approaches to multilingualism (Scollon and Scollon 2003; Jaworski and Thurlow 2010; Pütz and Mundt 2019). His approach centres on signs, understood as materialized and emplaced expressions of communicative action, and sign-genres, understood as functional classes of signs that draw on similar resources and arrangements to accomplish a socially typified communicative act. In the geosemiotic framework of Scollon and Scollon (2003), public signs gain their indexical meanings by emplacement, i.e., their spatial positioning in the world, and by various forms of inscription, including typography and the material surface on which linguistic and pictorial signs are inscribed. Geosemiotics was deeply influential in the transition from so-called distributive approaches to linguistic landscapes, which focus on multilingual signage, to semiotic approaches that underscore the material and discursive construction of all social spaces (Pennycook 2019; Shohamy 2019). This extension has fostered historical, materialist, and ethnographic research, not least an integration of genre theory and analysis into semiotic landscape studies.

The notion of “sign-genres” captures the observation that signs in the semiotic landscape, while each unique in their specific conditions of production, perception, and emplacement, follow lines of similarity in communicative function, referential content, and material-semiotic choices. A genre analysis is an approach that starts from a sign’s communicative purpose, rather than its perceivable language(s), and centers on configurations between a sign’s discourse function, spatial placement, and semiotic makeup (cf. Stroud and Mpendukana 2012; Järlehed 2018; Reershemius 2018; Androutsopoulos and Chowchong 2021). Genres bundle semiotic resources (including different named languages) in the material realization of a communicative act (e.g., naming a street, identifying a restaurant, regulating public behavior) and thereby provide orientation to the social actors who produce and/or read these signs. Some public signs are entirely standardized, i.e., produced on tightly defined genre templates (e.g., road signs and other types of administrative signage); whereas other signs, especially in the commercial sector, show more variation and fluidity in their generic orientation. In either case, the starting point of a genre analysis of signs is an ethno-category, i.e., a community-based categorization of signs and shops.

Compared to a lumping together of commercial signs, which was common in earlier research, an approach to specific sign-genres enables a “more detailed social semiotic examination” (Huebner 2009, 72) and shifts the focus to semiotic conventions for specific classes of public signs, on the one hand, and the way specific sign producers may strategically distance their signs from such conventions, on the other. In this regard, genre analysis enhances

granularity in linguistic landscape research (Huebner 2009; Järlehed 2018). A multimodal genre analysis emphasizes the role of semiotic resources, such as color, layout, typography, and material, in the configuration of a sign-genre. Even though a multimodal sign-genre analysis does prioritize signs and sign ensembles, it does not rule out an ethnographic approach to the interaction between signs and people in the semiotic landscape. Rather, the two can be viewed as mutually complementing and enriching (Leeman and Modan 2009; Järlehed 2018).

Key Concept 2: Atmospheres

Ana has long been interested in post-positivist approaches in the social sciences. Non-representational theories are core to such reflections. These are theories (and methodologies) that go beyond representation, focus on the embodiment of experience, and view social life as enacted through a vast array of – ever shifting, flowing, and fluid – everyday practices (Thrift 2008). One concept that has been used in non-representational work is the idea of “atmospheres,” a notion that speaks forcefully to “the power of the pre-cognitive” (Vannini 2015, 4; Anderson and Ash 2015). The term “atmosphere” derives from meteorology and refers to a layer of air or gas – *atmos* – that organizes spatially around bodies and objects, “enveloping” them and “pressing” upon them (Marx 1856, cited in Anderson 2009, 77). Atmospheres, in other words, exert a force and create effects. In everyday speech the word “atmosphere” can be used to express how one experiences social space as a mood and feeling. Thus, we commonly make statements such as: “The atmosphere was serene/tense/happy/caring/hopeful/violent/peaceful.” Or, consider the English idiom: “You could cut the air/atmosphere with a knife.” Here felt experience has moved, metaphorically, into the realm of the material; it is intensely physical and indeed “real.” Thus, we experience space and interaction not simply visually or acoustically – as landscapes and soundscapes – but also affectively. While we might struggle as scholars to conceptualize atmospheres analytically, the heuristics of everyday language show that atmospheres “are cognitively penetrable, if only on the level of common sense” (Griffero 2014, 12; Sumartojo 2020).

Atmospheres are located in-between the material world and our collective subjectivities; they are pre-dualistic, simultaneously objective and subjective, facts and feelings. As noted by the philosopher Gernot Böhme (2017a, 2):

Atmospheres are quasi-objective, namely they are out there: you can enter an atmosphere and you can be surprisingly caught by an atmosphere. But on the other hand atmospheres are not beings like things; they are nothing without a subject feeling them.

The quasi-objective nature of atmospheres means that they are “producible” (Böhme 2017b, 158). Böhme gives the example of stage design: a

stage designer aims to create the atmosphere for a play through sound and light as well as objects and their placement in space. Stage designers are trained in creating atmospheres that work, that envelop the senses of audience members in particular ways, drawing them into the mood of the play. Other professions that stage atmospheres are actors and musicians, event planners, advertisers, interior designers, landscapers, and architects. And as teachers and lecturers, we are involved in the production of atmospheres too: creating learning spaces that are safe, comfortable, challenging, and so forth. Even though atmospheres can be produced, there are limits to such interventions. Atmospheres are also inherently unstable, shifting and changing, dynamic and emergent. Sometimes atmospheric shifts occur rapidly, such as when tension is diffused by laughter. They are impossible to control. At other times an atmosphere lingers. It refuses to dissipate and is like a scent that remains. The notion of atmosphere offers us new ways of thinking about the well-established, yet contested, sociolinguistic notion of context; broadly understood as a “frame” that shapes interaction and that, in turn, is created through interaction (Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Drawing on Böhme’s notion of “tuned space,” Steven Brown and his colleagues (2019) describe atmospheres as “emplaced” and link their study to cultural geography. As a “place-bound approach to affect” (8), atmospheres are of particular interest for studying and understanding semiotic landscapes.

Atmospheres, as noted above, are pre-dualist: they are neither fully subjective nor fully objective; neither fully material nor immaterial. This in-between status speaks to their transformative potential, including the transformation of knowledge production. Tonino Giffero (2014, 108), for example, describes atmospheres as being simultaneously “supersubjective” and “superobjective”: they are experienced by bodies and articulated by human subjects in language, but they are also a world that is “sensuous *on its own terms*, generative of its own affects, without invoking human sensibility or language” (Brown et al. 2019, 7). Thus, in the study of atmospheres, we seek to maintain the balance between “feelings simply being projected onto the world (leading to a radical subjectivism) or as intrinsic to the world itself (and therefore a crude materialism)” (Brown et al. 2019, 9).

Small Shops: Hamburg and Cape Town

Kiosks

Nouns such as “Kiosk” (kiosk), “*Trinkhalle*” (drinking hall), and “*Späti*” (“late-y,” a late-hours store) index an ethno-category of shops that are found all over Germany. These nouns are regionally distributed and semantically index specific properties or assortments. The word *Kiosk* is typical for Hamburg corner shops (Klier 2013: 13, 36–37), *Trinkhalle* for the Ruhr area, and *Späti* for Berlin. Their common referent is a local convenience

store, a small shop that sells goods for everyday consumption on a neighborhood basis.¹

Academic literature and photographic documentation of German kiosks – by this or other names – offer background on historical and economic, sociological, and anthropological aspects (Kraemer and Osses 2009; Naumann 2003). *Kiosks* emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century in Germany's industrial areas to supply mineral water to industrial workers, hence early names such as *Seltersbude* or *Wasserhäuschen* ([mineral] water booth). In that era, kiosks were often discrete structures inspired by historical kiosk or pavilion architecture. By the end of the nineteenth century, their assortment expanded from non-alcoholic beverages to a variety of products, such as snacks and newspapers, although strictly in small quantities for immediate consumption (Kraemer and Osses 2009, 124). In the 1960s, kiosk opening times were gradually deregulated, creating a niche economy that enabled kiosks to exist in competition with supermarkets. The importance of late opening is reflected in the terms *Späti* or *Spätkauf*, specific to Berlin, where many corner shops operate on a 24/7 basis.

Kiosks are typically single-owner or family businesses, often run by immigrant families (Kraemer and Osses 2009, 125; Naumann 2003; Klier 2013). According to Klier's fieldwork (2013) in Berlin, 69% of *Späti* owners or managers are of Turkish origin. Kiosks typically serve as sites of urban sociability for residents of a neighborhood or even just a single block of buildings, a purpose especially appreciated by socially isolated or marginalized citizens. Berlin's *Spätis* support a neighborhood culture of people who meet regularly to hang out and chat, thus they become a "second home for shift-workers, night owls, lonely types, tourists, and students" (Klier 2013, 12, our translation). For some residents, small talk with a kiosk owner is an enjoyable practice, perhaps even their only chance for a chat throughout the day. Klier also suggests that nine out of ten kiosk owners or managers love their jobs because of the community exchange they afford. Thus, urban kiosks contribute decisively to the maintenance of social interaction in neighborhoods (Klier 2013, 107).

Naumann (2003, 78–95) discusses the material arrangement of Berlin kiosks as an outcome of "total improvisation," where provisional and non-perfect arrangements are the rule. Kiosk signs and interior arrangements are in sharp contrast to the professional advertising and interior design that shape the mainstream retail economy. This non-perfection becomes a core feature of "Kiosk-Kultur" (Naumann 2003, 80). The bricolage character of kiosk storefronts is quite visible on Hamburg's streets as well. A characteristic example from the Hamburg photographic corpus (discussed below) is Figure 8.1.

From a semiotic landscape viewpoint, this façade can be thought of as a semiotic aggregate (Scollon and Scollon 2003) or semiotic assemblage (Pennycook 2019), i.e., a conglomerate of signs by various authors and for various purposes, which draw on a wide range of modal resources and genre patterns. The genre analysis below focuses on primary storefront signs,



Figure 8.1: *Schanzenpost*.

i.e., the shop's largest signs, which are usually placed above the entrance (Androutsopoulos and Chowchong 2021). In this example, the primary sign comes in two parts. The first is the large yellow stripe with the store name, *Schanzenpost*. It is complemented by bylines and side-adverts at the bottom of the storefront window on both sides of the entrance door, which list the goods and services on offer. By virtue of their prominent size and placement, primary signs usually constitute “the most salient point” of the entire storefront, “from where the reading starts” (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 153). Some features of the main sign, notably the word *kiosk* and the postal service logos, are repeated on the window, perhaps reflecting multiple ownership changes that lead to multiple layers of store signage. In addition, a variety of other signs populate the shop façade: commercial stickers for products, such as Coke or sweets; several notes hand-written by the owner and/or customers; and a lot of tags, which are below the window and on the side columns (though not on the window itself), the latter extending to neighboring surfaces, such as the postbox to the right. This assemblage is typical for urban kiosks in Hamburg. Signs on kiosk shop windows, then, belong to different sign-genres, from which only one is examined below.

These observations tie in well with Neumann's (2003) and Klier's (2013) remarks on the vernacular and improvised material and semiotic culture of kiosk storefronts. Their photographic documentation covers the vernacular literacy that thrives on kiosk storefronts and indoor surfaces, including DIY boards and snack lists, notes to clients, private notes, and so on. Many of these photos feature various non-standard spellings that can be read as traces of their authors' multi-literacies (Blommaert and Dong 2010).

Naumann's study also covers kiosk names (Naumann 2003, 90–93). While some Berlin kiosks are simply named *Kiosk*, most have an additional designation that draws on semantic fields such as food (e.g., *Express-Imbiss*), proper names (e.g., *Rosi's*, *Heidi's*, *Otto's*), and spatial references to urban surroundings, e.g., *Am Güterbahnhof* ("At the Depot"), *Kieler Eck* ("Kiel Corner," which is situated on Kielerstrasse). Klier (2013) suggests that in Hamburg's inner-city districts, such as St Pauli, kiosk names often feature the owner's first name or the building's house number or a reference to the neighborhood (Klier 2013, 36). The findings reported below confirm these observations.

Small Shops: Spazas, China Shops, and Trading Stores

In a different space, South Africa, the legacies of colonialism are ever-present, and the country exhibits one of the highest Gini coefficients in the world (0.61 for income inequality and 0.83 for wealth inequality) (Daniels and Khan 2019). Extreme levels of socioeconomic inequality thus shape everyday life in South Africa. These inequalities are grounded in the structures of racial capitalism and the persistent realities of white privilege; they have been exacerbated by Covid-19 (Jain et al. 2020). It is in this broader historical context – which has its own atmospheric dimensions – that the discussion is situated.

In her ethnography *Raw Life, New Hope* (2009), Fiona Ross writes about the local spaza shops, a retail genre that she simply glosses as "small shops" for the reader; no further qualification or explanation is given. By describing them as "small shops," Ross emphasizes size: these shops are easily distinguishable from the large supermarkets and malls that have come to define the retail landscape in South Africa over the past two decades (D'Haese and Huylenbroeck 2005; Crush and Frayne 2018). These developments are not unique to South Africa. The growth of large-scale commercial outlets – often reflecting global brands – is a phenomenon across the world and has put pressure on smaller, often privately owned shops. Yet, as noted by Marc Wegerif (2020) in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic: "small shops" – and other forms of small-scale trading – remain important for ensuring food security and account for between 30% and 50% of sales in South Africa (approximately Rand 360 billion per annum). They are thus "small" only in their size, not in their economic impact. Despite their substantial contribution to the economy, they exist on the economic fringe. They are frequently unregistered and operate largely within a cash-based economy (Du Toit 2020; Petersen et al. 2019).

"Spaza" is the name that was given to the small shops that emerged in the urban townships and informal settlements from the 1970s onwards. They were often "survival businesses," allowing for limited economic activity in a political-economic system that sought to exploit Black labor through low wages and discouraged Black entrepreneurship (and indeed any form of Black agency). The presence of spaza shops created alternatives



Figure 8.2: Spaza shop in a South African township (2005).

for shopping during the consumer-boycotts of white businesses in the aftermath of the 1976 uprising, and thus disrupted white supremacy and racial capitalism (Spiegel 2005, 193–194). The etymology of the term is assumed to go back to isiZulu “*isiphazamisa*” (that which causes a hindrance or annoyance) (“*isiphazamiso*” in isiXhosa) (see Spiegel 2005 for a detailed discussion of possible etymologies and their pitfalls). While historically the term was used to refer to small shops in the township economy, today it is also used to refer to shops in inner-city areas and formerly white suburbs. These inner-city shops were historically run by Greek, Portuguese, or Italian migrants as well as, at least in Cape Town, South Africans of Indian heritage. They were commonly referred to as “cafés.” Over the past decade, migrant traders from South Asia and Africa (especially Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Somalia) have entered the market in large numbers and have become an integral part of the sector (Petersen et al. 2019). The word “spaza” is productive and also can be used metaphorically. For example, it refers to a multilingual hip-hop genre (Mashiya 2019); it can be used to describe low-quality housing (“spaza houses”), and, apparently, in the 1960s the term indexed low-quality clothing that mimics expensive brands (Spiegel 2005).²

The business model of spaza shops – and cafés – can be summarized as follows: (i) unlike malls and large supermarkets, they are located close to

where people live, rarely more than a five-to-ten minute walk from one's house; (ii) they sell basic food and consumable products in small and affordable quantities (for example, cigarettes can be purchased individually, not in packets); and (iii) they tend to offer credit to their customers. In this way spaza shops respond directly to the often precarious socioeconomic situation of the communities in which they are located. In the urban townships they frequently operate out of metal shipping containers or makeshift structures, and the display of goods is restricted due to limited space. In inner-city areas, spaza shops are usually more spacious and tend to be registered businesses.

To round off the discussion of small – and affordable – shops in contemporary South Africa, one should also mention so-called “China shops,” which became an integral feature of the local retail landscape over the past twenty years. They often advertise themselves by pointing to the cheap prices they offer (such as, “5 Rand Store”) and sell quite unpredictable mixtures of goods: some food items, household items, cosmetics, electronics, shoes, and clothes (Deumert and Mabandla 2016). And finally, in the rural areas, we find so-called “trading stores.” These used to serve villagers in remote communities. Historically, these trading stores were owned and operated by



Figure 8.3: A selection of ‘small shops’: a spaza (left), a China store (middle) and an old phone container (a public phone boot, which contains several phones) which has been turned into a hair salon (specializing in extensions; Eastern Cape 2015).



Figure 8.4: Inside a trading store (Eastern Cape 2016).

whites or Indians. Now they are mostly under Black ownership (see Whelan 2011, for an extensive discussion).

The genre of the “small shop” is thus complex, and the three types identified here constitute only a partial typology. There are also butchers and vegetable sellers, taverns and liquor outlets, hair salons and beauty parlors (see also Stroud and Mpendukana 2009).

Analysis and Findings

Kiosk Signs in Hamburg: Genre Analysis of Primary Signs

Photographic data for Hamburg was collected with the *LinguaSnappHamburg* smartphone app, a localized version of the *LinguaSnapp* application (Gaiser and Matras 2016; Androutsopoulos 2021). This app features a 14-category coding scheme that integrates elements from various linguistic landscape frameworks. Even though it was originally developed for the coding of multilingual signs, almost all of its categories can be applied to any kind of sign. The analysis is based on 64 photographs (collected by mid-March 2020), which represent 48 kiosk signs.³ Most of these kiosks appear to be independent shops, with only few being part of a franchise chain, and they are located in inner-city areas as well as close to transportation hubs in outer districts. This corpus seems to represent up to a fifth of all kiosks in Hamburg.⁴

The following analysis proceeds in three steps, moving from the composition of primary kiosk signs to their materiality and naming patterns. By funneling down from the entire sign to the semantics of the shop name, the analysis progressively decontextualizes kiosk signs from their contextual emplacement, but at the same time it demonstrates how linguistic and pictorial features of the sign itself link back to its urban surroundings.

Even though no two kiosk signs are identical (unless they are part of a franchise chain), their “family resemblance” traits boil down to three building blocks that occur on most signs in the Hamburg sample: (a) shop name, (b) byline, and (c) side-adverts. Examples are shown in Figure 8.5 (in the predominant landscape format) and Figure 8.6 (in square and portrait format).

The shop name (e.g., *Kiosk Steilo*, *Chaussee Kiosk*) is by far the most prominent element on the signs, discussed in detail below. The byline provides additional information on the assortment of products and typically appears adjacent to the shop name. As exemplified in Figure 8.1, the byline can also stand elsewhere on the shop window. However, typical for kiosk facades are Figures 8.5 and 8.6, where the byline stands below or on the side of the shop name or even in-between its constituent parts, as in *Kiosk Vering* (8.6b). The bylines in the photographic examples vary in terms of the number of listed products (from two to eight), wording, graphic design, and the assortment on offer. What they have in common is a list format with bare nouns and noun phrases and sometimes pictorial signs as well (for example, 8.5b and 8.5c). Side-adverts (see 8.5a) are part of many, though not all, main signs. Very frequently these are the logos of Deutsche Post/DHL (postal services) or Lotto (state lottery); other common adverts are for beer and soft drinks, often brands based in Hamburg.

Turning to the signs’ materiality and design (coloring, typography, pictorial signs, graphic decoration), high-contrast selections for type and background colors predominate. We find yellow type on a red background (or vice versa); white type on a red or green background; and black, blue, red, or green type on a white background. Thus, there are strong and vivid colors, some that are familiar from other domains (e.g., yellow indexes postal service), and there is a lack of pale or shady paint or type. This emphasis on visibility continues at the level of typographic choices. We see



Figure 8.5: Primary storefront signs in landscape format: (8.5a) *Eilbeker Shop*, (8.5b) *Kiosk Steilo*, (8.5c) *Schatzkiste Kiosk*, and (8.5d) *Chaussee Kiosk*.



Figure 8.6: Primary storefront signs in portrait format: (8.6a) *Karo-Kiosk* and (8.6b) *Kiosk Vering*.

a predominance of sans-serif fonts, a fondness for upper-case and heavy (hence, highly visible) lettering styles, and a complete lack of aestheticized (calligraphic, gothic, or other) typography. The light italics of *Karo-Kiosk* (Figure 8.6a) are just about the most embellished instance in the corpus. When both upper- and lower-case fonts are used on a single sign, they cast the name and the byline, respectively (for example, 8.5b, 8.5d). Apart from that, there is little typographic variation within a single sign. This is in stark contrast to many commercial signs in Hamburg, where the shop name is typographically set apart by means of size, color, and fonts.

The impression of “no-frills” design continues with pictorial and graphic design. Pictorial elements occur on kiosk signs and are of various kinds. A few signs feature the Hamburg skyline (for example, 8.7d); others include a pictorial illustration of the product assortment. For example, the *Schatzkiste* sign (8.5c) features bottles and a cup of hot coffee complemented by the word *Café*; the shop name is split in two by an icon in the shape of the kiosk itself. Such bimodal redundancy in signification also occurs for all products in the byline of *Kiosk Steilo* (8.5b), which stands out as one of the most well-designed signs in the corpus. Some side-adverts, too, feature product pictures, e.g., beer or soft drinks. In some cases, a pictorial or graphic element is integrated into the shop’s name. For example, *Kiosk Vering* (8.6b) and *Kiosk Susannen* (8.7c) feature a red star, perhaps indexing the owner’s political stance. *Kiosk 87* (8.7a) replaces the letter *O* with a smiley face, and

the same letter in *Kiosk Steilo* (8.5b) hosts an emblematic creature, perhaps a two-headed falcon or eagle. *Karo-Kiosk* (8.6a) is another instance of a shop logo, which is perhaps the contour of two stylized birds with a star on top. However, these examples are already quite aestheticized in view of several other signs that simply consist of the word *Kiosk* on a white background. Thus, despite some instances of graphic imagery and pictorial elements – which an ethnographic approach would no doubt illuminate in terms of, for example, the motivation behind image choice or production processes – there is a predominant concentration on straightforward visual design.

Turning to naming patterns, the focus lies on “exophoric indexicality” in kiosk names. In geosemiotics, “exophoric indexicality” is the process by which “reference is made to the world outside the boundaries of the picture” (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 158). All material signs are situated by emplacement, in the sense that they identify a shop or other establishment they are physically fixed or adjacent to. Our interest is on a specific aspect of situated semiotics, whereby signs “reflect the physical environment in which they are placed” (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 163) through reference. This is not forcibly the case for all small shop signs. For example, the sign for 7-Eleven, the global convenience-store chain, is situated by emplacement (i.e., placed in front of the built space that hosts the store), but not by reference, as it does not index its own location. Indeed, the 7-Eleven sign is an instance of decontextualized semiotics (Scollon and Scollon 2003). By contrast, many kiosk signs in Hamburg situate themselves by referencing their surroundings (Figure 8.7).

In a total of $n = 48$ kiosk names, $n = 22$ feature an exophoric reference to surrounding space, discussed below. Another $n = 12$ signs use the word *Kiosk* itself as a shop name, sometimes in compounds or coordinated nouns without spatial reference, e.g., *Lieblings Kiosk* (favorite kiosk) or *Kiosk & Blumen* (kiosk and flowers). Another $n = 14$ signs follow various other



Figure 8.7: Close-ups of names: (8.7a) *Kiosk 87*, (8.7b) *Kiosk Susannen*, (8.7c) *Kiosk 13 by Musti*, and (8.7d) *Kiosk Willy Town*.

naming patterns, some including the owner's name (for example, 8.7c). So, the word *Kiosk* itself is by far the most common shop-name constituent, followed by references to the shop's spatial surroundings. These can be broken down into five patterns of spatial scope, from most to least proximal reference (see examples in Figure 8.7).

The first is when a kiosk name features the house number of its own building: *KIOSK 13*, *KIOSK 39*, or *Kiosk 97*. A second pattern is the reference to the shop's street: *Bundes Kiosk*, *Holsten Kiosk*, or *Kiosk Susannen*. These typically come in abbreviated form, e.g., *Bundes Kiosk* is on *Bundesstrasse*. In a third case, the name indexes a nearby public building, e.g., a town hall (*Frisches Kiosk am Rathaus*) or station (*Schatzkiste am Bahnhof Alte Wöhr*). Fourth, the name takes up the shop's own neighborhood, e.g., *Eilbeker Shop* and *Kiosk St. Pauli* are in the neighborhoods by the same name. Here we find many urban slang designations, e.g., *Steilo* (for Steilshoop), *Willy Town* (for Wilhelmsburg), and *Karo* (for Karolinenviertel). This is a direct parallel to Berlin kiosk names, such as *Kotti* (at Kottbusser Tor) or *Perle-Kiosk* (on Perlenberger Str; cf. Naumann 2003, 92). By contrast, there are no kiosks named by the city of Hamburg, a spatial scope that is indexed by pictorial rather than linguistic means (for example, 8.7d).

To conclude, this brief genre analysis shows that the main signs of kiosks, which identify a shop and its product assortment, show generic similarities which reflect the shops' economic affordances just as much as their role in everyday urban life. Three findings must be emphasized. First, kiosks belong to a small number of commercial establishments that directly index their spatial environment. We sometimes see the same patterns on signs of pubs, restaurants, taverns, inns, and similar establishments that constitute urban sites of sociability and everyday interaction. In the case of kiosks, these spatial references reflect a commitment to the local, immediate community, which is at the same time the shops' main clientele and source of income. Some of the signs' side-adverts for local products also contribute to this local indexicality.

Second, kiosk signs are an instance of "no-frills" visual aesthetics. In an affluent Northern city like Hamburg, where commercial signs compete for attention-catching visual design, kiosk signs stand out by virtue of their simplicity. They do not entice passers-by with expensive and complex lettering or with names full of associations. Their visual style is more straightforward, unambiguous, and to the point. This seems directly related to their low-budget conditions of ownership and investment, on the one hand, and their emphasis on the signs' denotative rather than connotative function, on the other. However, "no-frills" does not equate to "no details" or "lack of variation." Had the study considered the entire storefront or the interior store space, it would no doubt have brought to the fore a variety of signage along the lines of Neumann's observations about the improvised literacy of Berlin's small shops. Even the present limitation to main signs brings to the fore a lot of semantic variety and orthographic variation, especially in

bylines, which reflects the individual, improvised, non-corporate character of small shops.

Finally, kiosks are a counterexample to the assumption of a straightforward display of heritage languages in the semiotic landscape. Given the very high number of migrant kiosk owners in Hamburg, the overwhelming absence of languages other than German on the main signs is in need of explanation, which I suggest is to be sought precisely in the shops' economic conditions: they aim to be maximally inclusive and do so in German. Kiosk signs thus orient to the language the audience is assumed to understand rather than the language(s) sign producers themselves prefer to speak. However, this does not rule out that kiosks, as spaces of urban sociability, offer opportunities for diverse languaging practices among their patrons.

Small Shops in Cape Town: Atmospheric Resonances

How does one start to write about atmospheres at a time when we are socially distant and often isolated from one another? At a time when many avoid social contact even after the formal Covid-19 lockdown was lifted? Given that atmospheres are collectively experienced, how can one write about them without speaking to others, without listening to their experiences? It seems that the only approach one can adopt in such a moment is autoethnography, reflecting on oneself, one's reactions and feelings as one enters the assemblages that constitute a "shop": people, items of consumption, signs and shelves, counters and decorations, light, sound, and smells (for a discussion of social life as assemblage, see Latour 2005). Autoethnography, which "seeks to disrupt the binary of science and art" (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011), sits uneasily within a section called "analysis and findings." This formulation articulates standardized "scientific" discourse and is at odds with the narrative impetus of ethnographic writing, which foregrounds the importance of emotion and personal voice (Stroud and Jegels 2014).

Autoethnography raises the all-important question of positionality: how does my being-in-the-world shape my perspective-on-the-world? How does my "I" – embodied and historically situated, yet also dynamic and of mobile fragmentation – find itself entangled with the objects and subjects of the semiotic landscape? And how do I move from my first-order experience to a second-order narrative (on first-/second-order categories, see Pablé and Hutton 2015)? Does my positionality remain stable across experience and narrative? Our beings-in-the-world are multiple and intersectional. There is race and age, gender and class, but also our politics and the dreams and hopes that we have not only for ourselves but also for the worlds that surround us. I grew up in West Germany (white, female, middle-class-with-working-class-intergenerational-roots-and-East-German-family) and migrated from north to south in my twenties, settling in the same neighborhood where I still live today. My whiteness bestows various forms of privilege and advantage on me, yet my foreignness can bring with it experiences of non-belonging, of

being-outside-looking-in. This, however, is softened by my South African family, which keeps me grounded and connected to local struggles. Yet, as I write these brief notes on my positionalities and relationalities, I ask myself: What matters and what doesn't? Where do I stop? I will stop here, because paying attention to positionality does not mean that we resurrect the Cartesian self-contained subject in all its glory. Borders are always fuzzy, grey zones will remain, and some knowledges are tacit and defy representation (Simandan 2019). Once we accept that all knowledge is subject to error and that the immediacy of experience does not establish a truth regime, then autoethnography is interesting not so much for what it tells, but perhaps even more so for the silences that it leaves (MacFarlane 2020).

Before turning to the supersubjective/superobjective entanglements of the semiotic landscape (and its atmospheres), let me provide a bird's-eye view of the many small shops in the neighborhood. They carry names such as *Rainbow Supermarket*, *Smokers Choice Mini Market*, *Mini Market and Tobacco Bar*, *Super Save Store*, *Lifestyle Market*, *Seven Star Superette*, and *Superette & Coffee Shop*.⁵ Even though the terms "spaza" and "café" are colloquially used to refer to these shops (at least in our household), their self-descriptors are quite different: "supermarket," "superette," "mini market," "store." Thus, unlike in Germany, the semantic field is broad and multiple. Seeing the word "superette" on the shop sign suggests that the owner is most likely from South Asia or Somalia; referring to them as spazas – or cafés – articulates familiarity with the local, South African shopping landscape. While the names on the signs differ, the shops are architecturally and aesthetically united. Signs are painted in bright red, and the Coca Cola logo is omnipresent (see also Figure 8.1). Indeed, red is *the* color of the shops, announcing them to potential customers. In some cases, it is not just the sign that is red, but the entire shopfront is painted red. Occasionally bright pink and green join the design. Spaza shops stand out in the urban landscape – they too, like the kiosks discussed by Jannis, strive for visibility. They appear cheerful, articulating a sense of plenty, such as a sign outside the Superette & Coffee Shop: "FRESH FRUITS, MILK & BREAD, COOL DRINKS, CHOCOLATES, CHIPS, CIGARETTES, AIRTIME, ELECTRICITY AND MANY MORE!!!" Yet, spaza shops carry different meanings in different places. Stroud and Jegels (2014) and Stroud, Peck, and Williams (2019) discuss spaza shops in the same city, but in a different space. They focus not on a formerly white, working-class, inner-city neighborhood, but a marginalized township on the Cape Flats. In this context the shop serves as an index of the poverty that has devastated the community. It is a survival business that one turns to only when everything else fails. In their interpretation (drawing on narrated walking) the presence of a spaza shop is "a sign to make ends meet," a "sorrow-laden *lament* about the large number of unemployed people in the township" (Stroud, Peck and Williams 2019, 9–10). By contrast, the shops that I listed above are not survival businesses in this sense. Rather, they are sustainable commercial enterprises that

are located in a marginal, yet thriving, migrant economy. Thus, spazas are not the same – different spaces in the city articulate the genre differently and are read differently by those who enter or pass by them.

Wee (2016, 108) positioned affect firmly within the study of linguistic landscapes. He writes:

[W]e may have to appreciate that there may well be a relatively broad spectrum of allowable emotions associated with any landscape as well as dispositions that are not easily categorized as emotions.

(see also Peck, Stroud and Williams 2019)

Wee (2016, 109) links affect explicitly to atmosphere: “The notion of affect therefore is useful when we want to look at the role that language plays in encouraging or creating a particular ambience/atmosphere.” However, it is not just language that creates atmospheres, but rather – as noted above – social assemblages. Brown and his colleagues (2019, 10) emphasize this when they write:

Atmospheres exist between subjects and objects. They depend on both the features of the environment and that of the person who engages with them, but cannot be reduced to either.

To capture these subject–object relations, let me start with an event, a fragment taken out of the flow of a day. And as I do so, I am acutely aware of the representational pitfalls of narration and discourse. Yet, I will try, because in a book, words and text are what we have.

It is a Thursday during Covid-19 lockdown, day 251 in South Africa. We are now at level 1, which allows quite a bit of movement, provided that physical distancing and masks are in place. After several weeks of low infection rates, we are witnessing a new surge, and there is growing concern about a new wave. I have been working at home for 251 days, and like many others I limit my movements and interactions as much as possible. Yet not everything can be done at home, without interaction. A friend texts me: she would like to return some books she had borrowed from me before lockdown. We meet centrally, at a well-known landmark in the neighborhood, opposite the village green. As our offices remain closed and visits to private homes are discouraged, public places have become meeting spaces, offering opportunities for fleeting sociabilities. It is strange moment: we are in a pandemic and never know when, and if, we will see each other again. As I walk back home, I feel oddly emotional. It is warm, no wind, the beginning of summer. I pass one of the spaza shops in the neighborhood. The shop is located next to the train station, adjacent to a small, informal market where food, coffee, spices, and other goods are sold. The only traffic is people walking; the road is for pedestrians only. A hand-written sign above the area designates it as a “LIFESTYLE MARKET,” and the spaza shop, located just outside the market, uses this name as well. As I approach the area, I hear

music playing, jazz-fusion with an African beat, a car hoots, and a tall man, who is buying sweets for his grandson at the spaza shop, complains loudly about the prices. My feelings shift, my bodily practice shifts: I listen; I walk slower; I look at the shops; I greet, talk, and buy something small to take home. I am back in the world, my emotions no longer spinning inside my head/mind, but responding and responsive to what I see, hear, and smell.

What was it about the atmosphere of the space that changed my mood from somber and a little sad to cheerful and hopeful? The space can be described as constituting an “affective regime” (in the sense of Wee 2016). Passers-by are welcomed by hand-written signs that are located on the pavement. The signs invite them to leave the road and enter the market; they are meta-affective signs, articulating an affective stance that seeks to influence the mood of those walking past. The first building is the “HOUSE OF FATCAKES,” which is painted in bright green. Fat cakes are a local type of doughnut. Next to the shop is a hand-painted sign for “IVY’S KITCHEN. The Home of African Food with a Smile.” Another colorful sign announces a spice shop: “WOW!!!!AT THE SPICE SHOP!! SPICES. SPICES. ALL FOR YOU. COME TRY IT, AT ONLY R8!! NO JOKES!!” Yet another sign leans against the iron fence that surrounds the space: “MAMMA CHIPS. Come inside the gate. Hot Chips R15 – Regular R15.” There are more signs written on moveable blackboards: “LOOK AT THIS!! FOR SUMMER!! ROOI KRANS BRAAI WOOD CHARCOAL AND FIRE LIGHTERS!! FOR SALE!!” and “WOW! SPICE SHOP – SPECIAL COMBO R10 – COFFEE R5 – HOT CHOC R5 – CAPPUCINO R5 – MILO R5 – CAN’T BE!! FOR R5?” There are bold capital letters, some emphasized with red chalk and exclamation marks. There is exuberance in these hand-drawn signs, they “radiate” affect (Brown et al. 2019); yet they are also ephemeral as the chalk can be washed off from the blackboard by just one rain shower.

Just outside the market is the spaza shop, displaying a limited number of goods on makeshift shelves in a dimly lit space. Painted in bright red, with pink shutters, the shop displays the color of Coca Cola, but not the sign. Instead, the shopfront advertises bread, a basic staple food, a necessity of life, not a luxury: “SASKO SOLD HERE.” This is the only spaza shop in the neighborhood that is secured by wire. One can hardly see inside the dark interior, and money and goods are handed through a small window. This might appear “unwelcoming”; yet there is nothing unwelcoming about it to those who visit the spaza shop regularly, stopping to buy something to drink or exchange greetings and goodbyes. The bright colors are attractive, and a small roof constructed out of corrugated iron protects waiting customers from sun and rain. The latter, a sign of care and sociality, allows people to linger and talk. Similarly, tables and chairs invite customers to sit down to drink their coffee or enjoy some food.

I have described the affective regime of the market, including the spaza shop, as welcoming, inviting potential customers with good cheer. It is a

relaxed and comfortable space (which stands in stark contrast to the highly regimented affective regime described by Wee 2016). Yet there is more. The space – and the materiality of its sign objects – reflects what Stroud and Mpendukana (2009, 373) described as “sites of necessity”: “The signage is manually produced ... with relatively modest investment and fashioned out of materials that don’t weather well.” The businesses work with minimal profit margins, and although they survived the hard lockdown between March and June 2020, they remain fragile and precarious. And thus, alongside the welcoming atmosphere, there is another atmosphere – of precarity and marginalization – pressing against the cheerful signs, the makeshift architectures of care, and the bright colors and exuberant exclamation marks (on atmospheres as multiple, see Anderson and Ash 2015). Located at a distance from the main shopping area in the neighborhood, these shops cater mainly for those who walk and/or take public transport; that is, Black working-class people with limited incomes living in communities where high unemployment is endemic. Next to the market is a grim reminder of precisely these inequalities. In the shadows, under the bridge, is a space where homeless people store their belongings and sleep at night. The presence of English on the signs also speaks to these violent inequalities: the fact that in a multilingual country the former colonial language, a minority language, has become not only a sign of affluence and upward mobility, but also a lingua franca in “sites of necessity” (on English in South Africa, see Kamwangamalu and Tovares 2016).

In this section, I tried to find a balance between the autoethnographic narration of my own experiences and feelings as I pass through the semiotic landscape of my neighborhood, and the recognition that the world is also “sensuous *on its own terms*, generative of its own affects, without invoking human sensibility or language” (Brown et al. 2019, 7). Seeing the semiotic landscape as an assemblage of subjects, objects, and affects recognizes the importance of materialities, while also going beyond them by paying attention to the affects they engender.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter, we positioned our reflections as a dialogue between different spaces and different approaches. We dubbed them “material” and “atmospheric.” We asked ourselves: How can the two approaches be combined? In some ways their linkages are obvious. Both approaches deal with space. Space as seen and documented, and space as experienced and felt. In a sense, our dialogue takes up two dimensions of space as conceived by Henri Lefebvre, i.e., “perceived space” and “lived space” (Lefebvre 1991; Wu, Techanan and Huebner 2020). Jannis’s interest in the genre and materiality of kiosk signs is an exercise in the study of perceived space, whereas Ana’s turn to atmospheric thinking brings up space as something that happens, which we can experience. At the same time,

our argument is one of methodological multitude and diversity. We suggest that it is not necessary to decide on using only one approach. Instead, we can combine and mix different methods and theoretical perspectives, and our analyses are the richer for this. The discussion in this chapter has illustrated the potential complementarity of these approaches. Signs can be studied as material artefacts whose semiotic choices index various aspects of their spatial and social context; signs are also part of the spatial design of shops and urban spaces, and as such they create atmospheres and affect our experiences, interacting with sounds, smells as well as our own histories.

Notes

- 1 The photography collection by Kraemer and Osses (2009) features shop signs with the nouns *Trinkhalle* (drinking hall), *Verkaufshalle* (selling hall), *Bude* (shack), and *Kiosk*. Klier's Berlin photographs (2013, 18–21) show designators such as *Mini Markt* and *City Kiosk* alongside *Spätkauf*.
- 2 Today, such clothing is referred to as Fong Kong, indicating the rise of Chinese clothing that imitates brands.
- 3 All photos can be retrieved on the *LinguaSnappHamburg* online map at <https://map.linguasnapp.uni-hamburg.de/table?title=kiosk>
- 4 A city of Hamburg inventory (www.hamburg.de/branchenbuch/hamburg/10238343/n0/) lists 215 kiosks, and the German “yellow pages” (www.gelbeseiten.de/Branchen/Kiosk/Hamburg/) feature 238 kiosks in Hamburg. However, I suspect the total number might be higher.
- 5 Several of the shops integrate the name of the neighborhood on the sign. These references have been deleted for ethical reasons.

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9 Global and Local Forces in Multilingual Landscapes

A Study of a Local Market

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Introduction

In their first contribution to linguistic landscape studies, Lanza and Woldemariam (2009) treated the issue of globalization and language policy in the regional capital of Mekele in Ethiopia where three languages are in use: Tigrinya, the official regional language; Amharic, the national working language, and English. In this contribution, we are going to look into the relation between the global, the local, and language policy in the regional capital of Donostia-San Sebastián in the Basque Country, Spain, where three languages dominate the public space. Two have official status: Basque, the regional minority language, and Spanish, the state language, which is one of the world's major languages. The third language is English, which, as anywhere else in the world, has an important presence. Other languages play a smaller role: French, the official language of neighbouring France, with the state border just 20 kilometres away, and a large number of other languages brought by mobile people, such as immigrants, refugees, expats, tourists, and visitors.

In our own first published linguistic landscape study (Cenoz and Gorter 2006), we could quantify the distribution of the different languages in one of the main shopping streets of Donostia-San Sebastián, and we described the characteristics of multilingual signs. This field has come a long way since then, and the number of studies has exponentially increased worldwide, as Lanza and Woldemariam (2017) made clear in their recent overview of linguistic landscape studies in just the country of Ethiopia.

Multilingualism has remained a central theme in linguistic landscape studies, because in many societies linguistic diversity is increasing due to several external factors related to globalization, such as workforce mobility, immigration, and tourism. The influence of mobility on linguistic diversity is noticeable in the socioeconomic sphere, more specifically in the commercial and hospitality sectors. Especially in a bilingual context, the interconnections with other languages can be an important issue to study.

Our contribution seeks to shed light on tensions that might rise among global and local forces as reflected in the linguistic landscape of the “*Mercado*

San Martín Merkatua” in Donostia-San Sebastián, a combination of a shopping mall and local market.

In the following section, some central concepts are discussed, followed by background information about the market and the city. After an outline of the methodology, we present the main results in three parts. First, we give a quantitative overview of the linguistic landscape, followed by a qualitative analysis of significant signs, and finally the perceptions of the linguistic landscape of salespersons in the market. The chapter ends with a discussion and some conclusions.

Multilingual Signage and Globalization

The aim of linguistic landscape studies is to describe patterns of languages in public spaces and to understand the motives, ideologies, and reactions of people to the multiple forms of languages displayed in public spaces (Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015). In today’s world, linguistic landscapes are almost without exception characterized by multilingualism, and different proposals have been made in order to analyze multilingual signage. Reh (2004, 8–15) developed a typology to account for the arrangement of multilingual information on signs. She distinguishes between four combinations of languages and information: (1) “duplicating,” where the same text is presented in more than one language; (2) “fragmentary,” where the full text is given in one language and parts are translated into one or more other languages; (3) “overlapping,” if only part is repeated and other parts are in one language only; and (4) “complementary,” where different parts are in different languages. Reh’s typology has been a source of inspiration for several linguistic landscape researchers. For example, Lanza and Woldemariam (2014, 499) observe that all four patterns can be found in the linguistic landscape of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In a more holistic approach, we recently developed a model of Multilingual Inequality in Public Spaces (MIPS) (Gorter and Cenoz 2020; Gorter 2021). The model aims at examining the cyclic processes associated with the construction of linguistic landscapes and how the effects of these processes influence the experiences of people and their language practices. Multilingual organization on signs is seen as fundamentally unequal because those signs are socially situated, and people perceive them differently. Application of the whole model leads to an all-encompassing approach, which linguistic landscape studies thus far are missing. There are five main components of the model: (1) Language policies, which decide the language to be displayed on signs; (2) Sign-production processes, which depend on design, material, multimodal, and linguistic aspects; (3) Physical signs in public spaces; (4) Influences on passers-by; and (5) Reactions to language(s) on signs and language practices. The components are like links in an interlocking chain that works as a feedback loop. Gorter (2021) provides a comprehensive outline

of the model. Due to lack of space, we cannot apply the whole model here, but we will use some of the ideas in the analysis.

Lanza and Woldemariam (2009, 190) point to the force of globalization “pushed by informational technology, trade, and international relations, with the concomitant increased role of English as in most of the world, a situation relevant even in an outlying city like Mekele.” Globalization reaches all corners of the world, also the city of Donostia-San Sebastián in the Basque Country, and we will give examples in the qualitative analysis below. The daily lives of people are affected by the products they can buy, the way they dress, the food they can eat, the culture they take in, the news they watch, and the words they use. In another study about multilingualism in the workplace, we linked it to globalization processes (Van der Worp, Cenoz and Gorter 2018). We noted that globalization has been explained in various ways, for example, by pointing to political ideas about free trade, standardized 40-foot containers for quick transshipments, or the computer chips that helped to create the internet. Another factor is movement of people through mass travel, as well as millions of migrants and refugees settling in new places, who take with them their language(s).

Political, economic, technological, or migration factors can explain globalization, but the cultural and the linguistic dimensions also have to be considered.

Robertson (1992, 8) refers to globalization as “the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.” Linguistically, due to globalization, mainly through the mass-media and the internet, people continuously learn new names of places, persons, products, or ideas, which implies a shared vocabulary among people around the world. The dual nature of globalization in contrast to local concerns can be grasped in the concept of “glocalization” (Robertson 1992), which refers to relationships between global orientations and preservation of local values. However, globalization does not reach all people equally, because they may decide to live in their own world or are not always “connected.”

Twenty years ago, the Filipino sociologist Bello (2000) proposed “deglobalization” as a concept for a countermovement to offer an alternative vision for an improved global society. For him, deglobalization prioritizes values above interests, cooperation above competition, and community above “efficiency.” Globalization may make people fear loss of identity or give them a feeling that there is no space for their language and culture. These feelings might be stronger in minority communities, such as the Basque Country, where people defend their own language, culture, and identity. Lechner and Boli (2020, 4) argue that globalization has become an extremely contentious process over the last few years. The recent global COVID-19 pandemic is said to lead to a future “new normal.” In a recent blog post Bello (2020) concluded, “The pandemic gives us an opportunity to rethink our global economic system in favor of ‘deglobalization.’”

Background: San Martín Market in Donostia-San Sebastián, Basque Country

The market of San Martín, or officially “*Mercado San Martín Merkatua*,” is located in the city centre of Donostia-San Sebastián. The market was originally established in 1884 as part of nineteenth-century enlargements when the city was creating a new centre. Due to an increase in the population, the market was enlarged several times during the twentieth century. In 2005, as part of an urban renovation project, the “new market of San Martín” was opened in a huge, multi-story complex that combines the traditional food market with a modern shopping mall and a parking garage. Its architect received an award for the new formula of integrated shopping. The building is inspired by the old market and has a covered, central street and huge glass-windows. On its trilingual website the market is advertised as a symbol of the social, cultural, and economic evolution of the city (www.mercadosanmartin.eus).

The city of Donostia-San Sebastián (population: 187,000; metropolitan area: 436,000) is the administrative capital of the province of Gipuzkoa, one of three provinces of the Basque Autonomous Community. The city claims a cosmopolitan identity and is a popular resort due to its beaches, its international cultural festivals, and its gastronomy. It attracts a large number of tourists and visitors (over 1 million in 2018), about half from Spain and the others from France, Germany, the UK, the US, and other countries.

Sociolinguistic survey data shows that 35.4% of the inhabitants of the city report to be bilingual in Basque and Spanish; 21.5% are passive bilinguals, i.e., they understand Basque but cannot speak it; and 43.1% are Spanish monolingual speakers (Basque Government 2016). In the most recent street observation study on actual language use in public, the outcome was that in 15.2% of cases Basque was spoken throughout the city, although there is some variation according to neighbourhood and estimated age (Soziolinguistika Klusterra 2016). These figures show that Basque is numerically a minority language in the city, the same it is on average throughout the territory of the Basque Autonomous Community.

The Basic Law on the Normalization of Basque Language Use (Basic Law 1982) established both Basque and Spanish as official languages of the Basque Autonomous Community. Societal bilingualism proposed by the law is based on the principle that citizens should be able to freely choose to live through Basque, Spanish, or both. A robust language policy was developed that aims to extend the use of Basque to all domains of society and to counter the process of language endangerment of Basque. Overall, the sociolinguistic developments over recent decades show a clear increase in the percentage of bilingual speakers and a decrease in Spanish monolingual speakers. The knowledge of Basque among the general population has gone up, and today the percentage that has proficiency in Basque is higher than the percentage that does not, but the actual use of Basque has not

developed at the same pace. The trends confirm that the efforts to revitalize Basque, especially in education, have been relatively successful in comparison to other European minority languages. Still, Spanish remains the dominant language in society despite revitalization efforts, and Basque has been characterized as a “vulnerable” endangered language (Moseley 2010).

The Town Hall of Donostia-San Sebastián has its own plan to promote Basque among citizens. The plan only takes into account official bilingualism, whereas other languages, for example, those of new inhabitants (9.4% was born outside Spain) or brought by tourists, are mostly overlooked. The official language policy aims at bilingual Basque-Spanish signage, although a few years ago new street name plaques were created that give preference to Basque (Gorter, Aiestaran and Cenoz 2012).

In the present study, we analyze some aspects of the linguistic landscape of the San Martín market, where Basque as the local minority language competes with Spanish, a major world language; English, the global language; and also other languages, such as French, Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese. Our main research question is: *How are languages arranged, and what local and global links can be found in the linguistic landscape of the San Martín market?* The research question aims to better understand tensions that can arise from the coexistence of local and global languages in one location.

Method

In this section, we present our methodological approach. The market building, the setting for our data collection, is located in the centre of Donostia-San Sebastián (see map in Figure 9.1). Via Google maps a good view of the inside can be obtained. The place is highly frequented by both local and foreign visitors.

On the ground floor and in the basement, the building houses a traditional local market that has 40 stalls where fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, and other products are sold (see Figure 9.2 for a floor plan of the market). The basement also holds a large supermarket, which is part of a regional chain, and a few small shops. On the ground floor are entrances to the megastores of globally operating chains, “ZARA” (clothing) and “FNAC” (cultural and electronic products), that also occupy the higher floors. The central street has a number of cafés and bars. The market’s website contains, among other things, a short description of all shops and stalls, including photographs of the salespeople.

The analysis in this chapter is part of a larger project, where we combine the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Here we limit ourselves to some data on the linguistic landscape and from the interviews. The data reported here has two parts.

The first part consists of photographic data about the linguistic landscape collected by taking pictures of all visual linguistic signs present on the two floors of the market (see Figure 9.2). Because there are just over 40

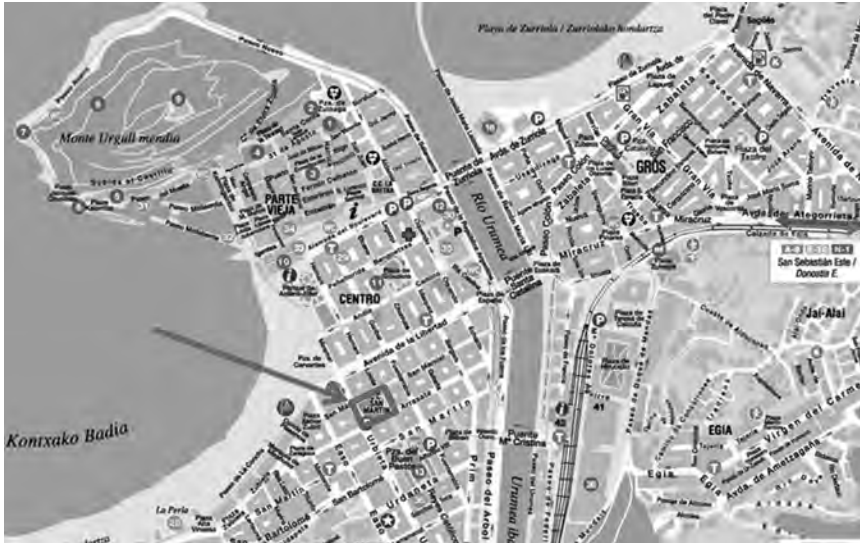


Figure 9.1: San Martín market located in the centre of Donostia-San Sebastián (retrieved from www.sansebastian.travel/mapa-de-san-sebastian).

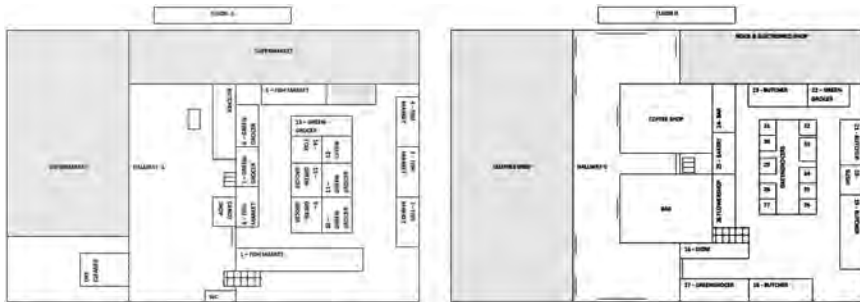


Figure 9.2: Plans of the ground floor (0) and the basement (-1) of the San Martín market (not to scale, drawn by the authors).

establishments in the building, we decided not to take those as the unit of analysis; this is different from our earlier work (Cenoz and Gorter 2006, 71). Already then we were aware of the difficulties of consistent and solid criteria for the unit of analysis, because a degree of arbitrariness is involved in the coding process (see also Blackwood 2015, 40–41; Gorter 2019, 46). In this case, our unit of analysis is “any piece of text within a spatially definable frame” (Backhaus 2007, 66). We collected a visual inventory of the signs in the building (1,025 photos). After redundant photographs were discarded, 850 units remained in our database. Each unit was coded using

a scheme that included 16 different variables, including the number of languages, which language, and their order (see Cenoz and Gorter 2006, for details). Two researchers coded all of the pictures independently of each other. They agreed over 95% of the time, but in cases of differing opinions/views, they came to a common code.

We undertook a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the signage, following the main methodological approaches in the field: on the one hand, “Variationist Linguistic Landscape Study” (VaLLS) (Soukup 2020), inspired by variationist sociolinguistics; and on the other hand, the “Ethnographic Linguistic Landscape Approach” (ELLA), an ethnographic approach, recently updated to ELLA 2.0 to emphasize the links between offline and online worlds (Blommaert and Maly 2019).

The second part concerns semi-structured interviews that were held with 40 salespeople working at the traditional market. For every stand, one salesperson was interviewed. They had an average age of 47.2 years, and there were 27 women and 13 men. A standard template with a limited number of questions was used as a guideline for the interviews. After permission was obtained, the interviews were audio-recorded while handwritten notes were also taken. The interviews were carried out in Basque ($n = 24$) or in Spanish ($n = 16$) depending on the interviewee’s preference. The average length was 15 minutes, and the total length of recorded material was almost ten hours.

All interviews were analyzed with an emphasis on language use on the signs. The use of the local languages, Basque and/or Spanish, was contrasted with the use of global languages, primarily English and French. The main results are presented in the next section.

Results

Our first step is to provide a distributional description of the multilingual characteristics of the signs. Thereafter, we analyze a limited number of signs to discuss their multilingual organization and find evidence of tensions between local and global influences. Finally, data from the interviews with the salespeople will shed light on their understanding of the use of those languages in this context.

Distribution of Languages

A short quantitative description of the linguistic landscape of the San Martín market can function as a useful first diagnosis. The results for the number of languages used on the signs are given in Table 9.1.

The table shows that most signs are in one language (58.2%), followed by bilingual signs (30.7%). Signs in three (4.8%), four (4.7%), or more (0.6%) languages are less frequent. Signs with “no language” (pictograms) are uncommon (0.9%). Thus, the data show a linguistic landscape predominately with signs in one language only, but also with a substantial number

Table 9.1: Number of languages on the signs

<i>Number of languages</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
One language	495	58.2
Two languages	261	30.7
Three languages	41	4.8
Four languages	40	4.7
Five or six languages	5	0.6
No “language”	8	0.9
Total	850	100

Table 9.2: Languages used on the signs

<i>Languages</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
Spanish	365	43.3
Basque and Spanish	157	18.6
Basque	60	7.1
Spanish and English	51	6.1
English	27	3.2
Basque, Spanish, and English	18	2.1
Basque and English	4	0.5
Other language or combination	139	16.5
Hard to define language	21	2.5
Total	842	100

of bilingual signs. The result is comparable to, but also different from, our first study of the main shopping street of Donostia-San Sebastián (Cenoz and Gorter 2006, 72), where we found 45% monolingual signs, 37% with two languages, and 19% with three or more languages. The difference can be explained. In our earlier study the unit of analysis was an establishment where several “pieces of text in an identifiable frame” are usually combined, and thus more units have more languages.

After discarding the signs with a pictogram (“no language”), the languages that are used in the signage are shown in Table 9.2.

The table shows that Basque is used on its own in 7.1% of all signs. Basque in combination with Spanish is used on 18.6%; in combination with English on 0.5%; and trilingual signs in Basque, Spanish, and English constitute 2.1% of the total. Part of the signs in “other language or combination” also include Basque, which represents another 5.3%. Added up, Basque is used on 33.6% of all signs. Spanish is used on its own in 43.3% of signs, and 6.1% of signs are Spanish-English bilingual. Adding the bilingual signs that include Basque (18.6%) and those where it is part of other combinations (4.9%), it implies that Spanish is used on 72.9% of all signs, which confirms its position as the dominant language in society. English is found on 14.6% of the signs – on its own (3.2%) or in bilingual (6.6%), trilingual (2.1%),

or other combinations (2.7%) – which shows a substantial presence, but perhaps less than would be expected in such commercial surroundings. The percentages are different from what we found earlier in the main shopping street, where 50% of signs contained Basque, 74% of signs Spanish, and 28% English (Cenoz and Gorter 2006, 73–74). The differences found are probably caused by a higher number of official, top-down signs.

In some signs, the languages used were hard to allocate (2.5%). These are mainly brand names where it is hard to say to which language the brand name belongs, for example, “ZARA” or “Frudisk.” Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2015, 24) would call “ZARA” a “Big Commercial Name,” but what about “Frudisk”? It is the name of a small candy shop, and an internet search informs us that it is a hybrid of “*frutas secas*” (dried fruits) and “*disco*” (audio disc). The candy shop is a remainder of a local chain of shops that used to sell both CDs and candy.

The category “other language or combination” (16.5%) stands out because all signs with four or more languages (5.2%) are included. Moreover, the obligatory use of Latin names in the fish stands, as will be explained later, also comprises 4.5% of those signs.

The quantitative diagnosis of the linguistic landscape of this market shows that local and global languages coexist and compete for space.

Multilingualism and Global-Local Relations

In this section we discuss some examples of multilingual arrangements (Reh 2004), and we also want to uncover global-local relations. As we will show, such relations can be found in both multilingual and monolingual signs.

The first example refers to the language policy the local government has in place (Gorter, Aiestaran and Cenoz 2012). Part of that policy is a campaign to incentivize shops and the service, retail, and catering industries to facilitate the use of Basque among their clients. The example is a sign from this campaign (Figure 9.3).

The sign is in Basque only and oriented to people who can read the minority language. It reads “*Hemen ere euskaraz*” (Here also in Basque), an invitation to clients to speak Basque with the salespeople. Establishments that display this sign must have at least one staff member on the premises who can speak Basque. Over 1,000 establishments in the city have decided to participate, which is a bit more than half of those that fulfilled the criteria and out of a total of 4,000 that were approached. The call-out signs can be found all over the city, and the campaign is accompanied by a website (www.donostiaeuskaraz.eus) with additional information on grants for signage and language courses. The sign is an example of offline-online links in the linguistic landscape (Blommaert and Maly 2019; see also Li and Kelly-Holmes, Chapter 1 in this volume). The example also makes clear that a need is felt to carve out a space for the minority language in its competition with languages such as Spanish, English, and French.



Figure 9.3: “Hemen ere euskaraz”: Basque language campaign.

The second example comes from an earlier campaign to encourage the use of Basque.

The sign hangs on the wall of a fish stall and it displays the names of 24 types of fish and seafood (Figure 9.4). In an earlier study we analyzed a similar sign of fish names, and we showed how it potentially provided language input for second language learners (Cenoz and Gorter 2008). As it turns out, this sign is a remainder from an earlier campaign launched in 2009, which was mainly aimed at language learning of specialized terminology. The sign shows an historical layer of the linguistic landscape; the URL of the website on the bottom refers to a dead link, which means that the offline-online connection is gone. The Internet Archive’s “Wayback Machine” (web.archive.org) informs us that the link was active between 2007 and 2014; afterwards it was redirected for a while to the current campaign website given above, but today it no longer exists.

If we try to figure out the multilingual organization of the sign, it is bilingual with Spanish names on the left and Basque on the right. In Reh’s typology the text is “duplicating,” however, such a mechanical classification of the relationship between the languages does not explain the significance of the sign’s multilingual pattern.

The next sign is common in fish stalls, and on these signs we encounter Latin words.



Figure 9.4: “Taste in Basque”: Learning fish names.

The sign is in Spanish except for the scientific name for salmon (*Salmo Salar*) in Latin (Figure 9.5). In terms of multilingual organization, the sign is “fragmentary.” The typology does not say anything about Latin’s minor but salient role as the secondary language. Of course, the word “salmon” could also be read as English, which is only a coincidence. Of the 24 names on the earlier sign, “salmon” is the only name that is the same in Spanish and English. The sign informs the client that the salmon on sale is produced through aquaculture at a fish farm in Ecuador, but the species originates from Norway.

As we will see later, the salespeople do not like to display Latin words, but European Union rules oblige them to include the scientific names of fish and seafood. The regulation is aimed at providing consumers with better information about what they eat and to combating “IUU fishing” (i.e., Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated). Therefore, the label also contains information on tracing the origin of the seafood (European Commission 2014). The regulation of information on the labels is another illustration of a global influence in this local market.

The next example is a directive sign (Mautner 2012) from one of the bar-café in which French is used next to Spanish and English without Basque (Figure 9.6).

The figure shows a self-made sign from a bar-café, which informs customers in three languages that they cannot bring in food from outside. In terms of multilingual organization the text is probably best seen as “overlapping”



Figure 9.5: Salmon ticket: Scientific name (*Salmo Salar*) in Latin.



Figure 9.6: Directive sign: "It is prohibited to bring food from outside."

because the Spanish and English texts are translations, but the French text contains additional information about drinks “that are not of the café.” Apparently, the signwriter wanted to be extra clear when addressing French speakers about the prohibition, perhaps based on past experience. It may seem remarkable that Basque is absent, but Basque locals may already know that you are not supposed to bring your own food/drinks into the café. Interestingly, this sign is surrounded by various signs in different languages, including Basque, but the other signs all originate from producers external to the establishment, as can be (more or less) seen in the next figure (Figure 9.7).

The figure shows a photograph of the glass front wall of the bar-café. The directive sign about bringing food from outside (Figure 9.6) is surrounded by global logos (Visa, Union Pay), the announcement of an event (“Rugby, sea, & food”), a local tourism sign, and a sign for the local Red Cross (almost unreadable and in Basque). During the interview with the owner of the bar, he explained that many French visitors come to his café. The use of French on signs is a contentious point among the salespeople. Some of them consider French to be more important than English because they take into account the French-speaking visitors who are attracted, in particular, by the “ZARA” store.

The next sign is from one of the “ZARA” store shop windows (Figure 9.8).

The “ZARA” flagship store is an epitome of globalization. “ZARA” is owned by the Inditex company (www.inditex.com), one of the largest fashion retailers in the world, which sells products under eight different brand names in over 7,000 stores in 96 countries. By the way, the word “zara” in



Figure 9.7: Assemblage of signs on the glass front window of a bar-café.



Figure 9.8: Bilingual price marker.

Basque means “you are” (2nd-person singular), thus it is a common word, and it has a different association for Basque speakers than just a brand name; but this is, of course, a coincidence.

The first “ZARA” store opened in 1975 in A Coruña, Galicia. After expanding in Spain, in 1988 it opened a shop in Porto, Portugal, and one year later a location in New York. In 2007 the company opened its thousandth physical store and its first online store. In marketing literature the global expansion of Inditex has been called “zarafication” (Willems et al. 2012), where it refers to a convergence of fine fashion and fast fashion through commoditization and the “massclusivity” of luxury fashions. The coming together of offline and online has become an important part of the retailer’s marketing strategy, as can be seen from the internet addresses displayed around the stores.

The sign demonstrates how the company combines localization with globalization. Localization is, of course, an important marketing strategy (Melewar and Saunders 1999). The company’s signage is in line with the official local language policy of bilingualism. In terms of multilingual organization, this sign is duplicating. The bilingual price marker also demonstrates the linguistic sameness and differences of words in Basque and Spanish. The word “*blazer*” is the same in both languages, while “*jertsea/jersey*”

are similar, and both originate from English. On the next lines “*prakak/pantalon*” (trousers/pants) and “*oinetakoak/calzado*” (shoes) show the linguistic distance between Basque and Spanish, where *pantalon* etymologically comes from Italian via French. What the sign also showcases is the minimalist approach to design that characterizes “ZARA” stores, which use the same font and design in all their stores. The languages used in the shop window do not seem to take the store’s many French customers into consideration. Similar observations could be made about the second international chain store, “FNAC,” which does not use any French in its signage, even though it is originally a French company.

The next example shows a different, almost opposite side of globalization.

The sign makes it clear that the establishment collaborates in the “take a bite towards solidarity” project. The origins of this “*Zaporeak proiektua*” (tastes project) can be found at a trilingual website. It started in 2011 in the town of Wukro, Tigray region, Ethiopia, and its aims are, among others, to improve knowledge about nutrition and start activities in the agrifood sector (<http://zaporeak.eus/en#ethiopia>). By ordering food, the client contributes to the project. The sign takes the (persistent) reader to a remote town in Ethiopia, thereby demonstrating global, long-distance links. The multilingual organization of the sign is mostly “duplicating,” except a creative blending of Spanish and Basque is used where the country’s name (Ethiopia) is in a larger font, and a smaller font is used for the Basque suffix (“*-rekin*” [with]). This is a linguistic pattern we have also observed in other bilingual signs.

The next and final sign also proves the effects of globalization, but in an indirect way.

The sign announces in Spanish that the candy shop “has Gildas for 80 eurocents a piece” (Figure 9.10). The sign is a plasticized photograph that refers to the product depicted called “Gilda,” which is an interesting combination of a local invented tradition and global influence. The story is told that some 70 years ago a customer in a bar skewered an olive, a green pepper, and an anchovy on a toothpick and thus invented the *pintxo*. He chose the name based on the movie *Gilda* starring Rita Hayworth, recently released at the time, because “the actress and the new *pintxo* both were green, salty, and a little spicy” (pintxos.es). It can be interpreted as an example of Hollywoodization (Conversi 2010, 359). Today, the Gilda is probably the most famous *pintxo*: a small portion of food, “a miniature of gastronomy,” usually on or with a piece of bread and a stick, served in bars, similar to a “*tapa*.” *Pintxos* are seen as an important part of local Basque identity. During the 2008 global economic recession, the “*pintxo pote*” was invented, a new “local tradition” where a *pintxo* and a drink are sold together for a reasonable price. Every Thursday afternoon the “*pintxo pote*” takes place in the San Martín market. It is the Basque example of what is known around the world as “happy hour” and thus another piece of evidence of global influence.



Figure 9.9: "Take a bite": Solidarity with Ethiopia project.



Figure 9.10: "Hay Gildas": Local-global connections.

Salespeople's Perceptions of the Linguistic Landscape

After analyzing some of the (1) language policies, (2) production and design, and (3) characteristics of the physical signage itself, which coincide with the first three components of our Multilingual Inequality in Public Spaces (MIPS) model, we will now discuss, as a fourth aspect, the salespeople's perceptions of the signs in their own stands and in the market.

We asked all 40 salespeople about the putting up of textual signs in their stand. Fourteen indicated that they do not put any signs at all in their stands. The only marker in those stalls is a small plate with the owner's name in uniform black letters on a rectangular steel metal background. They are mainly farmers in the fruit and vegetables stands. One of them explained: "*txartelak ez ditugu hemen jartzen. Baserritarrek ez gara ohitu horrela txartelak jartzen*" (We don't put signs here. We farmers are not used to putting up signs) (S33; numbers refer to the interviewees).

The other 26 salespeople use textual signs in their stalls, and 15 said that there is only Spanish on them. The reason they give is that Spanish is understood by all their clients, or as it was said in Basque: "*Erderaz. Jendeak ulertzeko, azkenean. Agian jartzen dut 'izokina' eta jendeak ez daki zer den. Orduan nabiago dut erderaz jartzea*" (Spanish. So that people understand, after all. Perhaps I put "*izokina*" [Basque for salmon], and people don't know what it is. That's why I prefer to put it in Spanish) (S02).

Another informant added: "*Azkenean ez gatoz euskara erakustera, ez da gure intentzioa hor*" (After all, we are not here for showing Basque, that's not our intention) (S06). Probably he never saw the bilingual sign for learning fish terms in Basque (Figure 9.4).

Six salespeople indicated that they use both Basque and Spanish on their signs. One of the informants provided more details and observed that Spanish still prevails in her bilingual signage: "*Los carteles están en los dos. Las descripciones más en castellano. 'Más' no, está todo en castellano. El nombre del producto en los dos*" (The signs are in both languages. The description more in Spanish. No, not "more," they are completely in Spanish. The name of the product is in both) (S32).

Three salespeople, all from the fish stands, brought up the issue of using Latin in addition to only Spanish or Spanish and Basque. However, all disapproved of this multilingual aspect: "*Europako arautegia dela eta, erdera eta latinez ... Latin erabiltzea ez zait ondo iruditzen. Zertarako ... Bezeroek parra egiten dute*" (Because of the European Law, Spanish and Latin ... I don't agree with using Latin. What for? ... the clients laugh about it) (S03).

Obviously, the European rules, which we clarified before, do have an influence on the linguistic landscape, at least for some of the stands at this market. The influence of the rules is considered negatively by the salespeople and, as they report, apparently seen as ridiculous by their customers.

All salespeople were asked if they are satisfied with language use in their stands, and 27 out of the 40 salespeople answered in the affirmative. However, some of the answers to the question focused less on the language displayed on the signs and more on reasons related to language learning or the behaviour of foreign visitors.

Six informants answered that at their age they do not feel capable of learning a new language, and therefore they settle for the languages they can use now. One of them said it this way: “*Ja nire adinarekin ez nuke beste hizkuntzak erabiliko. Ja burua ez daukat gauzak ikasteko*” (At my age I wouldn’t use any other languages anymore. I don’t have my head prepared anymore for learning things) (S07). As previously mentioned, the average age is 47.2 years, and several salespeople working at these stands pointed out that they lack knowledge of foreign languages, especially of English.

Five informants made it clear that the current display of language is fine because they have no reason to add any other languages. One explanation was the fact that many foreign tourists come to visit the market, but they do not often purchase items. Or as a fishmonger stated: “*Los extranjeros vienen a mirar, no a comprar*” (The foreigners come to look, not to buy) (S01). For him the tourists are not a priority, while local clients are. A butcher added that some foreigners may know Spanish anyway: “*Aquí estamos para vender, y punto. Ya hay algunos extranjeros que saben castellano, como los franceses*” (We are here to sell, full stop. There are some foreigners who know Spanish, like the French) (S19). One salesperson did actually put up some English signs, but he was not convinced of its necessity: “*No me parece necesario poner nada en inglés.*” (I don’t think it is necessary to put anything in English.) (S32). The answers show a tension between the use of local and global languages, where the salespeople opt for maintaining the local languages.

There were also 13 informants who indicated that they were less satisfied with how languages are currently used in their stalls. We already mentioned the discontent of three fishmongers having to use Latin. The ten remaining informants would like to add more languages and thus enhance the multilingual aspect of their signage. However, the reasons they give are contrasting. Six out of ten indicate they would like to use more foreign languages, such as English and French, in their stalls, while four others informed us that they would like to use more Basque. Thus, it looks like global and local interests are competing.

One salesperson summarized the need for more foreign languages as: “*Ikasi beharko genuke hobeto hitz egiten ingelesez. Azkenean da unibertsalagoa, eta frantsesez ere, jende asko etortzen da Iparraldetik. Egia esan edozein hizkuntza ondo da jakitea.*” (We would need to speak better English. After all, that is more universal, and French also, because a lot of people come from the French part of the Basque Country. Honestly, any language would be good to know) (S26).

One stand owner indicated that he is actually changing the signs: “*Hemos hecho carteles nuevos, y los haremos en francés. Pondríamos como segunda lengua en francés pero no hemos hecho todavía. Aquí compra mucho francés*” (We have made new signs, and we will make them in French. We would put as the second language in French, but we haven’t done that yet. Here many French people come to buy) (S23).

In contrast, among the informants who regret that they do not use more Basque, one explained it in comparison with French or English: “*A mi me gustaría saber más euskara. El francés o inglés no me importa tanto, pero el euskara sí*” (I would like to know more Basque. I don’t care too much about French or English, but I do about Basque) (S38).

After the question about the languages in their own stand, the salespeople were also asked about the language use on directional and other general signs in the market. The answers are surprisingly diverse. A majority (n = 22) thought that those signs are written exclusively in Spanish. Another 11 believed the signs are bilingual, written in Spanish and Basque, whereas two informants said the signs are exclusively in Basque. One informant believed the signs are in four languages: Basque, Spanish, English, and French. The last four informants had no clue about the languages on the signs. Taking into account that this is their place of work, and they pass by these signs daily, they seem to take this linguistic landscape for granted and are only partially aware of how languages are used.

The salespeople were further questioned about their preference for the languages used in the general signs. A majority (n = 25) believe that the local languages, Basque and Spanish, as well as English and French should be used. For them, the growing number of tourists is important, as a butcher explained: “*Hombre, estando en el centro habiendo tanto turista, sí que debería de haber más idiomas ... Pues sí, oye, aquí dos idiomas tenemos, pero cada vez, ayudar a la gente con facilidades no cuesta nada*” (Well, being in the city centre and having so many tourists, we should have more languages ... So, yes, we have two languages here, but helping people with facilities doesn’t cost anything) (S21). Nine informants would like to see the signs only in the local languages, Basque and Spanish, and saw no need to include any foreign languages. A reason they frequently mentioned was that in each country only the local languages should be used. A salesperson formulated it as: “*Joaten zara Frantziara eta ez dago ezer ez gaztelaniaz ere*” (You go to France and there isn’t anything in Spanish either) (S03).

Another person, who sells fruit, disapproves of the English currently used at the market: “*Tanto euskara como castellano. Aunque anda mucho francés también. La verdad, hombre, yo pienso, estamos en Donostia, así que para mí que esté en euskera. Me gusta el idioma de aquí*” (Both Basque and Spanish. Although there is a lot of French people too. In fact, I think, we are in Donostia, so for me it should be in Basque) (S17). These informants all together advocate for a local linguistic landscape in which the local

languages are prioritized (compare this to similar findings in Blackwood, Johannessen and Mendisu, Chapter 6 in this volume).

The remaining informants have various other ideas about the languages used on the signs. Three informants believe that, in this type of traditional market, only Basque should be used on the signs, although two of them mention the difficulties it can raise, due to the presence of non-Basque-speaking local and international clients. One of the farmers selling vegetables underlines: “*Euskara. Hemen euskara guk ez badugu indartzen ... Baina negozioa horrela da. Nola saldu behar den, baita txinoz ere!*” (Basque. Because if we don’t support Basque here ... But that is what business is like. As we have to sell, we would sell even in Chinese!) (S31). In one sentence he expresses the tension between language promotion and commercial interests.

Overall, a majority of the salespeople preferred multilingual signs including the two local languages as well as some foreign languages, while a smaller group opted for bilingual signage in only the two local languages.

Discussion and Conclusion

The building of the San Martín market is presented as a hallmark of urban renovation. Stepping into its traditional market you are immersed in a multilingual environment. The décor is multilingual because you can read signs that contain Basque, Spanish, or English, but some also have Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, and other languages. This is a local market that contains many markers of globalization; it can be conceived of as a glocal space. The first thing you may notice is the name “*Kenji Takahashi*” on a sushi stall, which upon closer inspection displays many products with labels and wrappers in Japanese. A sticker asks for a review on “the world’s largest travel site.” Walking around you can observe that the products for sale come from anywhere around the globe. One stall displays a variety of cheeses: Danish blue, Dutch Edam, Swiss Emmental, French Roquefort, and Italian Gorgonzola, which lie next to the local Basque Idiazabal sheep cheese. Fish on ice have labels that tell you their names in two or three languages, including Latin, as well as the seas or parts of the ocean where the fish were caught. The labels on containers for herbs and spices tell you places of origin: China, India, Paraguay, and even Ceylon. Another stall sells exotic *chirimoya* fruit, a Quechua name, originally from Central America but now widely grown in Spain. In the flower stall you find Dutch lilies, and the kiosk sells magazines with foreign titles: *Elle*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, or *Forbes*, although all turn out to be the Spanish-language edition. The next stall sells “*börek*” pastries, a Turkish word for a type of food that spread through the Ottoman Empire, showing an early form of globalization.

Global products are placed side by side with local products, showing processes of glocalization. The local dimension is most pronounced in the centre of the hall with its stalls of fruits, vegetables, and other products brought by local farmers. It is a stark contrast, also in terms of linguistic landscape,

because the stalls have only a small nameplate, some signs with the product names, or just a price per kilo or per unit. These products fit the “KM-0” or “100% local” campaigns for more sustainable ways of transport and production. The tension between the global and the local is almost tangible in this linguistic landscape.

In this chapter, we analyzed the linguistic landscape of this San Martín market, with particular emphasis on the quantitative and qualitative linguistic dimensions of the signage as well as its global and local relationships. We also heard the voices of the salespeople from the stalls in the traditional market. We saw that Spanish dominates the linguistic landscape in terms of quantity, with a substantial presence of Basque, but also English, French, and other languages. These signs demonstrate different patterns of multilingual organization (Reh 2004). One can wonder how the people who stop to read the signs navigate such multilingual landscapes. In an earlier study, we found that most readers check out the different languages, read the texts in two or more languages, but perhaps not all of it (Gorter and Cenoz 2015). Our informants at the market confirmed that they don’t pay much attention to the languages in general and directional signs of the building.

By considering a limited number of signs, we found expressions of the struggle of Basque as an endangered minority language, but also links to fish species in Latin and far away fishing grounds. One sign had a more elaborate prohibition aimed at French speakers, but the sign was part of a multilingual assemblage of signs. We also looked at two megastores on the other side of the San Martín building. “ZARA” and “FNAC” are examples of the global spread of “Big Commercial Names” (Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael 2015). These companies dominate the main shopping streets around the world, and as a consequence those streets “dress” alike. They have a strategy of standardizing their international “corporate visual identity” (Melewar and Saunders 1999, 583), and, as a consequence, there is more uniformity and thus a decrease in the diversity of linguistic landscapes in different cities. The design used for the linguistic landscape of the “ZARA” store in Donostia-San Sebastián looks almost identical to a “ZARA” store anywhere in the world.

Globalization can also bring solidarity with faraway places, in our case through food tasting with a town in Ethiopia. Already some decades ago Hollywood provided the name for the most famous Basque pintxo. The local market is, of course, also a fascinating “foodscape.” Järlehed and Moriarty (2018) studied the linguistic landscape of the Basque *txakoli* wines. They observed that the concept of foodscape is researched in various fields, including tourism and geography, but the connection between food and language is not addressed. In our examples, we found that displays of food and language have fascinating global connections. Other studies on markets, food, and multilingualism have pointed in the same direction (Adami 2019; Lou 2017; Pennycook and Otsuij 2017).

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on linguistic landscapes around the world. As a consequence, shopping streets are full of signs with warnings about maintaining a distance, instructions for using hand sanitizer, cautions to wear a mask, guidance for scanning QR-codes for menus, and offers of takeout food or home service. Future developments in the “new normal” after the COVID-19 pandemic will have consequences for linguistic landscape studies, and researchers can already start to find new meanings in the signs that surround us. Photographer Kiki Streitberger (2020) reported how she started to see another meaning in signs she finds on the streets of London. One sign said, “There is another way to live,” which was meant to encourage a switch to greener energy, but under COVID-19 lockdown it became a threat about things to come. Hopefully, it can also be read in an optimistic way in changing times.

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Part IV

Concluding Remarks



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10 Besides Hegemonic Multilingualism

Making Space for Little Stories and Complex Biographies

Crispin Thurlow

I am in so many ways the epitome of orderliness. It's in my nature, which is to say my neurotic make-up. Orderliness is also essential to the core practices of my work. In its most basic expression, language is inherently sequential and orderly, and the conventions of academic writing are especially so. Beyond these matters of personal and professional disposition, however, my colonial inheritance also means I effectively embody order. In this regard, I acknowledge other people's historical trauma while recognizing my people's historical pathology (cf. Vaughn 1993; also, Rich 1991). Not only am I someone inclined to, and deeply enculturated into, order, I have now turned up in a country which is the height of orderliness, by its own and others' mythology. This is nicely affirmed (photo above) in the trim bundles of paper – and thus of words and images – left curbside every other week for official recycling (Figure 10.1). My personal orderliness is thus compounded.

And yet, in spite of all this orderliness, I'm really such a mess.

n gemors
ukungcola
pulmentum
бардак
un desastre
un gâchis
فوضى
llanast
ein Durcheinander
es Dürenang

An utter mess. Throughout my life, I've continually found myself out of place. I am therefore rather dirty, as Mary Douglas (1966) would have it. My linguistic repertoire is certainly a slovenly one. As I've moved about – and been moved about – I've kept picking up bits of language along the



Figure 10.1: Orderly Swissness.

way. This has left me with little more than a ragbag of incompetencies and disfluencies. A verbal mishmash.

Inspired in part by the chapters of this book, and in the spirit of feminist-queer scholarship, I start by accounting for myself this way. In presenting some biography, I seek to declare my positionality and to do so in a way which is hopefully more self-critical than defensive. As Jane Gallop's (2002) anecdotal theory attests, personal stories can sometimes help us out of a rut. I too have previously recommended that little stories are useful antidotes to metanarratives; it is here that their pedagogical potency also lies (Thurlow 2004). For now, though, I mostly want to use my own little stories for surfacing the "phantom center" (Ferguson 1990, 9) – that elusive place from which symbolic power and concealed privileges exert themselves.

Speaking of/from the phantom centre

I am undeniably a privileged person. I am a gay man, true, but also a White, middle-class man. And a cisgender man. I speak English very fluently; it is my first language, a preferred language, and one of my home languages. I grew up in rural England with, by British standards, lower-to-middling middle-class parents. My mother was raised as the daughter of a priest; my fatherless father had been a high-school dropout. At the age of ten, we moved to South Africa, where I became Whiter-than-white in ways which,

unknown to me then, were even more entitled. There, I was bullied relentlessly for being foreign, or for being gay, or for both. (As the song goes, “Is he gay or European?”). In South Africa, I was also bullied into “immigrant classes” in order to learn enough Afrikaans for passing high school. Thanks in part to the lackluster pedagogy of Afrikaans teachers at our English-medium school, I ended up passing Afrikaans with better grades than most of my South African-born peers. Afrikaans was, however, not initially a happy place for me. At all. But nowadays I’m proud of it. I’m also grateful for the way it shoe-horned me into Swiss German, which many years later became a heart and home language. As Claire Kramsch (2009) tells us, these affective, sensuous, and romantic aspects of language learning can be of make-or-break significance in our lives.

Emerging from the greenness – and Whiteness – of rural England, Afrikaans was my first multilingual engagement. (The military resonance of the word is apposite.) This was, I now realize, the moment when language first made itself apparent to me, when I tuned into languages, and when my curiosity for language began. Tackling Afrikaans set the scene and the tone for my subsequent efforts at learning languages. With some typically (for many White people) condescending flirtations with Zulu, I also studied Latin to the end of high school. In communist-obsessed apartheid South Africa, my otherwise aimless teenage rebellion saw me teaching myself very elementary Russian. (All long since forgotten, except for товарищ which I always felt held queer potential.) My next most sustained engagement – a lifelong love affair really – was with Spanish; first at university, then in A-level classes in London. It was there, during my eight years of living in London, that I also took up a string of evening classes in French and Arabic. Then, in 1997, I ended up in Wales, where I fell in love with both my husband and with Welsh. It was crack-of-dawn language classes together which left Welsh with the special status of a courtship language for us. To cut a long, slow-burn language-learning story short, I find myself today embedded in Swiss German and flailing about with German German.

My own parochial lifespan – a lot more ordinary than orderly – has thus been marked by a magpie-like accumulation of fragments and scraps of language. Sometimes through necessity, sometimes through sheer curiosity. Nothing, however, has ever been properly sustained and therefore never fully accomplished. I didn’t grow up with other elite European languages at home. I didn’t grow up privileged enough to travel or spend time exploring other countries, carousing in other languages. My upbringing in South Africa certainly didn’t afford me chances for gap years in France or stays abroad in Germany. Somehow my Spanish remained competent enough without my ever having spent (much later) more than a handful of sporadic weeks in Spain. Must be love.

Filled with curiosity and desire, my relationship with other languages has simply not resulted in a profound multilingualism – the kind I could brag about or feel good about. My multilingualism, such as it is, feels somewhat

far removed from the kind of “elite multilingualism” that Elisabeth Barakos and Charlotte Selleck (2019) describe so nicely. Of course, my English continues to resource me amply. Coupled with my middle-class European affluence, I am thereby afforded the ultimate expression of privilege: Choice. I have the choice to learn languages (or not). Notwithstanding, I do find intellectual resonance in Barakos and Selleck’s interrogation of the ideologies of multilingualism. If nothing else, my own modest language biography – my hotchpotch encounters and higgledy-piggledy efforts – has helped me understand the struggles of others who are much, much less privileged than me. In fact, it is at the level of personal biography – not just my own – that some essential truths of multilingualism seem to lie. This, I believe, is also the greatest promise in the approach of Liz Lanza and her MultiLing colleagues to “multilingualism across the lifespan.” But I will come to that later.

At this point, one may be forgiven for thinking that this piece is all about me. It is and it isn’t. At least that’s how I intend things. The personal is political, after all. I’ve come to understand how my own messy, patchy multilingualism allows or invites me into a deeper, more empathic engagement with other people’s stories. (See Shohamy & Pennycook, Chapter 2 in this volume, on the shift from awareness to engagement.) Eventually, the bureaucracies and rhetorics of multilingualism affect us all, such is their hegemonic sway.

Living with/in hegemonic multilingualism

It turns out that Switzerland is actually quite a messy place – a surprisingly dirty, out-of-place kind of place. Especially when it comes to languages. This realization brings me to some reflections on what I’ve come to understand as hegemonic multilingualism (cf Krzyzanowski & Wodak 2010). I find myself indebted here to Claire Kramsch (2021); this time, though, for her Bourdieu-inspired treatise on *le politique* and, specifically, the inevitable slide from symbolic power to symbolic violence:

for Bourdieu, symbolic power always entails symbolic violence but it never does that without the agreement of the people involved. Thus, the word, “violence” indexes both psychological pressure and the intensity of this pressure, but it always implies acquiescence on the part of those on whom it is exerted.

(Kramsch 2021, 115)

Explained thus, Bourdieu’s symbolic violence is essentially Gramsci’s hegemony writ small (see Burawoy 2019, on precisely this point). The pressures and controls expressed/experienced in symbolic power are the stuff of everyday interaction, but these interactions are precisely where ideologies are realized and how, bit by bit, social order is consensually maintained. Importantly, and following Stuart Hall (e.g., 2011; cf. Grossberg 1986),

hegemony is not simply an exercise in mass consent; it is also a system of containment, simultaneously incorporating diversity – of ideas, experiences, and bodies – and setting the limits of possibility.

On this note, I return to Switzerland, a country famously wedded to the politics of multilingualism. This is also somewhere very much entangled in its various mythologies of multilingualism (Watts 1999; Berthele 2016). Such is the strength of feeling around these issues that, as an *Ausländer* (or *Usländer*), I hesitate to venture further – even as a very privileged, married-into-Swissness “outsider within.” Regardless, I use my own on-the-ground experiences – my little stories – as a case in point. I’m more than happy to accept that these are only my stories, although I doubt it.

Since moving to live permanently in Switzerland, I’ve been struck by – and learned to navigate – a ritual injunction at the start of many work meetings. “Everyone,” it is often stated, “should feel free to speak whichever language they feel comfortable in.” I remember at first being tickled by this congenial performance of multilingualism: It was the essence of Swissness. Especially after so many years working in the USA, it all felt very exotic. (In the UK, meanwhile, where a third of academic staff were not originally from the UK, different ways of speaking seemed always somewhat more discernable.) By and large, the magnanimous opening gambit works like a dream. That is, however, as long as German, French or English happen to be your comfort zones. I’ve come to see how my Italian-speaking colleagues are never hailed, even less so the Romansch speakers. Yet both are official national languages of Switzerland. In fact, I’ve had colleagues visiting from abroad who, on hearing the invitation, wondered just how far they might get with speaking – more than comfortably – Swedish, Catalan, or isiXhosa. The whole thing is, of course, charmingly inclusive but disingenuously exclusive. To reference a more familiar discursive contortion, it’s a little like saying, “I’m a multilingual, but ...” or perhaps “I’m not a monolingual, but....”

In the scheme of things, this is surely a minor moment; it is also a relatively harmless, well-intended gesture. But it’s a nonsense that the specific languages are so obviously assumed but not overtly or matter-of-factly listed. It’s more than just nonsense, though, because there’s also symbolic violence at work. And, like all ideological processes, these multilingual rhetorics ripple outwards, extrapolated across a diverse range of institutional policies and statements. Big and small.

This kind of “four legs good” performance of multilingualism plays out at the highest levels in Switzerland, where citizens and visitors are taught, “Multilingualism in the national languages German, French, Italian, and Romansh is cultivated (sic) in society and is enshrined in law.”¹ Without question, and quite understandably, multilingualism is a much-valued, widely celebrated fact of life here. Its complexities, contradictions, and inconsistencies are made far less obvious, however. Languages in Switzerland are, like everywhere, a matter of politics and political economy (hence the

officially unofficial status of English). It makes for a multilingualism which encodes, and upholds, a largely multiculturalist ethos (see Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001; also, Malik 2005). In January 2021, a new report by the Swiss Federal Office of Statistics laid bare the languages actually being spoken regularly in people's homes.² Besides the four sanctioned languages, English was the most common non-national language spoken regularly by 45% of the country. At home, meanwhile, people are also regularly in contact with some 75 other languages, including Albanian (6.7%); Portuguese (4.9%); Spanish (4.9%); Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, or Serbian (BCSM, 3.8%); and Turkish (2.8%). In the context of this perhaps surprising diversity, the same report noted that 84% of the population still believes in the importance of speaking more than one national language "to promote cohesion in Switzerland." The mythologies – and language ideologies – are alive and kicking.

The rhetorics of multilingualism are almost always filled with liberal optimism and universalist promise. What's not to like? But these same rhetorics contain at least two lies. First, multilingualism can be divisive when exercised as nothing more than a system, a policy, or a (mission) statement. Done this way, spoken of like this, multilingualism is an ideology which, true to form (Irvine and Gal 2000), erases and dismisses languages as fast as it iconizes and celebrates them. Second, multilingualism can produce a kind of magical realism: It looks a lot like reality and is undoubtedly grounded in the real experiences of real people, but it is shot through with fantasy and wishful thinking. Hegemonic multilingualism projects a vision of societal cooperation and intercultural exchange which is invariably at odds with the on-the-ground struggles, discomforts, and traumas it entails. Just because multilingualism is common and its practices are ordinary does not make it straightforward or harmless. The denial of multilingualism's downsides and dark sides – its "shadow" if you will – does little more than deny the full range of its lived experiences, its complexity, and its messiness.

At this point, I take the liberty of repurposing an argument I sought to articulate once before (see Thurlow 2002, 84). In her groundbreaking critique, Gayatri Spivak (1991) spoke truth to power by proclaiming the ethics/politics in making space for marginalised voices, especially those still choked by the ongoing exercise of colonial privilege. As with all large- and small-scale intercultural projects, therefore, multilingualism needs also to be an expression of self-sacrifice – humility even. It is not for us to pick and choose our differences. Linguistic diversity appears in many guises, most of which are often less familiar, fashionable, or comfortable than the ones we favour. Often the better funded ones. In Switzerland, for example, multilingual policymakers and advocates ought to be equally (at least) committed to the other *home* languages of Albanian, BCMS, and Turkish. Otherwise, ours is little more than an exercise in privileging anew only the long-standing, colonial languages of Europe. This, as I say, is something I've sensed for a while. It sometimes feels unseemly to hear speakers of

well-off European languages squabbling for status while so many others are left to watch in silence.

How, then, to confront hegemonic multilingualism or, at least, to learn to live with and within it? How best to proceed in a world so persistently structured by, and invested in, the preservation of elite languages? Is there a way to move not necessarily *beyond* this kind of multilingualism, but to live *beside* it (with it) and, thereby, to uphold a way of living *besides* it (in spite of it)? It might, in the first instance, mean ditching those disingenuous “all languages welcome” games. Most certainly, it would require relinquishing otherwise self-serving demands for integration and assimilation. In this regard, there may be lessons to be learned from the politics of disability access.

Language users, wheelchair users, and the spectre of assimilation

In some ways it is my privilege which gives me a clearer sense of the far greater symbolic violence meted out on so many working-class (im)migrants of color. I’m thinking of people who arrive in very rich countries like Switzerland (or Norway) with more stigmatized, less culturally or intellectually revered languages in their repertoire. Much less symbolic capital with which to trade or to protect themselves. I’ve certainly learned to recognize how offensive and unsympathetic the voices of “real Americans” are when complaining that, say, Mexican immigrants are simply too lazy to bother to learn English. This is, of course, precisely how language ideologies intersect with a raft of other ideologies about place and belonging, and, especially, so-called integration. There is a sinister spectre of assimilation which haunts the mobilities of so many people who struggle to become local language users.

The raw politics of this spectral haunting (cf. Deumert 2018, May 7) are distilled in the words of German AfD politician René Springer who, in June 2020, reacted to the release of government figures about the number of migrants initially failing language tests. True to form, Springer seized on the numbers as evidence that “many migrants” were missing the “necessary culture of learning” (*notige Lernkultur*) or the “will to integrate” (*Integrationswille*).³ This is a far-right expression of an otherwise mainstream attitude, one that is all too familiar around the world. Just as the burden of communication (cf. Lippi-Green 1997) invariably falls to the foreigner or newcomer, so too does the general burden of integration. In these terms, it is only ever a one-way street: *You* accommodate to *me*. This is quite at odds with our nicest sensibilities about what, in any domestic setting, a “gracious host” might be expected to do.

As it happens, the spectre of assimilation is something which also haunts the experiences of many people living with disabilities. Anyone who is a wheelchair user, for example, will surely recognize the moment depicted in



Figure 10.2: Symbolic violence in action.

Figure 10.2; they will sense its problematic assimilationism and more so its symbolic violence.

To start, the symbolic violence of the little text is materialized in the crudely hand-written, *ad hoc* sign itself, which has been carelessly sticky-taped to the window. There is also something inherently condescending about the no doubt well-intended drawing, as if a wheelchair user might not yet have grasped the meaning of the word ‘ramp.’ The symbolic violence is arguably at its most condensed in the deceptively convivial “available” and “please ask”. This is the worst kind of assimilationism. The author, abandoned by those with official responsibility for these matters, has patched together a sign which lays the burden of integration squarely on the disabled person. All done in the friendliest and, ironically, most “accommodating” way. Unwittingly, the author thereby animates some of the most deep-seated, fraught politics in disability access. It is for this very reason that, disability educators, scholars, and activists have sought to push the accommodations model, to exorcise its assimilationist tendencies.

While serving on the Disability Studies steering committee at the University of Washington, I first learned about Universal Design. (It is central also to my husband’s practice as a dancer-choreographer working with disabled and non-disabled performers, and I’ve certainly learned much from



Figure 10.3: Designing “universally.”

him too.) As an approach to thinking *besides* disability accommodations, Universal Design is both elegant and radical in the simplicity of its core principles; these are summed up nicely by Sheryl Burgstahler (1999–2002, n.p.; also 2015):

Whereas accommodations are a reactive process for providing access to a specific [person] ... universal design (UD) is a proactive process rooted in a social justice approach [that] advocates value diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Universal Design originated in the work of architect Ron Mace (e.g., 1998, 23), who sought to develop “a common-sense approach to making everything we design and produce usable by everyone to the greatest extent possible.” For him, solutions should not only be useable but also aesthetic. A good example of this ethic applied to the built environment can be found at the *Enabling Village* in Singapore (Figure 10.3), where steps are pleasingly combined with accessible ramps (e.g., with handrails, color-coded gradations) for wheelchair users, pram-pushers, and suitcase-luggers alike.

It was my colleagues at the University of Washington who recognized how the principles of Universal Design could be applied to teaching and learning. In this regard, the core practice entails offering learners multiple means of representation, different ways for apprehending information and

for expressing understanding. (There is an obvious link here with the issues raised by Urbanik and Pavlenko in Chapter 5 of this volume.) The underlying ethic – and politics – of Universal Design has far greater potential and applicability, however. It offers itself as a model for making any number of environments as accessible as possible. These are material, social, and cultural spaces designed *proactively* in ways which may be adjusted and customized by/for all sorts of different individual needs. Importantly, this is not a matter of accommodating only for disability, but rather for diversity. Any number of people find themselves at different moments benefitting from a variety of forms, modes, or systems for accessing information and interactions.

In designing environments “universally”, the primary objective is to think ahead to what may be beneficial for people rather than to wait for them to ask for help. In other words, to avoid the wheelchair user from having to “ask at the counter” for a ramp; this simply obliges them to ask for help, which also, in effect, positions them as seeking special dispensation – a favour. The ramp should, ideally, be in place already and anyway. The implications of thinking ahead like this are radical; they are also transformational for people otherwise regularly excluded by spaces carelessly designed to disable them. To be clear, Universal Design is not a matter of being able to design for every eventuality or even for every possible need; there will always be some specific accommodations needed. Universal Design does, however, seek concretely and meaningfully to shift the burden of accommodation away from the disabled individual or group.

This fundamental ethic of sharing the burden of accommodation has, I think, some relevance for the types of support often needed for/by different language users. This way of thinking may help ease the violence of hegemonic multilingualism. I do not have a detailed set of answers or solutions at this point, so I merely raise the possibility. What, I wonder, might the principles and practices of Universal Design look like for multilingualism? And, specifically, for creating multilingual settings which *proactively* accommodate diverse language users and diverse ways of speaking? Without, that is, always calling attention to the “foreignness” of people in ways which, de facto, diminish their voice and/or undercut their contribution. This would centrally be a question of creating environments which uphold the substance of people’s speech, their ideas and opinions, rather than drawing undue attention to the cosmetics of their speech – fussing only with issues of, say, register, style, and grammar. This definitely means moving beyond the adapt-or-die assimilationism of hegemonic multilingualism towards a richer kind of accommodation. Reaching even further – in the direction set by Universal Design – ultimately requires working with the capacities people have, not the ones they lack. And this means being willing to make the first move.

Quoting the famous South African singer Miriam Makeba, Ana Deumert (2019, 408) helps frame the politics of sociolinguistic restitution as a matter of hospitality which requires working against the settler mindset of entering

someone's home, sitting down, and saying "get out." In much the same way, too many European hosts (reluctantly) like to invite people in, sit them down (or put them to work), and then tell them, "shut up." Making space for other voices is not just about letting people speak, which it surely is; it also means being prepared to listen patiently not just to French and German, but to Weird French and Weird German (cf Ch'ien 2004). These are ways of speaking that are understandably flawed, but almost always workable. They may be "broken," says Evelyn Nien-Ming Ch'ien (2004), but they workable and they are invigorating. Meanwhile, and musing on her own attempts to "decolonize multilingualism", Alison Phipps (2019) proposes *getting the gist* as part of a similar shift of mindset. Rooted in patience and taciturnity, this, I assume, takes surrendering one's demand for flawless expression and absolute comprehension.

Ultimately, the fundamental practice of Universal Design is one which balances (or seeks to better balance) structural/institutional demands with the on-the-ground abilities, capacities, and needs of people. The goal is to help people exist more comfortably (and with dignity) within the inevitable constraints of living – of getting about and getting through. In effect, it is about offsetting bureaucracies with biographies. And this, I think, is where some of the "magic" lies in the scholarship produced by Liz Lanza and her MultiLing colleagues over the last decade or so.⁴

Betwixt bureaucracies and biographies – aka Learning from Liz

Across the allied fields within sociocultural linguistics, it is now widely accepted that *where* languages take place is crucial for their significance – their meaning and their effect. We likewise know that different ways of speaking do not always travel well, that their value ebbs and flows in unpredictable, often unfair ways. These "cartographies of power" (Massey 2005, 85) are always historical and embodied; they are, thus, matters of both sedimented and shifting positionalities. All of which comes to bear in – and to bear down on – the fleeting encounters, the little stories and tussles, of everyday life. This brings me to one more pit stop before I finish. Topographically speaking, this is a *very* different place than Switzerland. But, in cultural-political terms, perhaps not so different after all. It is a country which has held a special place in Liz Lanza and her MultiLing colleagues' work.

Long story short, I've been finishing off this piece while in South Africa. Specifically, I've been holed up in a village called Barrydale (Figure 10.4), about three hours' drive from Cape Town and with a population just over 4,000. I hope these snapshots help set the scene a little.⁵ This is somewhere I've been fortunate enough to get to know a little thanks to the generosity of close friends. Barrydale resonates with – and is still concretely structured by – old colonial and apartheid divisions. This manifests quite tangibly in its linguistic landscape where English and Afrikaans criss-cross. Afrikaans is in fact the preferred language of the village's Coloured residents who



Figure 10.4: Barrydale vignettes.

represent some 83% of the population; it is also the language preferred by nearly two-thirds of the White residents who constitute another 12% of the population. As such, English is very much a minority language, declared as a “first language” for less than 7% of the village’s residents. Like much of South Africa, English still functions as a powerful lingua franca, especially with so many out-of-town weekenders and other visitors to the village.

It is here, in Barrydale, that I’ve been reminded of the particularly joyful way that Afrikaans so often gets toyed and played with. Semiotic creativities are everywhere at work in and with space (cf. Thurlow 2019), hailing insiders and outsiders alike. In Barrydale, though, I’ve also rubbed up against another of my multilingual limitations, which are themselves part and parcel of bigger multilingual complications. These limitations-cum-complications are familiar to me from years spent living in the USA. There, for over a decade, I barely spoke Spanish given its fraught indexicalities in the mouths of White people like me (see Hill 1998). Rightly or wrongly, sensibly or not, I just never felt comfortable running the risk of sounding “mock.” Sixteen thousand kilometres from Seattle, and I find myself tangled up – and tongue-tied – in much the same predicament. Here in Barrydale, the Afrikaans I strove to learn in high school doesn’t quite withstand the test of time. Not for me anyway. Now, I’m not only White and also increasingly

foreign. Here in Barrydale, my early morning *goeie môre* (or just *môre*) greetings are usually returned in English. Or people get there first with *good morning*, perhaps reading off me over-nighter or weekender. More than this, though, I constantly worry about the risk of my rusty Afrikaans coming across as condescending.

In her book *The Multilingual Subject*, Claire Kramsch (2009) observes how our relationships with different ways of speaking are also unavoidably matters of memory and imagination. Once in love with Afrikaans, I cannot help but feel now that my attentions are either spurned or inappropriate. Of course, I try to allow for the complex way the big stories unavoidably texture my little stories. Projections of my own making or not, my Barrydale sensibilities and anxieties are just a part of my story. They speak, not only of my foibles and hang-ups, but also of my (privileged) mobilities and my own (relatively) complex biography. These are feelings, too, which emerge from deep within my historical body, which is itself bound up with my colonial inheritance.

In reading the chapters in this volume, I've been struck by an overriding concern for/with the in-the-body, on-the-ground cultural politics of multilingualism and language learning. Importantly, this is the politics – *le politique* – not simply of policies but also, and perhaps most importantly, of lives. And, as Robert Blackwood and Unn Røynealand remark in their introduction, the lived reality of multilingualism is invariably complicated, contradictory, and messy. It is the in-between space where most of us just have to get on with the often mucky business of speaking and writing. It is undoubtedly a place of endless negotiation and compromise. “Because we are not isolated monads,” says Claire Kramsch (2021, 198), “but social actors that depend on one another for symbolic survival, we are inevitably entangled or implicated in symbolic power struggles to be heard, recognized, respected by others.” For sure, it's complicated.

I have not only been struck by the chapters in this book, but often also touched and moved. First, I sense hope in the face of power. Seeking to denaturalize the language-body link, Raj Mesthrie, Toril Opsahl, and Unn Røynealand uphold the potential for people to creatively deploy their voices in speaking back to racists stereotypes and, thus, to (symbolic) power (Chapter 3). In this same spirit, it seems, Elana Shohamy and Alastair Pennycook write passionately about a pedagogy of activism and engagement – stopping just short of handing out spray cans (Chapter 2). All of which is why, argue Helen Kelly-Holmes and Li Wei, language policy-makers must do a better job of addressing the complex, uncertain circumstances of languages-in-contact (Chapter 1). The symbolic (and mercantile) power of language is made tangible in two chapters by Robert Blackwood, Janne Bondi Johannessen, and Binyam Sisay Mendisu (Chapter 6) and then Durk Gorter, Jasone Cenoz, and Karin van der Worp (Chapter 9), which both reveal the curious way that tacky snippets of language can effectively bond the lives of far-flung people.

Then there is the power of stories, big and small. To start, Anna De Fina, Anne Golden, and Ingebjørg Tonne testify to the tactical opportunities in everyday language for reasserting multilingual personhood; theirs is also a story about the power of storytelling (Chapter 4). Located in an epicentral space of vulnerability and power-in-action, Paweł Urbanik and Aneta Pavlenko demonstrate precisely how important it is to let people tell their own stories – in their own “imperfect” words (Chapter 5). Finally, Jannis Androutsopoulos and Ana Deumert stitch together two distant places, carefully attending to the on-the-ground materialities and around-the-body atmospheres of little spaces (Chapter 8). Although they write about other people’s practices, their chapter is shot through with a biographical (aka auto-ethnographic) sensibility in a way which dignifies the comings and goings of everyday life.

There is one other chapter I haven’t accounted for yet; I reserve a special space for it. Not because of my obvious interpersonal affiliations, but because it leads me rather nicely and quite literally to Liz Lanza. In their chapter, Adam Jaworski and Kellie Gonçalves take us to downtown Oslo where they/we encounter a spectacular *texturing*, a weaving together (cf. Ingold 2010, 92) of language and place: The public artwork *Ibsen Sitat* (Chapter 7). In Tim Ingold’s (2010) terms, the object of Jaworski and Gonçalves’s attention is the stuff of force fields; in this case, nationalism, democracy, literature, language, placemaking, and memory (or memorialization). The embedded word-things are merely trace elements. At the level of Oslo’s streets (admittedly the grander ones), we find the layering and mixing of grand narratives, literary tales, and personal stories. The artwork is simultaneously rendering the Norwegian nation state, giving voice to the lives of Ibsen’s characters, and revealing a little of the playwright’s own biography (quotes apparently form a trail from the Ibsen Museum to his favourite haunt). In many ways, though, the most interesting stories to be discovered are the ones being lived out and narrated by the pedestrians themselves. This is where the small stories and the big stories really meet.

This, as I say, leads me to Liz Lanza. For this, I will stick with Tim Ingold for a little longer. His intervention is one which takes as its starting point the work of artist Paul Klee, who is intimately connected to Bern, where I live. Ingold takes up Klee’s notebooks rather than his paintings, however. In these, Klee wrote that “form is the end, death” while “form-giving is life” –how the act of creation is as much about the process as it is the product. Creation is about the generative flowing of ideas and materials and, one assumes, words and bodies. It is a respect for form-giving which appears to have been key to Liz Lanza’s leadership of the MultiLing research center. Without detracting from her/their official achievements, the Center has clearly been a space where process has been valued as much as product or output. Relationships have been actively nurtured in the understanding that these relationships are what feed and nourish the work itself.

In my own fortunate encounters with MultiLing, I've always felt "seen", treated as a person with a story, not just an academic with a spiel. And MultiLing, under Liz Lanza's intellectual and pastoral leadership, has certainly been a place for so many junior and emerging scholars to find ways to meaningfully connect their lives and their work. It all takes a careful balancing act between bureaucracies and biographies, one which sits at the heart of MultiLing's own statement of purpose:

The Center's vision is to contribute to how society can deal with the opportunities and challenges of multilingualism through increased knowledge, promoting agency for individuals in society, and a better quality of life, no matter what linguistic and social background we have.

Key here is a recognition that multilingual scholarship sits precisely between the struggles of society at large – the big stories – and people's everyday struggles to find meaning – the little stories. And, just as the personal is always political, little stories always have within them the potential to tell big stories.

With all this said, I leave the last words to perhaps an odd coupling: Stuart Hall and Henrik Ibsen. In ventriloquizing them, I find a way to part on good terms with both hegemony and biography. These two writers have had an impact on different aspects of my own story: My academic life, and my former life as a would-be actor. Of course, Ibsen also keeps me neatly connected to Oslo, to Liz Lanza, and to the remarkably woman-friendly space that is MultiLing. It pleases me especially that Hall and Ibsen's voices are so filled with hope here. First, in his take on hegemony, Hall (2011, 727) allows for its contingencies and vulnerabilities, and therefore for its inescapable susceptibility to change. Meanwhile, from his bilingually produced *A Doll's House (Et dukkehjem)*, Ibsen ([1879] 1991, 1121) gives Nora a chance, in the final act, to speak back to power and, thus, to start telling her own story.

No project achieves a position of permanent "hegemony." It is a process, not a state of being. No victories are final.



HELMER: But this is monstrous! Can you neglect your most sacred duties?

NORA: What do you call my most sacred duties?

HELMER: Do I have to tell you? Your duties towards your husband, and your children.

NORA: I have another duty which is equally sacred.

HELMER: You have not. What on earth could that be?

NORA: My duty towards myself.

Acknowledgements

Image sources: Figure 10.1 Orderly Swissness (rights purchased from Adobe Photos); Figure 10.2 Symbolic violence in action (used with permission, Center for Accessible Living); Figure 10.3 Designing “universally” (used with permission, SG Enable). I offer thanks to Anne Marte Haug Olstad for her careful copy-editing of my initial draft.

Notes

- 1 Source: Swiss Federal Government’s “Discover Switzerland” English-language website: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/aboutswitzerland/en/home/gesellschaft/sp-rachen/mehrsprachigkeit.html>
- 2 For the record, the four “national languages” spoken regularly at home in Switzerland are: German (76%, mostly Swiss-German), French (39%), Italian (15%), and Romansh (0.9%).
- 3 Source: <https://www.noz.de/deutschland-welt/politik/artikel/2192637/sprache-st-fuer-zuwanderer-59-2-prozent-bestehen>
- 4 For anyone reading this essay “out of volume”, a record of Liz Lanza and her *MultiLing* colleagues’ scholarship can be found online here: <https://www.hf.uio.no/multiling/english/>
- 5 The three signs depicted in Figure 10.4 are rich with linguacultural significance. *Oppie Stoep* is first a rendition of “op die stoep” (on the verandah), thereby resonating nicely with the distinctive Western Cape (both Coloured and White) ways of speaking Afrikaans. *Oppie* itself also functions as a common nickname or/and as an abbreviation for *oupa* (grandpa). Mythologically, it calls to mind a well-known TV show, *Oupa en Ouma Sit op die Stoep*. Of course, sitting on the veranda watching life go by is a deeply enculturated index for small-town or village life. *Ruth 62* meanwhile is a perfect example of Scollon and Wong Scollon’s (2003) *emplacement*, only fully securing its meaning from its location alongside the provincial R62 road. It is, of course, a play on the famous Route 66, especially when styled visually as a shield. And then there’s *Life’s Bazaar* which I include partly because it always makes me smile. Life really is just wonderfully bizarre.

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