Sociolinguistic Variation in Urban Linguistic Landscapes

Edited by
Sofie Henricson, Väinö Syrjälä, Carla Bagna and Martina Bellinzona

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Table of Contents

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1. Introduction

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This book contributes to the multidisciplinary research field of linguistic landscape, henceforth LL, a field attracting increasing interest across countries as well as in various scientific disciplines such as linguistics, human geography and semiotics. It is a vibrant and steadily expanding research field, which is reflected in the many anthologies covering different topics and methodological approaches (e.g. Shohamy & Gorter 2009; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael & Barni 2010; Rubdy & Ben Said 2015; Blackwood, Lanza & Woldemariam 2016; Shohamy, Pütz & Mundt 2018). Previous LL research of special interest in this book includes but is not limited to the study of multilingualism and minority languages (e.g. Cenoz & Gorter 2006; Gorter 2006; Gorter, Marten & Mensel 2012; Hélot, Barni, Janssen & Bagna 2012), the omnipresence of English (e.g. Laitinen 2014; Lanza & Woldemariam 2014), and visibility of languages and ethnolinguistic vitality (e.g. Landry & Bourhis 1997; Barni & Bagna 2010; Vandenbroucke 2015), as well as papers offering theoretical and methodological reflections on LL research (e.g. Scollon & Scollon 2003; Spolsky 2009; Jaworski & Thurlow 2010; Barni & Bagna 2015; Blackwood 2015; Cresswell 2015; Gorter & Cenoz 2020).

LL is a relatively young research field that during the last decades has developed into an established field known by most linguists in the 2020s. Some studies in the 1970s and 1980s are often mentioned as early contributions to the field of linguistic landscape studies, but Landry & Bourhi's study from 1997 has however often been noted as a turning point, where after the field started growing exponentially. Today, in the early 2020s, LL is an established field that since 2015 has its own leading journal, *Linguistic Landscape: An international journal*, many sources describing its evolution and topical focal points (most recently Gorter & Cenoz 2023) and an extensive online bibliography (Troyer 2023) documenting its continuous expansion and growth. LL is a multidisciplinary field attracting not only linguists but also researchers in geography, sociology, economics and urban research, for example. Also within linguistics, which is the scope of the current volume, it informs research on a broad spectrum including sociolinguistics, language policy, multilingualism, contact linguistics, onomastics, language and gender studies, educational linguistics, and many other kinds of applied linguistics.

LL research nowadays incorporates a broad range of semiotic spaces, including but not restricted to buildings, tattoos, sounds and virtual spaces. Our prime focus

in this book is on physical urban spaces and their LLs but we approach these urban spaces through both physical and virtual data. Urban LLs include various publicly displayed signs ranging from official road signs, for example, to unofficial signs such as those authored by businesses or private individuals (e.g. Landry & Bourhis 1997; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006). Further, urban LLs also include unauthorised signs, such as graffiti on a park bench, placed in the public sphere without permission, or so-called transgressive signs (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Pennycook 2009). Unlike official signs authored by national or local authorities, LLs created by citizens are not as constricted by legislation and other regulations, nor do they necessarily adhere to linguistic policies or politically correct discourses.

More specifically, this book concerns urban LLs in different cities in northern and southern Europe (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Italy), and how they differ among urban areas with diverse profiles of linguistic and socioeconomic demographics, for example, or how they evolve as the city develops or in times of crisis. The common thread linking the chapters in this book is a mutual interest in sociolinguistic variation in the LLs of urban spaces. The authors approach this shared overarching interest by addressing a variety of questions, of which the following are central in all chapters:

– *How do different processes of the LLs create and reflect specific profiles and identities of urban districts?* This question is addressed by the chapters in this volume from different perspectives: in Chapter 2 from the point of view of the model reader, in Chapter 3 studying five urban centres in a multilingual Nordic region, in Chapter 4 with focus on names and place branding, in Chapter 5 through an analysis of activist discourses, in Chapter 6 from both a citizen and a researcher perspective, in Chapter 7 departing from commercial LLs of migration, in Chapter 8 exploring COVID-19 signscapes in two capital regions of the Nordic countries and in Chapter 9 by proposing a multifaceted methodological combination for the exploration of sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs.
– *What roles do different languages and discourses play in urban LLs?* The chapters discuss both highly monolingual (e.g. Chapter 2) and highly multilingual (e.g. Chapter 7) urban areas and touch upon a variety of central discourses highlighted in the urban districts in focus, such as commerciality (Chapter 3, Chapter 4, Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8), societal activism (Chapter 5), responsibility and solidarity (Chapter 7, Chapter 8). The universally present English language is included in the LLs of all the studied research sites but besides this common trait, the chapters discuss urban LLs with a diversity of languages and (im)balances between them. Chapter 3 further discusses the challenges of labelling signs of the urban LLs according to clearly demarcated categories of named languages.
– *How do urban LLs evolve in relation to the global and local society in which they are emplaced?* Both locally anchored and global societal changes in the LLs are explored in the chapters, including those related to urban planning and development processes (Chapter 2, Chapter 4), societal discourses (Chapter 5), tourism and migration (Chapter 6, Chapter 7), language contact (Chapter 3, Chapter 6) and the recent global COVID-19 pandemic (Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8).
– *Which theoretical concepts and methodological procedures have the potential to deepen understanding of sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs?* The chapters

9

included in this volume offer sophisticated and novel ways of approaching urban LLs from different perspectives that are adapted to the specific aims and contexts of each study. This includes both different ways of doing survey area selection and defining the unit of analysis as well as a variety of conceptual frameworks and methodological tools. Further, the studies presented in this volume give concrete examples on how research adapts to societal changes by developing new methods for survey area selection or data collection during the pandemic, for example (see Chapter 2, Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8).

A shared point of departure for all chapters is the sociolinguistic premise that variation in language use is not random. On the contrary, linguistic variation has both linguistic and social connotations. How LLs reflect and create sociolinguistic, societal and urban dynamics and how these relations can be scientifically explored is thus the main concern throughout the book.

1.1 Sociolinguistic Variation in Complex and Changing Urban Contexts

The departure point of this book is an interest in language in society and how language and discourse vary in relation to factors such as the geographical and temporal emplacement of signs in physical urban spaces. This approach links the study of urban LLs to a sociolinguistic interest in language variation related to regional or social indexes (i.e. dialects and sociolects). The main conceptual framework on which this study of variation in urban LLs is based is thus the societal rather than the individual level. We focus on LLs in specific European cities and investigate questions such as the profiles of different urban districts in terms of linguistic diversity, societal discourses or urban identity, for example. An interest in urban variation does not necessarily exclude sensitivity to individual and situational variation, however, which is highlighted in studies focusing on readers of signs in specific areas, or departing from citizen perspectives on urban mapping, or including analyses of language use both on social media platforms and on physical signs in urban LLs.

LL studies have been criticised at times for the haphazard selection of survey areas (see e.g. Blackwood 2015). Nowadays, therefore, there is increasing awareness of the need for the deliberate selection of a survey area as well as for inspiring examples of how this is done in practice (see e.g. Soukup 2020). As the chapters in this book illustrate, it can be done in a multitude of carefully considered ways, from handpicking urban areas of specific interest to allowing tools from human geography to guide the selection, dictated by the specific research questions posed at the LL. In terms of concrete possibilities, however, survey areas vary considerably from one study to another. For example, different countries and municipalities have different ways of categorising and registering their populations according to basic sociolinguistic parameters such as first language or ethnolinguistic origin. This complexity underpins most LL studies and gives the study of each local context its specific set of given background data, although there is seldom time or space to reflect in detail on the biases this is bound to create.

The need for and the relevance of measurable and exact parameters when choosing specific survey areas further varies depending on the focus and methodological basis

10

of the study, and in this respect the chapters of this book offer a range of equally valid but inherently different approaches. Comparative mappings of different urban profiles need a solid base on which to quantify language use and multilingualism, whereas ongoing processes and the constantly evolving shapes of urbanity might be better grasped through ethnographic approaches (as Blommaert & Maly 2016 argue, for example) and an emphasis on qualitative rather than quantitative analysis. As shown by many studies in this volume, mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches can offer further nuances to these analyses.

1.2 Global Processes in Situated Localities

Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness and synchronisation in different parts of the world and among the people in it in fields such as culture, economics and politics (see e.g. Coupland 2013). It is a seemingly ever-accelerating process with a global reach to which only the most privileged societies and individuals have primary access, and the means to exploit it (e.g. Blommaert 2010; Mufwene 2013). In linguistics contexts, in turn, globalisation is often discussed in terms of how a dominant culture or language spreads globally and hence intrudes on other more locally restricted cultures and languages, the main focus naturally being on the spread of English (for critical perspectives and overviews, see e.g. Pennycook 1994; Mufwene 2013; Sharifian 2016). The scientific discussion on globalisation and language nevertheless developed from an initial perspective on the global spread of English as a strictly homogenising and subduing process to a closer examination of the heterogeneous ways in which local communities adapt to global processes and forces and make them their own (see e.g. Robertson 2012; Mufwene 2013).

Examples of current global processes affecting and evolving in dialogue with local urban LLs around the world include migration, gentrification and segregation. Another recent case in point that arose suddenly is the COVID-19 pandemic, which illustrates the rapidity of global spread due to high-speed transport systems, as well as how local societies adapt to and address this joint threat within their specific cultural, economic and political frameworks (for topical papers, see Lou, Malinowski & Peck 2022). Indeed, the course of the pandemic and different responses to it, from lockdowns in Italy to a more recommendations based strategy in Sweden left different kinds of marks on LLs and highlighted how public signs can reflect and be used in order to influence societal phenomena. This impact the pandemic has had on LL research as well as societies in large is visible in several of the chapters in this book. Overall, the current book thus offers insights into how different kinds of global processes are reflected in and adapt to the local LLs of northern and southern Europe, and hence into how the glocalisation of globalisation is transmitted in a selection of urban LLs.

The analyses of global processes in local urban LLs presented in the chapters of this book depart from the significance of emplacement (Scollon & Scollon 2003), meaning where the LLs and their individual signs are situated. In this sense, one should consider both temporal emplacement, such as during the different phases of the pandemic, as well as emplacement in a certain part of the world (e.g. Europe, Scandinavia, or Stockholm) or specific localities within larger urban contexts, such as different city districts. The point is not to establish a clear dichotomy between global

11

processes and their local implications, or between patterns in the LLs of southern and northern Europe, or even between Finland and Sweden. The overarching aim is rather to enhance understanding of the intertwined and multifaceted connections between globality and locality by zooming in and out on the different levels of globalisation and glocalisation.

1.3 Inclusion and Exclusion

Although the signs of urban LLs are publicly displayed, not everyone has a voice in this public discursive arena, hence access as an author tends to be restricted to specific official and private actors. LLs frequently split into two main strata based on the authors: a formal level including so-called *top-down signs* authored by authorities, and an informal level including so-called *bottom-up signs* authored by private actors (see e.g. Ben-Rafael et al. 2006). However, this is not a simple official-private dichotomy: the signs rather reflect a complex network of semiotic spaces (public and private) and discourses (e.g. regulatory, infrastructural, commercial and transgressive) on which the urban LL is built (see Scollon & Scollon 2003; Kallen 2010). Let us briefly summarise some broad categories of signs within the LL to shed light on how this is expressed as sociolinguistic variation.

Top-down signs adhere to official rules and recommendations concerning choice of language, for example, and hence usually reflect official language and other policies of the state, the municipality or some other authority. The authors of bottom-up signs, in turn, obviously have to adhere to certain regulations concerning where a sign can be displayed, and so on, but in many cases they have more freedom in matters such as language choice. They thus have more options in terms of reflecting their own perspectives on the signs, of which many are commercial, adjusting the messages to the surrounding society and locally important minority groups, or specifically targeting customers and thereby fulfilling their intended (commercial) functions. Urban LLs also contain signs that in their very existence protest against regulations covering publicly displayed signage. In that they are displayed in a public urban space without permission, these transgressive signs break the rules of the urban LL.

All these different signs in combination contribute to how the 'sense of a place' (see Cresswell 2015) is created and experienced. The LL of a city or an urban district reflects the intended occupants of the public space, as well as the functions and activities that characterise it. Which ingroups and outgroups are created in the LL? Which inhabitants of the city are included in the urban LL by having their languages publicly displayed, for example, and on the contrary, which languages are made publicly invisible and hence restricted to private domains (see Löfdahl et al. 2022)? Do the inhabitants of a city centre dominated by hotel, restaurant and other tourist signs in universal English, in which supermarket signs in the local language are sparse, feel as included and welcome as visiting tourists in this public urban space? How does the discursive atmosphere change if the central station abounds with hate-filled messages telling immigrants to go home, or if it is dominated by signs signalling the opposite, explicitly welcoming migrants and their families?

It is not only the LL of a city or district overall, but also single signs that might, in one way or another, include some readers and exclude others. Inclusion or exclusion

may be signalled on many levels, such as by addressing specific persons (e.g. *dear customer*) or in the extreme case of hate messages explicitly excluding specific groups from the urban collective. The choice of language is a form of inclusion or exclusion that is integrated into all signs, however, although the language is not always the main channel of communication, or as easily definable as one might think. A monolingual sign includes all readers of the specific language and excludes all others; a non-verbal sign containing only a masked face, on the other hand, potentially addresses readers of any language and in any age group. Multilingual signs might be polyphonic, perhaps including some languages merely as symbolic of identity or internationality, for example, or they might be homophonic, giving all information in parallel in more than one language and thus including readers of all the selected languages (for categories of signs regarding kinds of multilingualism, see e.g. Reh 2004; Backhaus 2007). The choice of language on signs in urban spaces is also a question of accessibility, as shown in studies on how easy it is for someone who does not know the local language(s) or English to become oriented in a city (Hellén 2019).

1.4 Methodological Diversity and the Challenges of Comparison

The field of LL is notoriously multidisciplinary, multi-conceptual and multimethodological. It is a research field that attracts scientists from various fields employing a broad range of data sets, methodological tools and conceptual lenses. This is underscored in the all-embracing presentation in the leading journal in the field, namely *Linguistic Landscape. An international journal* (2022), referring to its interest in 'multiple forms of 'languages'' and an openness to 'all research methodologies'. This declared open approach is further illustrated in the multifaceted phenomena covered by the articles published in the journal, including but not limited to different kinds of linguistic signs, tattoos (Peck & Stroud 2015), smells (Pennycook & Otsuji 2015) and monuments (Huebner & Phoocharoensil 2017).

The multifaceted nature of and the open-mindedness in the field of LL studies are also reflected in this book, which comprises linguistic studies that are united by a joint interest in sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs but depart from various conceptual frameworks such as 'the model reader', 'affective regime' and 'legitimation'. Methodological and theoretical reflections are core issues in all chapters. These include measured procedures for survey area selection and data collection as well as defining the unit of analysis and choosing adequate analytical approaches and conceptual tools. The studies use various methodologies, representing quantitative and qualitative as well as inductive and deductive approaches, and various data sets such as the documentation of visual and virtual signs, focus-group discussions, interviews, census data and language use in both physical and virtual surroundings. The variety within the book thus reflects the nature of this particular research field and develops it with novel approaches. Further, the studies presented in this volume highlight and exemplify the importance of designing each study carefully in accordance with its specific goals and research questions.

Each study reported in this book is intended primarily to speak for itself underneath the umbrella of a specific joint research interest, although there are numerous junction points between the chapters. All in all, the studies pave the way for

comparative reflection and future comparative projects, but do not per se offer a basis on which to draw direct comparative conclusions. Conducting clear-cut comparative studies of LLs in different urban contexts is a complex and challenging endeavour, not least because different locations are embedded in specific societal settings that vary in aspects such as language policy and regulations covering signs in public places.

1.5 Perspectives on Sociolinguistic Variation in Urban Linguistic Landscapes

The present book consists of this introduction and eight chapters, each of which explores sociolinguistic variation and societal discourses in the LLs of four different countries and a diversity of urban contexts, namely Copenhagen, Florence, Helsinki, Jokkmokk, Kramfors, Milan, Pajala, Sorsele, Stockholm and Umeå. The selection of urban areas offers a geographical range from northern to southern Europe and includes both smaller towns and bigger cities, as well as central and peripheral districts within them. This variety offers a multifaceted empirical basis for the theoretical and methodological reflections on how sociolinguistic variation in different kinds of urban LLs can be explored. Many LL studies focus on high-density districts with a lot of signs and a lot of potential multilingualism, whereas several chapters in this book represent a more holistic view on urban space, including new development areas as well as peripheral and even rural parts of the city. Thereby, they broaden current views of what is normally studied within research on the LL as a collective urban space. The chapters offer new insights into the LLs of the cities in focus, and in combination they create a basis for comparative reflection as well as conceptual development in future studies.

The second chapter starts the journey through the urban LLs of a selection of European cities with an endeavour to apply Umberto Eco's concept of the model reader to LL studies. It explores language use and the intended audience of signs in Stockholm's nature reserves, with a focus on the addressees. Simultaneously, it offers insights into an urban sphere that has not attracted much attention in previous studies of urban LLs. The case study, which is based on data collected from the fringes of Sweden's capital city, opens up stimulating paths for the further study of both the sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs and the (perceived) use of different urban spaces.

The third chapter highlights the linguistic creativity found in the LL of five urban centres in Northern Sweden, with a particular focus on hybrid word forms discussed from the perspective of language contact. These hybrids most commonly appear on commercial signs and draw on both global and local sources, although at times resulting in a mixture that only makes sense to local readers. The chapter illustrates the challenges faced by many field researchers engaged in the detailed linguistic coding of items in urban LLs.

The fourth chapter analyses the LLs of two developing districts of Copenhagen in Denmark. The chapter focuses on the visibility of signs and takes a holistically qualitative approach to how the LL contributes to the identity of a place. It is a question of zooming in on the sense of place and a place's identity as experienced during a stroll around the districts, while also considering urban onomastics. The chapter highlights the changing and evolving urbanity, ending with a discussion about

the processes and actors behind the conscious branding and identity construction of new urban areas.

The fifth chapter explores underground activist layers of the LLs in urban districts of the Finnish capital, Helsinki, from a discourse analytic and sociolinguistic perspective. The study combines an interest in the discursive and linguistic properties of societal stance taking in the transgressive layers of urban LLs in an attempt to map the profiles of activist LLs in different urban districts. The results reveal tendencies that hold across different districts, as well as differences related to linguistic and socioeconomic variation in urban space.

The focus in the sixth chapter is on the characteristics and the identity of different districts of Florence and their LLs, with a special interest in multilingualism, the global COVID-19 crisis and the urban process of touristification. The analysis is based on citizens' perceptions of the urban districts and their LLs, as well as on the researchers' documentation of signs in selected districts. The findings reveal how the LL of an urban district reflect its identity, and how global processes materialise in the local urban space.

The seventh chapter explores the constantly evolving LLs of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the commercial LL of migration in Milan. The analysis is based on multifaceted data including both offline and online signscapes, and the results show how the LL becomes sensitive to the different phases of the pandemic. Through the notion of affective regimes and taking an ethnographic approach focusing on Spanish-speaking communities from Latin American countries, the authors illustrate how the commercial LLs of Milan's migratory communities emphasised responsibility and solidarity during the crisis caused by the pandemic.

How the critical stages of the pandemic were reflected in urban LLs is also in focus in the eighth chapter, which presents a study of crisis communication through unofficial signs in Helsinki and Stockholm. The discussion is about how different rules and recommendations were communicated and legitimised on unofficial signs in the signscapes of both Finland and Sweden. Based on a combination of sociosemiotics, discourse analysis and translation studies, the study gives insights into the role of unofficial signage in the dissemination of crisis communication, and how moral evaluation, rationalisation and authorisation are used as legitimation strategies in transmitting official COVID-19 regulations among the unofficial layers of urban LLs.

The book concludes with a chapter that draws insights from sociolinguistics, digital humanities and human geography in suggesting a multidisciplinary and methodologically sophisticated approach to the linguistic diversity of urban LLs. The methodological mixture the authors propose departs from both virtual and physical LL data as well as census data, and it combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Paying special attention to the level of linguistic diversity and based on a case study from Helsinki, Finland, the authors propose a systematic procedure for the selection of focus areas and of the in-depth study or urban LLs.

The combined picture the chapters in this book present enhances understanding of the challenges and opportunities included in the study of sociolinguistic variation in urban LLs, and hence contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of the field. In that the chapters take different approaches to the study of sociolinguistic variation in LLs, the book is also useful in providing methodological guidance in the field.

15

1.6 An Overview for Scholars

The book has the dual objective of addressing scholars and researchers involved in urban sociolinguistics and offering insights to those wishing to approach the subject from an LL perspective. It also offers interesting suggestions to people involved in language planning and policy reflection, as well as for those who intend to engage in urban redevelopment planning. Consequently, the book will be of use to Master's students, scholars and researchers representing different disciplines.

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17

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2. Unofficial Signs and their Model Readers on the Fringes of the City

The Linguistic Landscapes of Stockholm's Nature Reserves

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Most studies on linguistic landscapes have focused on multilingual urban areas, sometimes based on the explicit argument that these are areas where (especially commercial) linguistic signs are most frequent (cf. Gorter 2014: 1, 3) – and thus where linguistic practices are the most interesting to discuss. However, there are also areas on the fringes of cities with few public signs that can still be of interest as functional parts of the city. My aim in this chapter is to explore one type of peripheral linguistic landscape (LL), namely that found in nature reserves on the edges of Stockholm, Sweden. These areas could be considered 'non-places' of a kind, lacking a real, distinctive identity compared to different residential areas of the city, for example. At the same time, nature reserves are venues for recreation, thus serving an important function for the people of the city (not to mention the biological diversity and other environmental factors). Furthermore, the use of nearby nature areas peaked during the COVID-19 pandemic. This added to the interest for these areas with, and the importance of their LL to, both the general public and researchers looking to discuss sociolinguistic variation (see Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 in this volume for ways of adapting the research design and the data collection to the pandemic).

Nature reserves cannot really be said to fit within the typical context of LL studies (if one could define such a context; cf. Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke & Blackwood 2016: 423–424): practically none of the LL items mentioned in some of the most commonly cited definitions (e.g. Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25) are to be found in the nature reserves. They have no official buildings as such, nor advertising billboards, and very few road signs; only place names are frequent in these specific LLs. However, as I discuss in more detail in the following analysis, there is still a variety of messages to be found among the few linguistic items that are present. These include both official, *top-down* signage and unofficial, *bottom-up* items (see e.g. Puzey 2016: 401). Furthermore, the LLs of the nature reserves in focus in the present study are highly monolingual (which I also discuss in detail below). Not all of the research questions and analytical tools applied in previous LL studies are useful here, and in some ways, therefore, this study is situated at the crossroads of LL studies and text-analytic studies (see e.g. Nord 2017). The visual language in public spaces is an interesting question regardless of any explicit linguistic diversity. Hence, the present setting offers an interesting opportunity to test new theoretical approaches to the role of language use

in public spaces – or in understanding *places* (cf. Scollon & Scollon 2003; Cresswell 2015) and the peoples inhabiting and/or using them.

The aim of the study is to describe the kind of LLs that are to be found in the urban peripheries of Stockholm's nature reserves. The qualitative analyses focus on two research questions:

1) What kind of language use is visible in this type of LL?
2) Who comprise the intended audiences of the signs, in other words the imagined users of the places in question?

Thus, the purpose is not merely to describe the LL; above all, it is to discuss what it reveals about the specific places and the people using them. To this end, I introduce the theoretical concept of *the model reader* (Eco 1979; 1994) into the study of LLs as a novel approach to enhance understanding, beyond language choice, of the signs' potential interlocutors.

In the following sections I discuss some previous studies taking different perspectives on the readers of signs in the LL, before introducing the concept of the model reader in more detail. Next, I introduce the present case study, presenting the research areas and the data set, and giving some methodological remarks. After giving a general overview of the LLs in question, I present more detailed results of the qualitative analysis (of the model readers), with a focus on a selection of unofficial signs. In conclusion, I initiate a more general discussion on the theoretical and methodological implications of the model reader as a concept, and its potential in the context of further LL studies.

2.1 Background

Covering a variety of topics (see e.g., Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke & Blackwood 2016: 427–439), previous studies of LLs refer in various ways to those interacting with and targeted by the visible use of language in public spaces. Already Landry & Bourhis (1997) focused on the perceptions of language users rather than on describing the LL in itself. Collins & Slembrouck (2007) discuss multilingual shop fronts from the perspective of literacy, whereas others such as Reh (2004) and Juffermans & Coppoolse (2012) assume the reader's perspective to gain more insight into the functions of multilingual and multimodal LLs. Readers have also been engaged in the growing number of studies adopting ethnographic approaches, Garvin (2010) being one example.

However, details of the audiences of specific signs, and by extension the (imagined) users and/or inhabitants of the places, have been overlooked to some degree. In other words, the analyses in most studies focus on the types of multilingualism found, the visibility of the different language groups (be they minority languages, or in the context of other language-policy issues), or the perspective of the authors of the signs (e.g. the very definitions of *top-down* and *bottom-up* flows). Some interesting remarks on audiences are still to be found, however. Berezkina (2016: 127), for example, notes how the use of immigrant languages in Oslo is limited to unofficial signs targeting those specific language communities. Similarly, Woldemariam & Lanza (2015) discuss the function of the LL as a marker of imagined community among the Ethiopian

diaspora. In general, the LL could contribute to the creation of a specific sense of place. Stjernholm (2015) compares two distinctive areas of Oslo and suggests that the differences in commercial signage could be interpreted as expressions of difference in the expected customers present in the areas. *Sense of place*, as a notion, could relate even more closely to the audiences of signs: in Syrjälä (2022), for example, I discuss the question of whose place is reflected in the signs in the context of the Stockholm archipelago and its permanent residents and visitors.

With regard to the LL in itself, some aspects of unofficial signs observed in previous studies should be considered in comparison with the present case study. Muth (2014) discusses signs produced by private individuals found all over the city of Chisinau. Such signs advertise events, services and so on, or express political opinions. The choice of language may well be tied to the potential audiences (Muth 2014: 35–38), although (at least in Muth's description) specific readers are only hinted at between the lines. In another example, Zhang (2016) connects the choice of language on posters advertising cultural and sporting events in Macao not only with authors and audiences, but also with different discourses. More transgressive signs may also be of interest, as illustrated in Reershemius's (2019) discussion on stickers as communicative events. Reershemius (2019: 623) also raises various questions that should be of interest in connection with all unofficial signage: where the communication takes place, who uses stickers and for what purposes, and which discourses are mediated. The agency behind the stickers is often anonymous (Reershemius 2019: 630, see also Chapter 5 in this volume), which in turn means that the signs might not contain explicit clues as to the identity of the specific, intended reader. In a later work and in the context of rural settings, Reershemius (2021) notes how different transgressive signs can become quite salient in an otherwise sparse landscape.

Bulletin boards represent a specific venue within the LL in which a variety of authors may communicate directly with different audiences. Kullenberg et al. (2018) studied Swedish bulletin boards, adopting a citizen-science approach to collecting data from around the country. Their analysis reveals some interesting findings: invitations to various events and buy-and-sell ads were the most common texts on the bulletin boards. Most notices were authored by various local associations, and about half were professionally printed (Kullenberg et al. 2018: 10–12). As a more general conclusion, the authors point out that bulletin boards are to be found in locations with the potential for local meaning-making, thus many notices concern something relevant in close proximity to the bulletin board. All these observations could be considered added context for my analysis presented below.

The LL, like the bulletin board, is one specific context in which texts appear and could draw part of their meaning from the emplacement itself (cf. Scollon & Scollon 2003). More text-analytic studies could therefore also feature LL as a data source. Nord (2017), for example, discusses a university building as a textual landscape (*textlandskap*), looking at all kinds of texts found in this specific space. More specifically, Nord (2017: 72) uses the landscape as a starting point from which to discuss the kind of text-assemblage points that exist within this space, what functions the different texts have, and who the senders behind them are: all these questions are relevant in both LL and text-analytic research. In particular, the notion of text-assemblage points could facilitate description of how the LL is organised; Nord (2017: 75–76) identifies examples such as bulletin boards, shelves and monitors. The

non-existence of commercial and genuinely private texts in the landscape in question is also interesting, yet not so surprising in that the functions of the texts are tied to the place (Nord 2017: 83).

Drawing from all these examples, I see the nature reserves in focus for the present study as their own specific kind of textual landscape. The majority of the studies mentioned have multilingual settings, focusing first and foremost on the use of different languages – and then on the audiences of the LL. My approach in this chapter is novel, however: I consider the unofficial signs placed in the LL with a specific focus on their presupposed readers. In the following section, therefore, I introduce the key concept of the model reader.

2.2 The Model Reader

Referring to the audience – or readers – of signs in the LL, already Tulp (1978: 273) noted that their very placement in public spaces meant that anyone could (consciously or unconsciously) read the texts. Nevertheless, individual signs may have more specific target audiences, having been created and posted by their authors for specific purposes. This compares with what Eco (1994: 8–9) notes on the role of readers of texts in general: we are all potential readers of any given text, but the author tries to engage with a specific type of reader, evidence of which is to be found within the text. It is the concept of this implied reader that Eco (1979: 7), drawing from a wide range of semiotic and philosophical theories, presents as *the model reader*.

If one is to understand and exploit the concept of the model reader, one needs to consider texts as inherently dialogical, as part of a process between a sender and a reader, embedded in a cultural and situational context (Björkvall 2013: 23). To make it work, the author of a text – or indeed a sign in the LL – thus needs to foresee the possible and desired recipient, in other words the model reader (Eco 1979: 7). On the basic level, the author must choose a linguistic code to be shared with the intended reader, as LL scholars have also noted (see also Chapter 3 in this volume). Public signs obviously need to be understood to be functional. Spolsky (2009: 33), for example, discusses the 'presumed reader's condition', whereby the author's choice of language is adjusted to the perceived audience of the sign. Given that most texts are intended not only to be understood (e.g., advertisements are meant to sell something and thus presuppose a type of consumer as a reader; Björkvall 2013: 24), further textual strategies and characteristics of the model reader should be considered.

It is worth noting that the model reader is not the same as the *empirical reader*. According to Eco (1994: 8), the *empirical reader* is 'you, me, anyone, when we read a text', who may interpret it in many different ways, influenced both by the text itself but also by factors beyond it. Thus, empirical readers do not have to read according to the author's intentions for a model reader (Björkvall 2013: 25). The model reader, in turn, is an ideal collaborator that the text itself tries to create (Eco 1994: 9). Concerning himself mainly with literature (i.e. fiction), Eco gives an illustrative example:

> If a text begins with "Once upon a time", it sends out a signal that immediately enables it to select its own model reader, who must be a child, or at least somebody willing to accept something that goes beyond the commonsensical and reasonable. (Eco 1994: 9).

23

The author behind the text, then, uses different textual strategies and genre signals to steer the reader in a specific direction, in other words creating a specific model reader who is willing to accept the aims of the text (see Eco 1979: 7; 1994: 10; Björkvall 2013: 24).

The model reader, who is both presupposed by the text and constructed within it (Eco 1979: 8), can be revealed in the process of reading; applying the concept as an interpretative strategy therefore necessities a pragmatic approach (Eco 1979: 206; 1994: 24). In addition to discussing the choice of linguistic code, Eco (1979: 7) describes how literary style and specialisation give general clues to the model reader. The texts could also yield more detailed information about the presupposed reader, perhaps naming a specific addressee. In most cases, however, this is done using highly ambiguous signals infused in the text (see Eco 1979: 10), leaving room for interpretation in a qualitative analysis – and a need to consider aspects surrounding the text. Even Collins & Slembrouck (2007: 336) point out that producing and interpreting texts are practices whereby the text and its context become intertwined.

Björkvall (2013) raises some further points to be considered regarding the model reader of a text. First, the difference between the target audience and the model reader needs to be clarified. Defining the more general target audience entails simplifying the attributes of the preferred *empirical readers* of the text, whereas as discussed above, the model reader is the intended reader embedded in the text itself (Björkvall 2013: 27). Second, it should be decided whether or not there is only one model reader of a text. There may be many or few *empirical readers,* of course – cf. the points about audiences of the LL at the beginning of this section. The model reader, on the other hand, is not a real person, even if presented and constructed as such, but is rather a synthesis of different roles constructed in the text and thus potentially complex and multifaceted (Björkvall 2013: 27–28).

To summarise, the model reader is different from other types of reader in being constructed within the text and thus closely linked to the intentions of the author. This can be seen in previous research applying the concept. Jaakola et al. (2014), for example, discuss the aims of journalists by comparing the construction of readers within the editorial process and in the final texts, and Björkvall (2013) analyses multimodal, commercial texts, namely Swedish advertisements aimed at different age groups. In a further application to items found in the LL, as in the present study, identifying the model reader could reveal more about who the (perceived) users of a place are. At the same time, it should be noted that some compromises have to be made with such an application. On the one hand, not every sign in the LL consists of complex texts, therefore offering little in the way of clues constructing a specific model reader – if one can be found at all. On the other hand, it is not viable to define the specific model readers of every sign included in a larger data set (cf. other challenges of quantitative approaches to LL discussed in Blackwood 2015: 41). I discuss the implications of this regarding the methodology of the present study in the following section.

2.3 Research Areas and Methodological Remarks

As mentioned above, this case study concerns the LLs of nature reserves situated in Stockholm. The data were collected in two research areas (i.e. two nature reserves), namely *Älvsjöskogen* in the south of the city[1] and the large *Nackareservatet* towards the southeast on the border of Stockholm and Nacka municipalities[2]. I collected the data in August 2021 on a walk through each nature reserve, during which I photographed all signs with text on them: the data set comprised 208 signs in total. Most (approximately 77%) of these signs were official (i.e. *top-down*), such as information boards with maps and signposts with place names. There was also a limited number of unofficial (i.e. *bottom-up*) signs, such as stickers and small notices, which constitute the main data for the analysis. Given the aims of the study, I excluded non-verbal signs (containing only symbols or images) and illegible graffiti. I describe the different types of signs, the languages used and other relevant characteristics in more detail in connection with the first part of the results reported in the following section.

Although it might seem counter-intuitive at first, the fact that I found only a small number of signs in the LLs in question does not make them less interesting as a research object – quite the opposite. Given the fewer signs overall, those that are placed in the landscape potentially attract more attention. From a methodological perspective, the small number of signs also allows for the natural selection of specific signs for closer analysis. Furthermore, the specific nature reserves allow for easier identification of potential model readers, it being relatively easy to imagine the kind of people who might be found there. Thus, a data set of the kind analysed in this chapter is ideal for a pilot study to test the application of the theoretical concepts presented above, while also giving insights into linguistic and textual practices in the sparser LLs found on the fringes of the city.

For the purpose of the discussion on model reader*s*, I chose a sample of signs from the aforementioned data set for closer analysis. First, I considered all unofficial signs, in other words those not placed in the landscape by city authorities, then from among these I identified various notices (home-made or semi-professionally produced) as the most interesting textual items. I collected 30 of these signs from the two nature reserves, which had more complex texts than the other unofficial signs in the data set (small stickers, graffiti). They were also purposefully placed in the specific locations (as discussed in the analysis below). Therefore, specific model readers, tied to the specific places, may (potentially) be constructed on these signs.

As an example of methodology for the search of model readers, Björkvall (2013) conducted in his study of Swedish advertisements a detailed and multifaceted text analysis. Drawing from systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday 2014), he considered categories such as the composition of the multimodal texts, the ideational meanings, interpersonal functions and recontextualizations (Björkvall 2013: 53–56). Björkvall (2013: 56) also argues that a detailed analysis helps to minimise the effect of the gaze of an *empirical reader*, in other words the subjective interpretations of the researcher.

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1. For information about *Älvsjöskogen*, see: https://parker.stockholm/naturreservat/alvsjoskogen/.
2. For information about *Nackareservatet*, see: https://parker.stockholm/naturreservat/nackareservatet/.

Such detailed analysis works with a limited number of texts, and although a similar approach to the signs in the LL would be ideal, it would easily become overwhelming. Therefore, a compromise between an in-depth analysis of specific texts (signs) and a broader analytical perspective on the LL as a whole has to be found – even when dealing with a sample of limited size, as is the case here.

Given the aim of the present case study to function primarily as a study of the LL and not purely as a text analysis of material collected from public spaces, a more flexible close reading (see Björkvall 2013: 56) was considered a passable solution. This would allow the focus to remain on the larger number of linguistic items observed in the nature reserves as a whole, as well as for a discussion of the specific model readers found on signs that function as illustrative examples in accordance with the stated aims of the study. It would then be possible in further analyses to build a more detailed picture of the selected model readers in a closer, systematic analysis of specific signs, and/or to broaden the discussion by considering further examples from other categories of signs or other types of LLs.

In light of these methodological considerations, the results of the present case study are reported in the next section as follows. First, I offer a general description of the LLs as a whole, including the types of signs found as well as the use of different languages. This addresses the first research question and provides a context for the more in-depth examples. Second, I discuss illustrative examples of unofficial notices from each nature reserve in turn to be able to identify the characteristics of them as distinctive places that might emerge through the model readers. Here I will be considering the themes presented on the signs and the extent to which a specific reader is addressed, as well as making other general observations on the idea of a model reader.

2.4 Results

As I hinted in the introduction – and as one might expect in a nature reserve – the LLs in the chosen research areas were relatively sparse in terms of signs. Most were in specific locations (as in the text-assemblage points mentioned above), such as at the entrances to the nature reserves, at larger intersections of walking trails and by an outdoor gym. Naturally there were also additional signs situated randomly in the nature reserves, such as stickers placed on lampposts or signposts at smaller crossings. Nevertheless, it was still possible to walk hundreds of metres in the reserves without observing any linguistic items.

I collected a total of 208 signs from the two nature reserves. On a walk round the exercise track forming a loop around most of the Älvsjöskogen nature reserve I found 98 signs, of which 77 were categorised as official and 21 as unofficial. Similarly, I observed 110 signs in Nackareservatet on a walk across the reserve from Dammtorp to Björkhagen. Of these, 84 were official and 26 were unofficial. Table 1 below gives the number of signs as well as information about the languages used in the official and unofficial signs, respectively.

Table 1. The numbers of signs in the two nature reserves and the languages used

	Älvsjöskogen	Nackareservatet	Total
Official signs	77 (79%)	84 (76%)	161 (77%)
Swedish only	*64*	*73*	*137*
English only	*9*	*0*	*9*
Swedish and English	*3*	*8*	*11*
Swedish, English and additional language(s)	*1*	*3*	*4*
Unofficial signs	21 (21%)	26 (24%)	47 (23%)
Swedish only	*15*	*24*	*39*
English only	*4*	*1*	*5*
Swedish and English	*2*	*1*	*3*
Swedish, English and additional language(s)	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total	**98 (100%)**	**110 (100%)**	**208 (100%)**

Another key characteristic of the LLs in question mentioned in the introduction, which is quite apparent in the data presented in Table 1, is their highly monolingual nature. Most of the signs found in the nature reserves were only in Swedish: 79 signs in total (64 official and 15 unofficial) in Älvsjöskogen and 97 signs (73 official and 24 unofficial) in Nackareservatet. This result is not surprising, given what is known about other specific LLs in Sweden (see e.g. Bylin & Spetz 2019). English is the only other language found by itself, on 13 signs in Älvsjöskogen and on one sign in Nackareservatet. These include random stickers (commented on below), and small signs with visual instructions for using outdoor gym equipment, in which a picture is coupled with an English name (e.g. *Dip'n'fly, Dip bar*).

English is also used on bilingual signs together with Swedish, specifically on maps and the information boards of the nature reserves in which at least part of the Swedish content is given in English as well. Thus, multilingualism in these LLs (see Reh 2004) is both duplicating (on simpler signs) and fragmentary (on more complex informational signs), but also complementary in some cases when an English name or slogan is used in an otherwise Swedish-language notice. Further multilingual signs are easily counted. One sign in Älvsjöskogen has writing in Chinese as well as in Swedish and English: it is a small sign with the words 'Error report' in three languages and contact information, placed on a waste bin. The same type of bin is visible in areas in the centre of the city that are more tourist-heavy, but why only and specifically Chinese is used as additional language is unclear. Two identical signs in Nackareservatet stating that 'dogs must always be kept on a lead in the reserve' include the key phrase in German in addition to Swedish and English. Finally, one additional sign also found in Nackareservatet concerning the need for a fishing licence is written in four languages: Swedish, English, German and Polish.

Official signs, which comprise the majority of signs from the two nature reserves, all relate closely to the physical environment in which they are placed (cf. Scollon & Scollon 2003: 146, 181–187). They are also of the type one might expect in a nature reserve with walking trails and other recreational facilities (such as an outdoor gym and a dog park). The most numerous are signposts giving place names and distances, placed at crossings along the trails. There are also maps of the nature reserves, general information boards by the entrance points, signs with instructions for using the outdoor gym equipment, and (often simpler) signs reminding visitors about the rules (e.g., that cycling is not allowed or that dogs should be kept on a lead). The data set from Älvsjöskogen also includes some traffic signs in a small car park, warning signs on the fence between the nature reserve and a railway line, as well as a number of smaller signs listing the sights along the exercise track (e.g., a frog pond or sites of historical buildings). Temporary notices posted by official bodies complement the permanent signs, such as COVID-19 guidelines, warnings about the risk of forest fire (banning open fires) and information about an ongoing survey for users of the reserves. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, I suggest that the materiality of these official signs is worth further exploration to find out, for example, what effect the wooden signs used instead of the more standard directional signage found in other parts of the city have on the sense of place in the nature reserve. Figure 1 gives examples of various official signs.

The unofficial signs in the data set fall into two categories. The first comprises the various notices that are discussed further in the more detailed analysis in the following two subsections. In the second category are a number of small stickers placed on lampposts and other signs found in both nature reserves (eight in Älvsjöskogen, nine in Nackareservatet). Many of these are hard to interpret: some stickers only have single words or abbreviations on them, which may mean something to a very specific in-group. Even when the message can be interpreted (e.g. *Hammarby IF Stockholm 1889* with the logo of the football club, and an environmental message about 'fossil fuel mafia'), there are very few clues as to who placed the stickers in the LL, and who (if anyone) was the intended reader. Of course, such signs are to be found in all kinds of LLs (see Reershemius 2019), not just in these nature reserves.

Figure 1. Examples of typical official signs (from Nackareservatet). Pictures: Väinö Syrjälä.

2.4.1 Unofficial Signs and their Model Readers in Älvsjöskogen

I found 13 unofficial signs of relevance to the discussion about model readers in the data set from Älvsjöskogen. Most of these notices were posted at a couple of assemblage points in the landscape. There is no bulletin board as such, but eight notices were attached to a couple of lampposts near a sports field (*Gamla Älvsjö IP*), and two to the official information board at the southern entrance to the nature reserve. The other three were placed individually on lampposts/fence posts in different parts of the reserve. The notices also varied in design, from (semi-)professional to homemade, roughly corresponding to the contents described below. Although not discussed further here, an additional aspect that may be potentially meaningful in connection with the LLs is that the notices were affected by the elements in different ways, making some of them more difficult to read. Moreover, the condition the signs were in gave some clue as to how long they had been there.

About half of the signs (four) shared a common target audience, namely dog owners (see Figure 2). One of these four signs was found in three and another in two copies. The model reader is constructed on them in much the same way, and most apparently by their subject matter. The notices advertise services for people who wish to take good care of their dog or to train their puppy: *New Era K9 Care*

Figure 2. Notices addressing dog owners in the LL of Älvsjöskogen. Pictures: Väinö Syrjälä.

29

Hundsalong […] ('New Era K9 Care Dog Salon'), *Kurs med din valp* ('A course with your puppy'). There was no apparent need to explain why such services would be of interest. Thus, the author expects anyone owning a dog to take an interest in the text, thereby constructing a specific model reader within it.

Furthermore, three of the notices address the model reader directly by using the second-person singular pronoun 'you' (and in these cases supplemented with 'your dog'), e.g., *hälsar dig och din hund välkommen* ('welcoming you and your dog'), *dig och din valp* ('you and your puppy'). The fourth notice (upper right in Figure 2) has the least detailed text and does not address the reader directly. However, like the other signs, it demonstrates how the model reader can be partly constructed using other multimodal resources. Here, pictures are used to draw attention (in line with the overall theme), and the dog depicted with a person (also in the round, blue and white logotype of *Livet med hund*, 'life with a dog') allows the intended reader, a dog owner, to identify with the characters in the pictures.

The other six notices found in Älvsjöskogen carry information on different themes, from outdoor exercise organised by a gym to a campaign to protect children from cancer. Instead of describing every sign in detail, I will highlight some interesting observations about the specific model reade*r*s constructed on them. A notice from the local orienteering club offers a 'nature pass' (*Naturpasset*) to those who want to explore the nature reserve. It implies different characteristics of a model reader: on the one hand, the reader must have some familiarity with orienteering (there is part of an orienteering map depicted on the sign), and on the other hand it offers something that can be done 'on your own terms' (*på dina egna villkor*). Similarly, a notice about a running group highlights that it is for everyone and for fun, both verbally as in *Löpargrupp för alla!* ('a running group for everybody') and […] *hitta löparglädjen med oss* ('find the fun in running with us'), and visually with a picture of a large group of people. A specific model reader is again addressed (and described) directly in the final example from Älvsjöskogen, in this case a notice about a lost gold ring: *Snälla om du hittar den ring mig* ('if you find it, please call me'), the Swedish word *snälla* translates as 'please' but also referring to a kind-hearted person. Although the notice is certainly addressed to everyone in the nature reserve, the specific model reader is constructed as someone who is kind enough and willing to reunite the author with their ring.

Model readers of different types are thus approached by and constructed on the unofficial signs in the nature reserve, the texts on the signs offering varying degrees of detail about these intended readers. The model readers (or target audiences) of the signs also match the kind of people one might expect to be present amongst this specific LL. I will discuss what further conclusions can be drawn and what remarks can be made about applying the concept of the model reader in further research in the following sub-section, after first presenting examples from the second research area.

2.4.2 Unofficial Signs and their Model Readers in Nackareservatet

Unofficial notices were found in specific assemblage points in the Nackareservatet LL, too. There are 17 signs of interest in the data set, from four locations: on a bulletin board at the western entrance to the reserve (*Björkhagen*), on two different bulletin boards near an outdoor gym (and the beginning of an exercise loop), and by an official map at an intersection in the eastern part of the reserve. The notices cover a range of

30
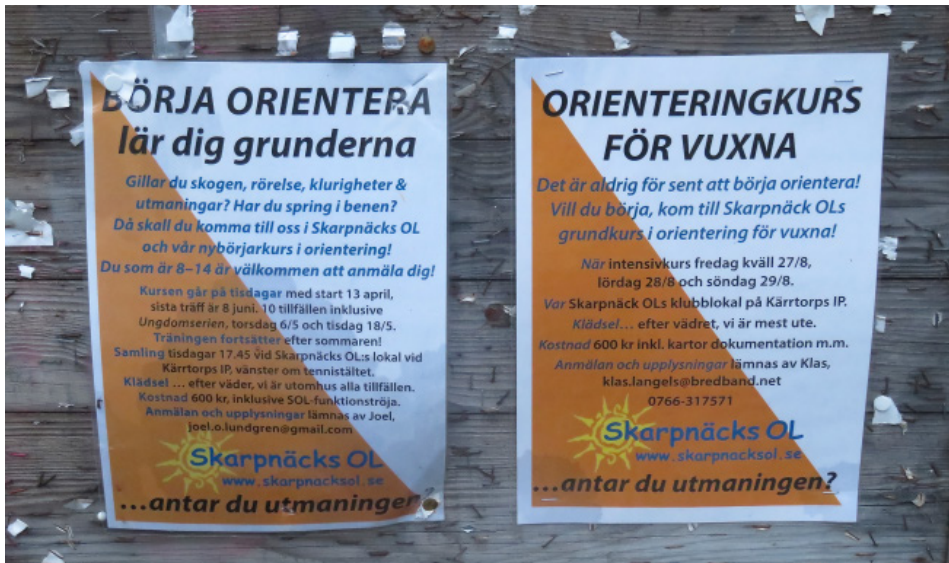
Figure 3. Two notices posted by the local orienteering club, found in Nackareservated. Picture: Väinö Syrjälä.

topics, two of which, namely orienteering and wellness, are highlighted first in the analysis aimed at identifying model readers.

The same sender, the local orienteering club, posted three different notices, one of which was found in three copies in the nature reserve. The target audience of these signs is quite apparent, someone who is interested in orienteering. The visual design of the signs (see the two notices illustrated in Figure 3) pinpoints this specific model reader, both in the highlighted words *BÖRJA ORIENTERA lär dig grunderna* ('start orienteering, learn the basics'), *ORIENTERINGSKURS FÖR VUXNA* ('course in orienteering for adults'), and in the colours of the orienteering flag that anyone who was interested would recognise from afar.

A more specific reading of the signs suggests slightly different model readers. The notice on the left in Figure 3 directly addresses young people 'aged 8–14' who are beginners in orienteering with a question (*Gillar du skogen, rörelse, klurigheter och utmaningar?* 'Do you like the forest, motion, puzzles and challenges?') and an invitation (*Då skall du komma till oss…* 'Then you should come to us'). The notice on the right similarly addresses adults: *Det är aldrig för sent att börja orientera!* 'It is never too late to start orienteering'. Overall, both notices give detailed information in which someone who was attracted by the courses offered would be interested. They also end with a similar question for the model reader: …*antar du utmaningen?* ('will you take on the challenge?').

Another interesting group of notices advertise what could be described as wellness services, namely massage and psychotherapy, for example. Four of these notices are included in the data set, of which two examples are given in Figure 4. Interestingly, the model reader is addressed in varying degrees, much of the focus being on the authors themselves. Three of the notices have a picture of the author (i.e. the individual offering the advertised services), and the name and contact details of the author are

Figure 4. Two examples of notices advertising wellness services in Nackareservatet. Pictures: Väinö Syrjälä.

provided in the fourth one too (on the right in Figure 4). In fact, the entire text on one of these notices describes the person providing 'wellness services and art therapy' (*friskvård & konstterapi*). Thus, the model reader is only present between the lines, as someone agreeing with the message presented in the text (e.g., *Människan är en helhet bestående av tanke, känsla och vilja*. 'A human being is an entity consisting of thought, feeling and will.').

The other three notices dealing with wellness, directly address the model reader in some way. This can be in the form of questions and commands directed at a 'you' as in, *Börjar karantänen och hemmakontoret ge dig ömma muskler? Ta hand om din hälsa och unna dig en massage!* ('Do quarantine and working from home strain your muscles? Take care of your health and treat yourself to a massage!'); or it can be an offer as in, *Du är välkommen på egen hand, med din partner eller med en grupp för stödsamtal eller samtalsterapi* ('You are welcome on your own, with your partner or with a group for counselling or conversational therapy'), *Du lär dig ett kraftfullt egenvårdsprogram* ('You will learn a strong self-care routine). A lot of information is supplied on these signs, including prices, discounts and contact details for those who are interested, and in a somewhat personal manner (cf. the presence of the author and the direct address). Although it is difficult to describe model readers in detail, at least they are open minded and interested in these specific services. The connection to the nature reserve is not as evident in these notices as in those advertising orienteering courses – or addressing dog owners. Here the emplacement (a meaningful semiotic resource in itself, see Scollon & Scollon 2003) is part of constructing a model reader, who thus would not only be interested in the services offered but would also be inclined to enjoy nature.

The rest of the notices found in Nackareservatet advertise a range of topics (cf. Kullenberg et al. 2018 on the contents of bulletin boards). Here I will merely add a

couple of more interesting observations. In one additional example, the emplacement of a notice in the reserve contributed to formulating a specific model reader. The notice in question calls for potential support families to help troubled youths. In addition to what is mentioned in the text (e.g., *träna på rutiner och få en fungerande vardag*, 'practice routines and pursue a functional everyday life'), the fact that the model reader might be found in the nature reserve becomes an additional preferable quality. In the construction of a model reader the more commercial signs could also bring to light needs that the empirical reader had not considered beforehand, as noted in Björkvall (2013: 26). For example, one could address questions to the model reader, as in a notice from the present data set (from *Ski & Bike Nordic – Race Service Center*): *Behov av kedjevård eller ny kedja?* ('In need of chain maintenance or a new chain?'). This example also illustrates the difference between the model reader and an empirical reader: everyone can read the sign, but only the model reader answers 'yes' to the question and is thus genuinely interested in all the information it has to offer.

Overall, one could also identify different model readers of the unofficial notices found in Nackareservatet. Pinpointing a specific model reader is not always that simple, however. In fact, one must be careful not to be too far-reaching in one's interpretations: the researcher is also an empirical reader of the text in question (see Björkvall 2013: 56). It is therefore necessary to consider what is on the texts themselves, as the rest could easily become wishful thinking on the part of an ambitious interpreter of the LL. Nevertheless, it is interesting to ponder upon what the presence in the LL of different kinds of texts with different purposes could reveal about the expected users of the places in question. I will now conclude this chapter with some remarks on the application of the concept of a model reader to the study of LLs.

2.5 Conclusion

The case study presented above sheds some light on an interesting aspect of the sociolinguistic variation in LLs, namely that even in a monolingual context, it is possible to find relevant information about people and places by identifying the model readers of texts presented on public signs. In addition to summing up the empirical conclusions in this closing section, I will discuss how this specific theoretical concept could be taken further within the study of LLs.

As the examples in my analysis illustrate, a variety of model readers are constructed within the unofficial signs of the LLs. Not too much should be read into the fact that different groups of people emerge as the target audience of the signs in the two nature reserves; signs are generally few in number here, and it is quite random which private notices are present at any given time. Still, the notices discussed above give a glimpse of each nature reserve as a distinctive place. Älvsjöskogen tends to be frequented by dog walkers from the adjoining residential areas, whereas the larger forests of Nackareservatet are used for orienteering and other outdoor sports, for example. Thus, I would argue that the model readers identified on the signs indeed attest to the users of these places. Similar analyses of the LLs of different parts of the city could therefore yield interesting observations about who is present and/or represented in different urban settings.

This already begins to answer the additional aim of this case study, namely: to examine if there is a need for a concept of defining a model reader of the LL? On the basis of the examples that emerged in the qualitative analysis, I would argue that such a concept could be highly useful as one possible solution, in addition to other social-semiotic analytical tools, to moving the discussion on public signage past the level of language choice or broad categorisations (e.g., *top-down* and *bottom-up*). The notion of model readers offers a more concrete picture of those (imagined) to be present amongst and interacting with the landscape and further perspectives on the sociolinguistic variation found in these contexts. From such a starting point, one could discuss a broad range of questions on space, place and identity. Indeed, a textual approach in general could promote a more social-semiotic take on the LL in its context (cf. Malinowski 2020: 24).

In applying the concept to LLs, one must inevitably consider model readers in the plural, as every sign is its own text. Additionally, the idea of a single model reader of the whole LL would go against the very nature of public language use, consisting of a variety of signs and communicative purposes, not to mention all the practical challenges in defining such a reader (see the methodological remarks above). In fact, a multitude of model readers are present and shaped in the signs. How detailed a description of those model readers an analysis should include surely depends on the specific research interests, from a more extensive focus on specific signs (see e.g. Björkvall's 2013 study of commercial texts) to a more general overview of intended readers of the LL (as in the present case study). The fact that a specific model reader cannot be found on all signs (e.g. simple traffic signs just addressing a 'law-abiding citizen') would not, therefore, hinder the use of this concept to identify new layers of meaning in the LL.

It would be interesting in further studies to apply the concept of the model reader to other types of LLs with wider sociolinguistic variation in more contested urban areas, for example. As I have shown, unofficial signs are of special interest in that they reveal more about local communicative practices. What is communicated through the LL and how? Who is thought to be present in the specific public space? Who gets to participate actively in the LL as an author or (model) reader? Such questions about people and places are undoubtedly of wider interest in urban studies. The LLs of the nature reserves thus offer an interesting testbed for an analysis of the model readers of unofficial signs. Despite the overall sparse number of signs, and the fact that most are monolingual (i.e., only limited sociolinguistic variation can be expected), the textual focus on model readers still reveals some interesting evidence of the social role of visible language use – and its different audiences – even on the fringes of the city.

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3. Hybrid Language Use in Urban Landscapes of Northern Sweden

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Language is constantly changing and developing, and the pace of change has increased in the current globalised and digitised society. This is observable worldwide through internet connections, global economic interests, travel and migration – and as a result languages mix a lot more than they used to. The mixing takes place via physical and virtual meetings, and in interactions between speakers, but also when a certain language has worldwide distribution as in the cases of English and Arabic, for example: English is the main language of the internet, and Arabic the main language of Muslim texts (Thomason 2001). The English language is also very common in advertising all over the world, including in many European countries (Piller 2001). Language development is ongoing in this changing world as the need arises for terms covering all kinds of new techniques and new phenomena, such as digital payment services and video calls.

All this, of course, affects the languages observed in the linguistic landscape (LL). This chapter examines the LL of Northern Sweden from this perspective. What can creative components of a mix of named languages used on signs teach us about the linguistic and sociolinguistic discourses and their functions in the LL? The focus of the reported study is twofold. First, we address the methodological challenges that arise when categorising named languages represented on signs. Second, we focus on the linguistic aspects of language contact as observed in LLs. The findings shed light upon the societal discourses that are visible in urban LLs, as well as on the sociolinguistic and societal dynamics reflected in them.

The study reported in this chapter is part of a research project that focuses on LLs in Norrland, a traditionally linguistically rich area of Sweden.[1] The region could be

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1. The project (*The language of place-making. A mixed-method analysis of linguistic landscapes*, FORMAS 2018-01528, 2019–2022) investigates how languages, as they materialise in various surroundings, contribute to the making of public spaces. We describe and analyse which languages are visible and which are not, and relate these findings to the demographic, socio-economic, educational and linguistic characteristics of different spaces. This enhances understanding of how the use of majority, Indigenous and minority languages constructs the different spaces.

described as historically multilingual in which Indigenous Sámi languages, languages from the Nordic countries and national minority languages co-exist. Sweden (including Norrland) has been a country of immigration for many different groups of people since the Second World War, examples including labour immigration from southern Europe and Finland as well as asylum immigration from South American and African countries.[2] Immigration for more than half a century together with a generous language policy for both adults in society and children in schools have made Sweden an increasingly multilingual nation. Legislation dating back to the 1960s was aimed at developing multilingualism. The ambition was that all groups in society should have equal opportunities to maintain and develop their mother tongue as well as to develop their knowledge of Swedish as a second language (Bajqinca 2019).

3.1 Abundant and Challenging Data

The data were collected in 2019–2020 during a period of ethnographic fieldwork involving photo documentation in five urban centres in Norrland: Umeå, Kramfors, Jokkmokk, Sorsele and Pajala. We selected these five places to represent a variety of demographic and socioeconomic conditions in the area, basing the selection on the number of inhabitants, the percentage of inhabitants from other countries, tourism, global industry and trade (Cocq et al. 2020). We conducted fieldwork for between two and four days in each place. The data include photos of signs containing orthographic language, in other words graffiti, commercial signs, stickers, flags, products such as clothes, bags, posters, webpages, sandwich boards, transport and notes. We decided when we started to collect the data that, to be of relevance to the project the signs should contain named language(s), and orthographic text either on its own or together with other symbols and pictures. As we will show, this gave rise to complications in the next phases of the project when we were coding and analysing the data.

The decision to photograph all signs and not just specifically multilingual signs or signs in specific languages resulted in the collection of a large number of signs to be coded. The photo documentation from the five urban centres in Norrland generated about 6,400 photographs. We decided that the specific area in each place of interest and its documentation should be similar on each site, namely the central square, the library, the health centre, a public meeting place and the most popular tourist attraction. The area chosen for documentation was quite extensive, the aim being to include many types of establishments and thereby to capture a broad variety of signs in each urban centre. Every sign, big or small, in each place in the designated area was photographed. Some were very clearly marked, such as street and shop names, and some were embedded in other signs, including overlapping notices on a noticeboard and stickers overlapping on a post. The photographic data counts were as follows: Umeå 3,855, Kramfors 844, Jokkmokk 684, Sorsele 615 and Pajala 410 signs. We categorised all the 6,400 photographed signs for language code, status, position and function using a coding manual specifically developed by the project team (Cocq et al. 2020).

2.   The Swedish Migration Agency's website 13/9/2021.

The language-coding process is of special interest in this article. The first question we asked was if the sign was multilingual (Y/N). We coded the main language[3] and, in the case of multilingual signs, the additional language(s). Quite a number of the signs contained words that could be described as beyond the boundaries of a named language. Words such as these could be defined as a form of language hybridisation or a mix of languages. Instead of just dismissing them as being outside of our research focus, however, we decided that this data was worth investigating.

Our starting point was thus to find out which languages were represented in the public spaces. However, the concept of language became more complex in the analysis stage, and it was obvious that the category *named language/s* did not capture all the different aspects of language that appeared on the signs. A named language, sometimes also called a national language, is a social construct rather than a linguistic object. It is connected to a nation or a social group, and has socially and politically defined boundaries (Otheguy, Garcia & Reid 2015). Our data contain many examples of the creative use of languages and of hybridisation, namely orthographic signs in a language that cannot be categorised as 'named' (Demska 2019), or that contain words combining several languages (Garcia & Seltzer 2016). We identified the need for a specific category that we call *hybrid language* in the coding manual, to which we assigned signs containing language that was a mixture of two named languages. The word *hybrid* is used in many different contexts, meaning an intersection between two units or a mixed form. Here we use it with reference to an intersection or a mix between two named languages, or in some cases a mix of two Swedish or English words. In the following we take a closer look at some of the challenges that we met when coding the languages. We also discuss how the language hybridisation represented on the signs should be understood and described, and how hybridisation could be linked to individual, national and global processes.

3.2 Previous Research

Most previous research in the field of LL has targeted multi-ethnic multilingual areas in some of the large cities in the world including Sydney, Tokyo, Athens and Kuala Lumpur (Nikolaou 2017). Projects are often quite specific in terms of the area in the city to be mapped and the type of signs of interest. In Athens, the capital of officially monolingual Greece, for example, Nikolaou (2017) investigated the language choice on 621 shop signs in languages other than Greek (mostly English). Other projects have focused on specific languages such as the use of Italian in Kuala Lumpur: Coluzzi (2017), for instance, analysed 44 shop signs with Italian names. Various Chinese languages and dialects have also been investigated, as has the use of Dutch, English, French and German in the Chinatown districts of six cities in the Netherlands and Belgium – the data comprised 2,080 signs from 404 Chinese establishments. Therefore, although the emphasis is on the LL of big cities, the chosen place where the photographs are taken tends to be segregated, and the focus shifts to specific signs and sometimes to specific languages. A few LL studies have been conducted in

3. The main language is the language that is the most prominent on the sign, such as in its position at the top of it, in the centre, or with the largest font size.

smaller rural areas, most of which target one language or more, and some of which include a national minority language. Pietikäinen et al. (2011), for instance, studied seven northern villages above the Arctic Circle looking at multilingual signs and Sámi linguistic practices, analysing 379 photographs. Phillips (2011), in turn, analysed 94 photographs to find out what languages were on display in the small village of Carman in Manitoba, Canada.

Other LL studies illustrating what we call hybrid language include that of Huebner (2006), who examined the spread of English on signs in 15 neighbourhoods of Bangkok. Woldemariam & Lanza (2014) also examined signs containing both a regional language and Amharic in two regional urban capitals of Ethiopia. Many of the multilingual signs analysed in the Bangkok study exhibit some form of language mixing, such as the use of the English lexicon and syntax in Thai orthography. Taking a diachronic perspective, the study shows a shift from Chinese to English whereby English is now the dominant language of commerce (Huebner 2006). The focus in the Ethiopian study, in turn, is on signs demonstrating language contact: the results reveal a blurring of language boundaries that reflects ideological perspectives and shows relations of power. Most speakers know both a regional language and Amharic, and despite the reduced role of Amharic in current language policy, they draw on their multilingual resources to create a new arena for language use, thereby mixing languages (Woldemariam & Lanza 2014). In his study on the use of English in the Chinese city of Suzhou, Li (2015: 28) found what he describes as the 'creative, fluid and transgressive capacity of language practice', in other words language that does not operate within the established linguistic boundaries of Chinese and English, but rather deviates from and disrupts them.

Unlike many other projects within LL research, the present study includes an extensive number of signs reflecting our interest in any and every kind of orthographic language posted in any kind of way, monolingual or multilingual, from the designated areas in each of the five places. This is probably one of the reasons why what we call hybrid language use appeared in our data.

3.3 Language Contact and Hybridisation

A sociolinguistic concept that could shed light on the use of hybrid language (as mentioned, hybrid here means a mix of two named languages) found in our data is language contact. The meeting of languages, in the sense that more than one language is used in the same place at the same time, and as a consequence one or all of the languages are influenced by the other(s) in some way, could be described as *language contact* (Thomason 2001). This often, but not always, involves a physical meeting and interactions among speakers of different languages in a particular geographical space. Alternatively, as Woldemariam & Lanza (2014: 99) point out, when most speakers in a geographical space are multilingual and know and use more than one language (here a national language, Amharic, and a regional language), it 'allows languages to be in extensive and long-term contact.' This may work slightly differently in the case of languages with a worldwide distribution, such as English, which plays a big part in the instances of hybrid language use in our data. Millions of non-English speakers have come into contact with the English language through

radio, TV, film or music, for example, and as the main language of the global internet. Thus, English seems to have strongly influenced many other languages around the world. The increasing use of English in other European contexts has been reported. Brandl (2007), for instance, observed that the number of products containing English elements increased considerably in Germany between 1993 and 2003; he also studied their attractiveness and intelligibility as well as the individual associations they aroused. Huebner (2006), in turn, describes how English has influenced multilingual signs, mostly in Thai and English, in various ways in different neighbourhoods, revealing a shift from Chinese to English and the predominance English has as the language of commerce.

Gorter & Cenoz (2015) give a more holistic picture of multilingual signage reflecting a combination of linguistic resources in LLs. The notion of *translanguaging*, meaning the practice among language users of employing their entire repertoire of linguistic resources, could be a starting point in the promotion of multilingualism as the norm in LL studies. This would also take into account the increased language diversity in urban spaces all over the world that reflects the combination of the local and the global.

Language contact has existed throughout the centuries and has played a part in how languages have developed. Multiple aspects of language structures are transferred through such contact, but the most common source of influence is the borrowing of words (Thomason 2001). Thomason's (2020) account of the social and linguistic factors required for language contact is the theoretical starting point for this chapter. Both factors are needed for change, but social factors are considered more influential than typological factors such as word order and grammatical patterns. Even if there are wide differences in typology between two languages, words may be borrowed from one to the other if there is strong social contact between the respective users. We consider examples of hybrid language use through the lens of language contact, and specifically the social factors required to promote change.

3.4 Distinguishing Hybrid Language Use

How could we determine what distinguishes hybrids in the project? Bakhtin (1981: 359) describes a linguistic hybrid as the presence of 'two linguistic consciousnesses', each of which belongs to a different 'system of language'. The creative use of languages and hybridisation could be described in terms of orthographic signs in a language that cannot be categorised as a named language (Demska 2019), or that contains words combining several languages (Garcia & Seltzer 2016). According to Kraidy (2002), hybridisation represents a perspective on globalisation that could possibly enhance understanding of the dynamic process of interplay between globalisation and localisation, with a mix of traditions and cultural forms. From this theoretical angle, we take a closer look at and discuss issues of language use and language hybridisation. In our data, language hybrids include words that cannot be coded as a named language because they contain elements of two different named languages. An example of this is *rawfika*: *raw-* is English, here meaning food that is uncooked or unprocessed, and *-fika* is the very Swedish custom of taking a break from an activity to drink coffee, eat cake and relax, often together with other people (see further analysis

41

below). A hybrid could also constitute a word belonging to a named language plus a suffix that is identifiable from another named language: examples include *Sportia* (the name of a shop selling sports gear) and *Järnia* (the name of a shop selling items connected with construction and tools). Here, *sport-* is Swedish (as in English) and *järn-* is Swedish for iron, combined with the suffix *-ia*, which has Latin roots and most probably means a collection of things here. Sometimes the word and its suffix are from the same language, but the new hybrid word is not in any dictionary. In other cases, the hybrid represents a play on language or its creative use for fun, a form of 'bilingual winks' (Mettewie, Lamarre & Van Mensel 2012; Lamarre 2014). An example is *Kebabnekajse* as a name for a pizzeria – a combination of *kebab*, meaning skewered roasted meat, and *Kebnekaise*, which is the name of the highest mountain in Sweden, from the Indigenous Lule Sámi language. The combination and contrast produce a fun and creative language mix.

The last three examples of hybrids, *Sportia*, *Järnia* and *Kebabnekajse*, are commercial signs in the form of company names: as we will show, most of the hybrids in the data are commercial names, company names, and product or brand names. Commercial naming is connected to advertising, and is intended to persuade a target group to buy the product (see also Chapter 4 in this volume). Hence, the company and the product should be perceived as independent entities, each with an interesting personality and a unique individual name (Sjöblom 2016). The name is meant to give added value to the brand and to the product, and it also has basic linguistic and cultural significance 'Since names do not just identify but also draw attention and attract, businesses can benefit from those that deviate from the rules of standard language.' (Sjöblom 2016: 458).

3.5 Hybrid Language Use in Northern Sweden

Of the 6,400 signs from the five different locations, 328 contained hybrid language, accounting for about five per cent of the data. The hybrids were quite evenly distributed across the locations as follows: Pajala (24 signs; 6%), Kramfors (41 signs; 5%), Sorsele (31 signs; 5%), Umeå (208 signs; 5%) and Jokkmokk (24 signs; 3.5%).

Before taking a closer look at some examples of hybrid language use, we give an overview of the thematic areas in which they were found, and the named languages or mixes thereof they constituted. One area in which we found hybrid language use represented the cultural and creative sector. The hybrid languages used in this area include Swedish/English and Swedish/Swedish. A few represent the notion of sustainability, and typically constitute English/English and Swedish/Swedish. Others are connected to new technology and the media, combining English and Swedish such as having an English root and a Swedish suffix. A large number of the hybrids in the thematic areas, and overall in the data, are commercial names, many in the form of company names, and the languages used are predominantly English in various combinations such as English/Swedish and English/English, but also Swedish with a Latin suffix and words containing Greek and/or Latin.

In the following we present examples of hybrid language use based on the thematic area to which they are connected. More specifically, these thematic areas include new technology and the media, the cultural and creative sector, and sustainability.
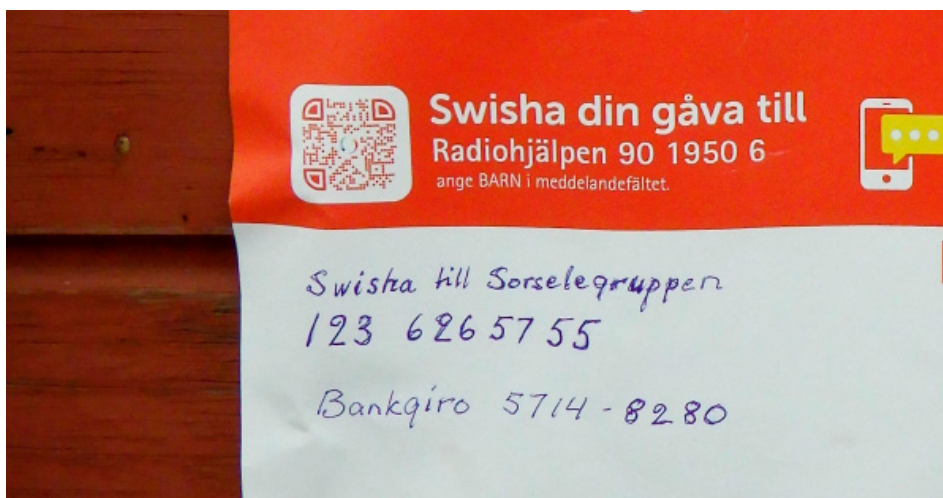
42

Figure 1. Swisha (Sorsele). Picture: Eva Lindgren and Urban Lindgren.

A new word for a fairly recent phenomenon is *swisha* (meaning a way to access your Swedish bank account and make payments using your smartphone), as illustrated in Figure 1.[4] It is a combination of *swish-*, an English noun meaning to move quickly through the air making a soft sound, and the suffix *-a*, which is a common Swedish verb ending. The linguistic context of the use of *swisha* on this sign is clearly Swedish, which reinforces how the English part of the term is integrated to the Swedish language.

Another example of a hybrid from the same area of new technology and the media is the name of a website on which customers may both read and leave reviews of different companies. The website is called *reco.se*. The company describes its vision as a digital version of word-of-mouth in the form of a website, in other words a marketing method whereby satisfied customers spread the name of the product. The name *reco* could be considered a hybrid in the Swedish context, as a combination of two interpretations of the word, one in English and one in Swedish. Firstly, it is an abbreviation of the English word 'recommendation', and secondly it is the Swedish word 'reko' (short for 'rekorderlig'), which in everyday speech means decent and reliable. Among Swedish speakers *reco* could thus mean both at the same time, namely 'to recommend' and 'to be reliable'. The pronunciation of the two words differs only slightly, with a longer -e in Swedish. This could possibly lead to confusion as to how to pronounce it correctly.

Another area in which hybrids occurred in the data was the cultural and creative sector. *Tickster* (a company selling ticket systems for different cultural and sports events) is one example. The word *tickster* is a hybrid of the English word 'ticket' and the English suffix '-ster'. A Swedish dictionary would include some words ending '-ster' that have already been imported from English, such as '(hip)ster' and '(trick)

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4.   As we were working on this chapter, in May 2021, *swisha* was added to Svensk Ordbok (Swedish Dictionary) published by The Swedish Academy (https://www.svenskaakademien. se/svenska-spraket/svensk-ordbok-utgiven-av-svenska-akademien-so). Thus, it moved from being a hybrid to being a word in the Swedish language.

Figure 2. *Skell hell* (Umeå). Picture: Coppélie Cocq and Lena Granstedt.

ster'. Therefore, the model of word creation is not new per se, but the hybrid *tickster* does not feature in English or Swedish dictionaries. Other hybrids in the cultural and creative sector that also rely on English are *berättarslam* and *Skell hell* (Figure 2), which we discuss below.

Both of the above-mentioned examples, *berättarslam* and *Skell hell*, combine Swedish and English. *Berättar-* is Swedish for telling or sharing and *-slam* is English and comes from slam poetry. The name in Swedish retains the English word *slam*. Although poetry slam was introduced in Sweden in the mid-1990s, and there are yearly national competitions in poetry slam, the word *slam* is not yet included in Swedish dictionaries. *Skell hell* is a highly local word: *Skell-* is part of the name of a town in the north of Sweden, *Skellefteå*, and *-hell* is English. *Skell hell* is used as a nickname for the town in the sense that it is a small, boring place where nothing exciting happens. The word *Skell hell* was first used in a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, *Norran*.[5] It has since been used in other contexts such as in *Skell hell Rebels*, which is the name of a short film.

Another example of a local hybrid is *Krammy,* comprising *Kramm-* and *-y*. *Kramm-* is strongly local and historical, the name of the person who established a sawmill in the place in the mid-18th century, which later became *Kramfors* and from which the name Kramfors derives. It has also given its name to the local hotel, *Hotel Kramm*. The word ending *-y* seems to make this hybrid more international, creating associations with words such as *grammy*. *Krammy* is the name for a mascot in the form of a crow, which also features in the municipality's coat of arms. The crow has been made into a mascot to represent Kramfors and has been given the name *Krammy*.

5. The article in the local newspaper *Norran* can be accessed here: https://archive. is/20130620032639/http://norran.se/2011/03/insandare/skellhellintesaillasomdutror/.

Figure 3. *Rawfika* (Umeå). Picture: Coppélie Cocq and Lena Granstedt.

The linguistic features of both *Skell hell* and *Krammy* seem to produce a sense of globality as well as locality. This could be interpreted as hybridisation, a dynamic process at the interface of globalisation and localisation, and a product of interdisciplinary mixed forms of (culture or/and) language (Kraidy 2002). It also reflects what has been going on in the past few decades that Appadurai (1996) calls an *ethnoscape*, a flow of people, cultures and languages that shape societies in many ways.

Finally, we found hybrids in the area of sustainability in our data. One example is *ecotaxi*. *Eco-* is English, which would be spelled with a *k* in Swedish, i.e. *eko-*, and *-taxi* is the same in English and Swedish. Once again, it is only the spelling that differs and it does not necessarily change the pronunciation of the word. *Ecotaxi* is the name of a local company. Its homepage carries a description of an environmental policy and a statement about only using hybrid and electric cars.[6]

Rawfika(*t*), an example mentioned earlier, illustrates language use combining English *raw-* with Swedish *-fika*. Figure 3 shows a sign in Swedish ('The best rawfika is here'). Similarly as in the case of *swisha* (Figure 1), *rawfika* is integrated in a Swedish sentence.

Here, *raw-* has a specific meaning, which comes from raw foodism (meaning to follow a raw food diet, a dietary practice of mainly eating food that is uncooked and unprocessed) and *-fika*, which is Swedish referring to the Swedish custom of taking a break from an activity to drink coffee, eat snacks and relax, often but not necessarily with others. Some idea of what raw foodism means is probably necessary to understand the word *rawfika*.

Glorientering is another example of hybrid that combines *glo-*, here short for global (with the same spelling and meaning in Swedish and English) and the Swedish

6. See https://ecotaxi.se/policys/.

-orientering (meaning orientation). Although it could be interpreted as a combination of the Swedish *glo-* and the Swedish *(o)rientering* (and thereby not combining different languages), we categorised it as hybrid mainly because it represents fun and intentional creative play with words, and it is not to be found in a Swedish dictionary. *Glorientering* is the name of an outdoor activity, namely orientation with the aim of increasing knowledge of the environmental goals that are part of Agenda 2030. Each of the control stations that are part of the orientation represents a global goal.

Included in all three thematic categories, namely new technology and media, the cultural and creative sector, and sustainability, are hybrids with a connection to commercial actors, such as, *swisha*, *reco*, *tickster* and *ecotaxi*. Commercial actors are highly present and visible in the public space in Norrland (see also Cocq et al. 2022). Commercial naming is closely connected to advertising, and advertising is aimed at persuading a target group to choose a specific product (Sjöblom 2016). As Sjöblom (2016: 458) pertinently points out: 'since names do not just identify but also draw attention and attract, business can benefit from those that deviate from the rules of standard language.' In this way, commercial names can attract attention by being innovative and experimental, extending beyond ordinary linguistic boundaries.

3.6 Discussion

As we have shown, the use of hybrid language in our data focuses mainly on the following areas: new technology and media, the cultural and creative sector, and sustainability. We also found that the majority of signs are about commercial naming. Commercial actors dominate the public spaces and more than 70 per cent of the hybrids were produced by commercial companies. English and Swedish are the most frequently used languages in hybrids: English in the form of words as part of a composition, or in some cases simply as the English spelling of a word that exists both in Swedish and in English. The dominance of English in hybrid language is connected to the wide acceptance and the strong position of English in Swedish society. Since the end of World War II, English has been established as the number-one foreign language in Sweden, as in many parts of the world, and it is influential in many areas of society, not least within the trade and industry (Gheitasi, Lindgren & Enever 2020). The English language is disseminated and used on a daily basis in Sweden. It has been a symbol of internationalisation since the 1970s, and being modern and international means speaking English (Gheitasi, Lindgren & Enever 2020). There is an intensity of contact with English and a positive attitude towards the language, as Mattfolk (2017), for instance, observed in other Swedish-speaking contexts. Huebner (2006) refers to the use of English on signs in Bangkok neighbourhoods as an intention to convey a cosmopolitan atmosphere, to reflect the tourist character of a space, to advertise products, or as international communication directed at educated citizens. This 'highlights the importance and influence of English as a global language' (Huebner 2006: 49), something that is also observable in the context of our study of Norrland's LLs. In terms of language contact, research shows that the more intense the connection between different languages is, the higher is the probability of language contact (Thomason 2020). Languages meet, and in the case of English in Sweden, one language influences the other. The most common means is that words from one

language are taken into the other(s) as new words. Positive attitudes among speakers are highly relevant to the generation of contact-induced change, as 'Close-knit social networks characterized by intense contact among the participants can facilitate the spread of innovations.' (Thomason 2020: 38). It could be said that the basis for language contact regarding English in Sweden is highly favourable.

Most of the examples of hybrid language use in our data are not change-induced, because they are not (yet) officially adopted in the Swedish language or in dictionaries of Swedish. Hence, we opted for the category *hybrid*, but as we have shown, in some of the instances the words have made the transition into Swedish and have been added to the dictionary. In one case, namely the hybrid *swisha*, the transition took place as we were working on this chapter. Behind the term we discovered the Swedish Bankers Association together with representatives of a few Swedish banks. They met to name their newly developed digital payment service and decided to call it *Swish* (2009), and the verb connected to its use *swisha* (Lindblom 2019). As a verb, *swisha* soon became popular and much used. Consequently, in 2015 the Language Council of Sweden, the primary regulatory body for the advancement and cultivation of the Swedish language, selected the term *swisha* to be added to a dictionary of the Swedish language. They then added a second spelling of the word, namely *svischa*, i.e. *svisch-*, an existing Swedish word (noun or interjection) close in meaning to *swish* plus the Swedish verb suffix *-a*, which makes it a verb, thus making it more Swedish than hybrid. Currently, in response to questions recently posed on its website, The Language Council recommends the spelling *swisha*, arguing that it is clearly most commonly used. Why we included this hybrid is hence a complex story connected to the author/s, the users and the regulators of language. It could be argued with regard to the word *swisha* that there are national, global and individual influences at play when words or hybrids take form and make it into the Swedish language and the Swedish dictionary.

Hybrids could be described as multilingual writing in which the unit of analysis is the word. Most of the hybrids in the data comprise one word, a compound, and in some cases two words that in combination form a concept. Multilingual writing is among the literacy practices that are embedded in the culture of language communities, whose sociolinguistic and economic circumstances they thereby reflect (Sebba 2012). As we have shown, most hybrids are commercial names, and the predominantly used languages are English and Swedish. We interpret this as an effort to connect to a global-local discourse. Major influences here include the choice of English as the lingua franca in communicating with prospective customers around the world, English as a status-enhancing language in the Swedish context (Gheitasi, Lindgren & Enever 2020), English through language contact via the internet and films (Thomason 2001), and English as part of the current global movement reflecting (often) young people's ecological engagement with social media and the internet.

3.7 Conclusion

We have illustrated in this chapter how LLs could be studied with reference to the hybrid language used on signs. From a methodological perspective, the five per cent of the signs we collected that could not be categorised as 'named languages'

complicated the coding phase of the project. It turned out, however, that this data was a rich source for the examination of language contact. Focusing on hybrid language use could shed light on sociolinguistic and societal dynamics such as the status of languages, language hierarchies, global trends (such as sustainability in our case), and implications regarding potential inclusion and exclusion.

It is clear from our data that the general influence of English in Swedish society is very much a matter of language choice regarding hybrids. Even though their use may break or blur the boundaries of the national language, it still follows norms through mixing with the established accepted high status of the English language. The data nevertheless lacks instances of hybrids mixing with any other language such as one of the national minority languages or any other minority language, despite the fact that Norrland is a traditionally rich linguistic area. The fact that the minority languages in general, and the Indigenous Sámi languages in particular, have been stigmatized for a long period of time (Elenius 2006), is one explanation for the absence or invisibility of such linguistic elements in public spaces and thereby in our data (with *Kebabnekajse* as the only exception).

The linguistic variables of hybrids, or mixed language, may have a social meaning above or below the level of awareness (Sebba 2012). Some of them seem to have a close local connection (*Skell hell* and *Krammy*), and are not simply accepted as a name (of a film or a mascot). Some of our examples illustrate instances of language creativity through playing with words, or bilingual winks, such as *Kebabnekajse* and *Skell hell*. In many cases, these 'winks' also comprise a cultural dimension: fully understanding the meaning behind the name may require prior (local) knowledge. The same applies to hybrids connected with global movements such as an environment with a focus on sustainability and health (*rawfika*) or an open creative network (*berättarslam*). Here, therefore, we point out the notion of individual exclusion and/or inclusion regarding hybrids such as these: they are aimed at certain individuals possibly of a certain socio-economic status (cf. reflections on intended readers of signs in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 in this volume).

Finally, we argue that hybrid language use is future-oriented and points towards emerging changes, thereby providing food for thought as to its meaning in the future. Therefore, we would encourage colleagues within the field of LL to give attention to this methodologically challenging data that reveal the layers of meaning and societal dynamics reflected in these landscapes.

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4. Power, Language and Visibility
Defining the Linguistic Landscape

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The interplay of signs and the texts on them facilitate the identification and distinction of the communicated information that is visible in the linguistic landscape (LL). Commercial names may dominate the physical space via large signage and big letters communicating commercial discourse, for instance, and smaller signs on shop fronts may specify or otherwise relate to the same discourse (see also Chapter 3 in this volume on the commerciality of naming). Drawing on empirical findings and studies of official records, I investigate two development areas in Copenhagen, Denmark. Given that LLs function as both informational and symbolic markers displaying the relative power of linguistic communities in an area (Spolsky & Cooper 1991; Landry & Bourhis 1997), I argue that the interplay across communicative functions constitutes the identities connected to the area in a broader sense. I relate these findings to the place branding of each area.

The Carlsberg City District development area is the former home of Carlsberg Breweries and is located in the heart of Copenhagen. The main brewery activity moved outside Copenhagen in 2009, since when the area has become a district with housing estates, shops, schools and businesses. Some of the original buildings are now apartment blocks and company premises. The area is set to be fully developed by 2024. The Nordhavn development area, in turn, was formerly a large industrial dock area. Development work began in 2009, but the project, which includes the establishment of an artificial island, has been delayed. However, some parts of Nordhavn have been transformed into a district with housing estates, shops and businesses.

Both Carlsberg City District and Nordhavn were originally industrial areas, and their past functions are highlighted as a narrative in the new place branding. The history of the brewery as set out on the official Carlsberg City District website points out that the original buildings are 'part of the Danish cultural heritage' given that the site is 'home to many of Copenhagen's architectural treasures'. The same branding strategy is used for Nordhavn: 'Nordhavn emanates the industrial history of the harbour. The special atmosphere is maintained and integrated into the district by preserving selected buildings and cultural-historical features.' (my translation).

However, if it is to have an impact on people any place-branding strategy needs to be backed up linguistically in the physical area. In Denmark, for instance, street names are chosen by local politicians, businesspeople choose the names of their shops and companies, and advertising experts develop advertisements, logos and the

like. It is in this mix of *bottom-up* and *top-down* naming and writing that LLs are constructed, and they may or may not relate to the place-branding strategies. My aim is to investigate the identities of these areas (see also Chapter 6 in this volume). I therefore examine the interplay between the signs that constitute the LL, focusing on their communicative function as meaning-making, geo-semiotic resources and therefore facilitating distinction not only between different kinds of communication, but also between different identities and senses of place.

The data consist of 522 individual texts on signs excerpted via photos taken on field trips. I compare the identities constructed by the texts to the official naming records, and to the available websites and documents describing and branding the development sites. In doing so, I investigate what kinds of identities that are coming into play. In what follows I first describe the data, method and theoretical framework. Then I present and comment on the findings in each study area, and discuss the relation between power, language and visibility. Finally, I consider how the texts in the LL relate to the place identities presented in the official records and on the relevant websites.

4.1 Data and Method

Because I am interested in the linguistic, visual identities of Nordhavn and Carlsberg City District and how they relate to the place branding of the areas, I needed a method for excerption that would highlight what is the most salient linguistic features of the studied LLs. As mentioned above, the LL functions as an informational and symbolic feature in a given area. Hence, what are salient in terms of size, placement and colour, for example, dominate and attract attention and constitute meaning (e.g. Scollon & Scollon 2003; Kress & van Leuwen 2006; Kress 2010) thereby constituting the first impression and overall sense of place.

I used an exploramental method previously conducted by Andersen & Sandst (2022): The data were collected during a 15-minute walking tour in each area, starting from a central square in the respective districts from where I moved to other parts. I set an alarm for 15 minutes, the aim being to excerpt as many texts as possible during this period of time. The purpose was to record the most visible linguistic features and thus to map the first-hand impressions of the areas and hereby capture the overall sense of place. The approach is based on the assumption that people primarily pay attention to salient features in the landscape, and do not see smaller texts such as what is written on manhole covers. Following this assumption, I allowed the visibility of the LL to guide me in the direction in which I walked, namely to where the most (prominent) signs were. I followed this procedure in both areas, enabling me to register similar parts of each district. Allowing the very visibility of the signs to guide me, I departed from a central square in each district and walked in the direction that displayed the most signs. The aim was to imitate a 'stroll in the area conducted by any language user'. Consequently, I mainly registered visible signs that most people see when they walk in the areas concerned, leaving out smaller, less visible signs such as stickers on lamp posts, brands on parked bicycles, texts on manhole covers etc. In this sense, I allowed the principle of visibility to guide the data collection, hence my results stem from signs of salience rather than the full mapping of all texts within a specific

area (cf. Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 in this volume). My intention was to capture the most dominant texts and thereby the most dominant discourse and identity in each area.

However, what is perceived as salient in an area may vary from person to person, and the method is subjective in this sense. To counteract this potential source of error I applied impartial criteria such as size and placement as a guide to what should be excerpted as part of the data following Scollon & Scollon (2003), Kress & van Leuwen (2006) and Kress (2010). However, such criteria may also vary from person to person. What is salient to a child may be less salient to an adult just as a number of sociolinguistic variables such as ethnicity and educational background may influence what one notices in the LL. Hence, the method could be strengthened if other scholars carried out the same walking tour gathering data enabling us to compare the collected data. Since this has not been an option I have tried to be as open and thorough as possible and to photograph everything visible within the time limit.

The data comprise a total of 74 photos of the LL in Nordhavn and 73 photos taken in Carlsberg City District. These numbers include additional photos showing how different signs are placed relative to one another, such as on a shop front. These images played a key role in determining the communicative functions of the individual texts and signs in the categorisation phase, how the texts relate to each other, and the interplay between different signs. Each sign was counted once, which means that the signs on the additional photos were not counted a second time if I had already taken a close-up photo of them. However, I did count texts such as shop names that appeared several times on a shop front on individual signs, see figure 2 below. In Nordhavn, there was a displaying of 274 individual texts on signs, in Carlsberg City District there was a total of 248 individual texts on signs.

The varying texts in the LL point to different communicative functions such as orientation (traffic information) and buying, hence I categorised them into groups of functions (cf. Amos 2016; Sandst 2016), thereby making evident the kinds of influence the LL had on people. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) point out that modalities such as size, composition and colour construct a 'kind of grammar' allowing determination of the salient and the less salient information on a sign (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2010). For instance, the street name shown in Figure 1 has two types of communicative function. These two pieces of information relate to one another and are placed in an internal hierarchy; the street name *Århusgade* is written with larger letters and is placed above the 'explanatory information' that the street name is 'part of a group of streets named after Danish cities'.

The modalities of size and composition underline the difference between the two communicative functions: the bigger letters attract the most attention and so the street name is the most important information on this sign. In addition, the street name written in bigger letters is placed above the explanatory information. Thus, the composition of the texts on the sign underlines the hierarchy behind the difference in the smaller and bigger letters.

Consequently, I placed the two texts on this sign in two different categories, namely *street name* (*Århusgade*, 'Århus' street') and *explanatory information* (*Navnet indgår i en gruppe veje opkaldt efter danske byer*, 'The name is part of a group of streets named after Danish cities'). This exemplifies the key role of the general principles of layout in the categorisation and interpretation. I follow Scollon & Scollon (2003) in

Figure 1. Official signage of the street name *Århusgade* and the smaller 'explanatory information' below expounding it as 'part of a group of streets named after Danish cities' (*Navnet indgår i en gruppe veje opkaldt efter danske byer*), Nordhavn 2021. Picture: Line Sandst.

this approach, who argue that one can only interpret the meaning of public signs by considering their placement in a social and cultural context. Where the sign is placed matters. A text placed on a sign above a door to a shop denotes a *shop name*. A variety of information is communicated to passers-by, such as the kind of locality (a shop), and its name. This information may guide passers-by either to walk into the shop or to pass it by. Signs with additional information such as opening hours, or the kinds of goods for sale are often placed in the window and by the entrance, most commonly with smaller, less visible letters.

The adapted 'principle of visibility' may be fundamental in most LL research, even in the more traditional studies of languages in LL (e.g. Blommaert 2013; Syrjälä 2018; Soukup 2020). However, the focus of this chapter is not on the distribution of languages in the LL, it is rather on the hierarchies and interplay between the texts and how these structures construct the 'sense of place' (cf. Cresswell 2015). Naturally, the words and languages play a key role in constituting a sense of place. However, the focus in this chapter is on the interplay between the texts and how meaning is constructed in this sense, and rather or not this relates to the place branding of Nordhavn and Carlsberg City District, respectively.

54

4.2 The Theoretical Framework and the Central Concepts

Backhaus (2007: 66) defines a sign as 'any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame'. However, as discussed above, signs may also carry information of different kinds that relates to various communication strategies. I follow Backhaus's definition but given my interest in the interplay among signs in the landscape and among the different types of text on a sign, I make a distinction between sign and text, whereby a sign may contain multiple texts denoting different communicative functions as described above (cf. units of analysis in Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 in this volume).

I understand the concept of identity in line with fields such as human geography, anthropology and ethnography, which focus on the relationship between language and names and how they turn space into place to create a sense of identity (Tuan 1991; Basso 1996; Cresswell 2015; Mácha 2020). The language on signs in the LL is linked to cultural and social identities (e.g. Georgiou 2010; Helleland 2012; Jordan 2012; Helleland 2018), being intertwined with the perceptions of language users and how they relate to their environment (e.g. Kostanski 2016; Taylor 2016). Indeed, language and the physical world relate to each other in complex interaction among minds, cultures and environments, and some places may have multiple meanings and associations attached to them (e.g. Taylor 2009; 2016; Kostanski 2011; 2016; Ameel & Ainiala 2018; Helleland 2018).

The focus in my investigation into the identities of the development areas is on how the texts relate to each other within a sign, and how the signs in the area relate. The complex interaction between the communicated functions and the hierarchies and relations of the most salient texts constitutes the identity that is then compared to the place-branded identities of the areas.

4.3 The Communicative Functions and Internal Relations of Texts and Signs

Tables 1 and 2 below show the distribution of texts in the two study areas, categorised according to their communicative functions. As mentioned above, one photo may contain more than one sign, and one sign may contain more than one text denoting different communicative functions. First, I present and discuss the distribution of texts in Nordhavn, and then turn to their distribution in Carlsberg City District. After that, I discuss the interplay between the signs and the communicative functions in more detail.

4.3.1 THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN NORDHAVN

The study area in Nordhavn is primarily characterised by shops and signs related to commercial functions, consequently texts such as shop names, advertisements, logos and signs indicating opening hours strongly define the LL in the area.

I registered 66 names of shops and enterprises (commercial names). However, the largest category of texts is that of *additional information,* such as opening hours, menus and texts specifying the area in which the shop is placed (Copenhagen, Nordhavn). Nonetheless, many of these signs and texts do not stand alone without

Table 1. Nordhavn

Primary Communicative Function	Number of Texts
Street names	7
Explanatory information, e.g. name descriptions	8
Commercial names (shop names, name of enterprises)	66
Information clarifying what the shop is selling, or what kind of shop it is, e.g. coffee, clothes, bicycles	38
Additional information, e.g. signs pointing to trolleys, opening hours, or menus, and mentioning cities and countries	91
Logos	33
Advertising a product's name, e.g. a movie title, a concert	10
Traffic information, e.g. parking signs, signs indicating construction sites or roadworks	9
Longer texts branding a locality in a certain way, such as branding a shop as a sustainable enterprise	2
Slogans	3
Election posters	7
Total number of texts	**274**

losing or changing their communicative function. A sign giving opening hours points to a place that is available or unavailable to people depending on time-specific circumstances, implying a shop, a museum and the like. Such signs tend to have text written in smaller letters and are placed on the door, hence this kind of information is far less visible than the shop name.

A shop front may display the name or logo several times, in which case I counted the text as many times as the name occurred. Consequently, I counted *Husted vin* three times, as it was written three times on the shop front (see Figure 2 below). The text is categorised as a *commercial name*.

Husted vin is written in two different ways: twice in printed letters in a box, and once in handwritten letters. The handwritten text gives more of a sense of fleetingness than the printed text in the box, as it can be erased and replaced more easily. The different modalities, in other words the different fonts used to write the shop name, affect how the texts are perceived. The printed version seems more permanent than the handwritten one, and the former is also far less visible than the latter. Nevertheless, *Husted vin* carries the same communicative function, namely that of a proper name, therefore I categorised it as such.

The different texts on the shop fronts also tend to clarify the kinds of goods the shops sell or mention what kind of shop it is. As in the case of *Husted vin*, the text *pop up vinbutik* specifies the shop as a 'pop-up' wine shop, denoting a temporary location intended to operate for a short period of time. I categorised this as *Information clarifying what a shop is selling, or what the shop is*. This text is also in handwriting and is less visible than the uppermost text: this implies a secondary status to that of the name.

Figure 2. *Husted vin*, Nordhavn, 2021. Picture: Line Sandst.

Information clarifying the kinds of goods the shop sells is often described in a few words, as in the case of *Husted vin*. However, exceptions to this rule include shops such as *Handvärk*. In this case, the shop name is written on some of the windows, whereas other windows display lists of goods for sale, such as daybeds, coffee tables and spine rugs. However, the text below *Handvärk* spells *shop*, specifying its nature. This kind of additional information is different from that on display at supermarkets, which genuinely point to parking spaces nearby and where customers can find shopping trolleys.

As in any LL, different actors communicate different kinds of information. Local Danish municipal entities (more specifically the Naming Boards) decide the names of streets and other official sites such as squares and bridges in Denmark, whereas local business owners decide on the names of their shops and enterprises and all other texts displayed in shop windows and interplaying with the shop's name. Communication advisors design posters advertising concerts, products and other goods available for purchase. The different interests of the actors within the LL may conflict with one another, and even a street-name theme may differ from the branding strategy for the same area decided by city developers. I discuss the number of branding strategies and how they interact in Nordhavn in further detail later in the chapter.

4.3.2 THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE IN CARLSBERG CITY DISTRICT
Approximately half of the signs in Carlsberg City District relate to commercial functions, with texts including shop names, advertisements, menus and opening hours.

Table 2. Carlsberg City District

Primary Communicative Function	Number of Texts
Place names	32
Street names	17
Explanatory information, e.g. name descriptions	9
Commercial names (shop names, name of enterprises)	48
Information clarifying what the shop is selling, or what it is, e.g. coffee, clothes, bicycles	9
Additional information, e.g. signs pointing to trolleys, opening hours or menus, and mentioning cities and countries	61
Logos	26
Advertising a product's name, e.g. a film title or concert	6
Traffic information, e.g. parking signs, signs indicating construction sites or roadworks	14
Longer texts branding a locality in a certain way, e.g. branding a shop as a sustainable enterprise	17
Slogans	4
Election posters	5
Total number of texts	**248**

Only two signs in Nordhavn have a branding function, both of which brand two different shops. Seventeen signs have the same function in Carlsberg, although only three of them brand a shop: the other 14 brand the area itself. The vast majority of these texts refer to the new development area, but the LL also includes texts dating back to the late 1800s that brand the brewery. Many of these texts are so long that passers-by have to stop to read the signs. The texts are welcoming, advertising the evolving Carlsberg City District as a diverse area with shops, housing estates, schools and theatres, and displaying pictures of older buildings in the area while giving the history of the site. Other branding texts describe the 'tree-planting project' that is evidently underway. Trees are planted in small containers, making it possible to move them around the area in line with the ongoing city development. Marginalised citizens are responsible for taking care of the trees under the supervision of a named garden centre.

There is a paradox in the branding texts. As mentioned, they are relatively long, and they are all written in Danish. Not only do passers-by wishing to take in the place-branding narrative have to stand still and read the texts, they also need to know Danish. In addition, some texts are written on objects close to the ground, attracting attention mainly because of the lack of texts in the immediate surroundings. The area is characterised by the presence of hotels, the international *European School* and signposts pointing to *Visit Carlsberg*, which offers guided tours of the district. Clearly, many tourists do not speak Danish and are thus unable to read the texts explaining the history of the area and the developmental visions.

Nevertheless, the city development company *Carlsberg Byen* is strongly present: its logo accounts for 15 of the 26 logos registered in the study area. The logos are primarily used in connection with the rather long branding texts, thereby closely connecting *Carlsberg Byen* to the place-branding texts in the district. As in Nordhavn, commercial names characterise the area, but they are outnumbered by signs with *additional information*. However, this category contains a variety of texts with different communicative functions, such as website addresses. As mentioned above, I counted each text as many times as it was visible in the LL. The website address *www.cp.dk*, advertising a construction company operating in the site at the time I collected the data, occurs 27 times and adds to the number of texts in the *additional information* category. The strategy of repetition involving a website address is also evidenced by another construction company operating on the site at the time of the data collection: *p-olsen.dk* occurs seven times and was consequently counted seven times. Excluding the repetitions from the category reduces the total number of texts carrying *additional information* to 29.

Finally, in the case of Carlsberg City District I added *place names* as a category, which was not necessary when I categorised the signs in the Nordhavn LL. This *place name* category comprises the unique names of houses and parking spaces, for

Figure 3. Picture showing the *place names* category, Carlsberg City District. Picture: Line Sandst.

59

example, rather than street names. The names have different origins, and some of them were place names used among brewery workers from the late 1800s up to 2014 (Sandst 2016).

Figure 3 depicts the place name *Gamle Carlsberg* written on a portal that brewery workers called *Stjerneporten* ('The star gate') (Sandst 2016). *Gamle Carlsberg* ('Old Carlsberg') is the name given to that part of the brewery when the brewery site was divided into two, namely *Gamle Carlsberg* ('Old Carlsberg') and *Ny Carlsberg* ('New Carlsberg').

The tower on the left in Figure 3 was called *Kridttårnet* ('the chalk tower'), but as the picture shows, the name is not displayed. The tower does, however, feature a text requesting workers to work hard and to live a modest life. Nowadays, *Kridttårnet* is the name of a parking area approximately 20 metres from the tower. This naming strategy is also followed in other named parking areas in the district: e.g. *Lagerkælder 3* ('warehouse 3') is the name of an underground parking area. I will return to this later in the chapter.

The LL in any part of a town denotes the organising principle of meaning in public spaces. It is the communicated information, its functions and the interaction between the texts that organise and constitute meaning. In the following, I discuss the relationship linking power, language and visibility that stems from the data collected in the two study areas. My objective is to discuss these dynamics and relate them to the place branding of the districts as presented in official, public advertisements. To achieve this, I will investigate the identities of the districts with a special focus on the hierarchies manifested in writing, communication, visibility and power, and thereby examine place-making strategies.

4.4 Structures in Linguistic Landscapes: Power, Language and Visibility

My focus in this section is on the communicators of the signs in the LLs, and the interplay between the texts and the signs. I distinguish between private and official communicators with reference to *bottom-up* and *top-down* signage, respectively. Private communicators include shop owners and advertisers who give the shops and enterprises their names and offer information related to the activity of shopping. Official communicators, in turn, include the municipality of Copenhagen, the Naming Board and the Danish state. The State is responsible for naming streets and squares, as well as for traffic information and posters announcing COVID-19 regulations, for example.

There are different motives behind the information communicated by private and official bodies. The objective of private communicators is to sell goods, whereas the main aim of the Naming Board, the municipality of Copenhagen and the Danish State is to convey official regulations and to guide passers-by from A to B. However, the signs vary in terms of visibility: signs with street names tend to be smaller in size than signs giving commercial names on shop fronts. As I will show, it is in these hierarchies that meaning is organised and functions are communicated.

4.4.1 Private Communicators: Commercial Names, Brands, Adverts and Additional Information Related to the Enterprise or the Place

Owners of private shops decide on the vast majority of texts on their shop fronts, including the name and opening hours, and information about the goods they sell. Chain stores have a name across cities and countries, and the names of chain stores and shops are often homonymous to a brand name. Shops such as these have to maintain an internationally recognisable identity, and local, country-specific characteristics may be hard to find (Ainiala, Saarelma & Sjöblom 2012: 211–213; Stjernholm 2013; Sandst 2016: 28–32; Sjöblom 2016). As Trinch & Snajdr (2017: 65) state: 'Shop signs are public texts that communicate what stores sell, who is perceived to be on the street and what their commercial desires are thought to be'. In other words, not only do these texts indicate what goods are available for purchase in a more or less literal manner, they also pre-suppose an imagined group of people belonging to or expected to be attracted to the public space in question (see also Chapter 2 in this volume).

Sixty-six commercial names were registered in Nordhavn, and another 133 texts contained information related to them such as slogans, details about what was on sale, menus and opening hours. In total, 199 texts related to the activity of shopping were tied to the above-mentioned 66 commercial names, and another 43 texts were logos and advertisements in the form of product names, film titles and concerts with which the shops were concerned. As many as 242 of the 274 texts related to the activity of shopping, leaving 32 texts serving a directory function (street names including the name descriptions), traffic information, election posters and official notices setting out Danish COVID-19 regulations. In sum, the LL in Nordhavn is dominated by texts related to the activity of shopping, and the primary communicators are the business owners who, in a bottom-up structure, have extensive leeway in deciding what kinds of text appear.

A total of 48 commercial names were registered in Carlsberg City District, and another 74 texts contained information related to commercial names, such as slogans, details about what was on sale, menus and opening hours. Another six texts advertised products that were available for purchase in the shops. Of the 248 texts, 128 related to the activity of shopping. Street names and place names with explanations of the motives behind them accounted for 58 texts, and traffic information and election posters for 19. Hence, almost half of the texts in the registered data related to functions other than shopping, indicating different primary activities in Carlsberg City District compared to Nordhavn.

Fifteen of the 26 logos in Carlsberg City District were of the city development company *Carlsberg Byen*, and the remaining 11 were found on signs branding the district, including logos of the social-media sites passers-by could visit online if they required more information. Three out of four slogans represented the city development company *Carlsberg Byen*. The main difference between the areas lay in the fact that the LL in Nordhavn strongly reflected a commercial and shopping discourse, whereas that in Carlsberg City District was more of a narrative of the area.

61

4.4.2 The Official Communicator: Traffic Information, Street Names and Name Descriptions

Street names in Denmark are coined, decided and implemented by local politicians. The Naming Board in Copenhagen comprises four politicians who are appointed for four-year terms. On the administrative level their work is based on a number of guidelines related to naming, such as following themes (e.g., birds or cities), and naming streets after people – since 2008 preferably women in order to achieve gender equality in this respect. The guidelines state that there must be no commercial motives behind the names (Teknik- og Miljøforvaltningen, 2014: 9). However, it does not forbid political motives. There have been a number of incidents recently regarding observed political motives behind street naming, which have fuelled public debate in the Danish media (see e.g. Sandst 2016; Mikkelsen 2021). In fact, street naming in Denmark is political, and is closely connected to political power. Disputes have erupted over the years, some of which are aired in the media, whereas others are recorded in minutes available in the archives (e.g. BTU-449/2004).

The street names in Nordhavn follow the theme of cities with harbours. The ports closest to Copenhagen have given their names to the streets and squares in the central part of Nordhavn, and the further away from the centre one goes the more distantly located are the ports after which the streets and squares are named. The study area in Nordhavn is located in the central part of the district, hence the streets and squares under study are named after ports close to Copenhagen. Below each name is an explanatory text, e.g. *Göteborg Plads Havneby og Sveriges næststørste by* ('Gothenburg Square Port, named after the second largest city in Sweden'). There is slightly more traffic-information signage than signage carrying street names. Moreover, the former is more visible in terms of more central placement and larger signage.

In Carlsberg City District, on the other hand, there is slightly more street-name signage than signage carrying traffic information. Some of the traffic signage is large and orange, and is thus more visible than the street names. However, other signs giving traffic information are just as discrete.

On the semantic level, several themes have been incorporated into the street-names category, including 'beer-brewing activity', 'people related to the area' and 'famous Danish painters' (TMU 2014-0079803). Whereas Nordhavn has an unequivocal linguistic identity in the textual layer of official street names, that in Carlsberg City District is much more diffuse. The names of streets and squares reflect 'beer-brewing activity' (*Bryggernes Plads* 'Brewers' Square); people related to the area (*J. C. Jacobsens Gade* 'J. C. Jacobsen Road'); Danish painters (*Franciska Clausens Plads*, *Thorvald Bindesbølls plads*, *Constantin Hansens Gade*, *Købkes plads*); astrophysicist Niels Bohr (*Bohrs Gade*), chemist Louis Pasteur (*Pasteursvej* 'Pasteur Street'); and *Ny Carlsberg Vej* ('New Carlsberg Street'), which dates back to 1883 when it was an access road to the *Ny Carlsberg* brewery that was founded in 1881 (Jørgensen 1999).

Pasteursvej is also an older street name dating back to the early 1880s. Neither *Pastersvej* nor *Ny Carlsberg Vej* relates to a specific theme, and the remaining street names under study carry so many different themes that a linguistic identity is hard to specify based solely on them. This could reflect the fact that the decision-making process was contentious. Twelve street and square names were imposed on the site in 2014. This was the result of a one-year decision-making process involving the city development company, Carlsberg Byen and the Naming Board. Carlsberg Byen

proposed street names that reflected the old, original place names in the area, and they suggested naming streets after the architects of the listed buildings that are part of the new district. The Naming Board rejected all the proposals, however, and the chosen names of streets and squares related to one of the three above-mentioned themes (Sandst 2017). The three themes, namely *beer brewing*, *famous Danish painters* and *people related to the area* are all evident in the study area.

However, a number of the rejected names are now part of the LL in layers other than that of official names of streets and squares, used for houses and parking spaces, for example. The *place names* category in Table 2 above also contains some of the rejected names, but it primarily comprises old, authentic unofficial place names that were used among brewery workers as late as in 1847.[1] This implies different senses of place related to different layers of the LL: the names categorised as *place names* in Table 2 and the names of parking spaces and houses may have a higher degree of authenticity than the names of shops, enterprises, streets and squares. At the same time, it seems that different layers of power relate to different layers of the LL.

Hence, different linguistic strategies, levels of power and senses of place are tied to different layers of the LL. In the Carlsberg City District, place names, longer branding texts, three out of four slogans, and 15 out of 26 logos all relate to the same narrative, namely of a historical, cultural site that values diversity. In addition, one commercial name, *Carl's*, and one text advertising a beer brand relate to the same narrative. In all, 70 of the 248 texts across communicative functions relate to the same narrative of Carlsberg City District as a historical, cultural site that values diversity. In addition, 11 of the 17 street names could relate to the above-mentioned theme, although a number of them, such as *Pasteursvej*, require prior knowledge. This street name dates back to the 1880s (Jørgensen 1999), conferred by the founder of Carlsberg, because the chemist's method of pasteurisation was connected to beer brewing. There is even a bust of Pasteur on the street corner.

In this respect, the city development firm purports to influence the overall sense of place via unofficial channels. With regard to the commercial names, the vast majority of these texts and of those related to these enterprises reflect motives other than those relating to the site.

4.5 *Visibility and Power: Place Branding and Identity*

A high number of texts in Carlsberg City District cross communicative functions to form an overall narrative of the site as a historical, cultural place that welcomes diversity, whereas the commercial discourse in Nordhavn has overall superiority in the LL, and the signs with street names and traffic information are secondary. The fact that I did not photograph all the signs carrying street names although I photographed the shop fronts on the street corners corroborates this: the shop fronts simply took my attention. I overlooked the street signs because the signs with commercial information were larger, more colourful, placed in more prominent places in the cityscape.

1. See Sandst 2016: 201–206 for a total record of unofficial place names that have been used by brewery workers related to the area in 1847–2014.

As Trinch & Snajdr (2017: 66) put it: 'storefront signs place texts on the land in a seemingly innocuous way, but in a no less dominant fashion'.

On the other hand, I photographed all the street signs in the Carlsberg City District study area. The smaller number of shop signs made linguistic features other than commercial communication more visible in the LL. However, the sense of place in Carlsberg City District constitutes the narrative of the site, traffic information and shopping discourse. Nevertheless, the overall sense of place is far from obviously commercial: it is rather the place that is being branded in an array of texts relating to the same narrative. This is underpinned by the signs with other than commercial communicative functions. *Carlsberg Byen* brands the place, and the narrative of the site as historical, cultural, and valuing diversity is visible on signs all over the study area. The narrative is backed up by the architecture and texts dating back to the 1800s, which reflect the history of the area, complemented by some signs with street names via the explanatory text below the name. Most of the commercial names and the *additional information* on the signs are written in small letters, or the signs themselves are small. As Trinch & Snajdr (2017) put it, 'text-sparse signs appear to operate on the principle of what Scollon & Scollon (2003: 113) call 'low semiotic intrusion'. This language ideology governs and constitutes an environment where elegance and sophistication are projected through the absence of dense public textual displays' (Trinch & Snadjr 2017: 79). In line with this argument, the storefronts project a sense of exclusivity, yet given that the commercial discourse is not the most prominent in the area, the signs collaborate across communicative functions to uphold the Carlsberg narrative, although not without disruptions.

As mentioned above, Nordhavn was originally an industrial port in Copenhagen. When it started to be developed the original street names were replaced to reflect the current practice of using the names of ports: *Bilbaogade* and *Sassnitzgade* were originally called *Jernvej* ('Iron street'), for instance (TMU 2013-0264472). One could argue that part of the history and the original sense of place are lost when streets are renamed. Local citizens and business owners protested against the changes, but the Naming Board pushed through the decision. As with Carlsberg City District, the Naming Board was convinced that the port theme gave the streetscape in Nordhavn a suitable identity. However, the theme is hardly visible due to the prominent commercial discourse that relates the vast majority of texts to shopping.

Two kinds of power are connected to two layers of the LL in Nordhavn. The Naming Board implemented the port theme, but commercial enterprises dominate the LL and claim the sense of place. The distinct hierarchy in font sizes and the placement of the signs emphasise this. In many cases the most visible text is the shop name, to which all other texts on the shop front relate and enhance (see Figure 4 below).

As Figure 4 shows, *Liljen og Fuglen* is the largest text on the shop window, and the word *bogbutik* ('bookshop') is written in smaller letters below it. The same strategy is used for *Ren Cykel* ('Nothing but/clean bikes') to the right of *Liljen og Fuglen*: only the text is placed above the entrance door. The same composition is used: the commercial name is written in larger letters than occur in all other texts on the shop front. The hierarchy communicates that the shop name is the most important information, and that all other texts – being smaller in size – are secondary. In this respect, visibility plays a key communicative role in the cityscape.

64

Figure 4. The hierarchy of texts on the front of *Liljen og Fuglen* ('The Lilly and the bird') and *Ren Cykel* ('Nothing but/clean bikes'), Nordhavn 2021. Picture: Line Sandst.

However, the signs on the storefronts in Nordhavn have some resemblance to those in Carlsberg City District, in that the texts are sparse and add to the sense of elegance and sophistication. If one only considers the texts on the shop fronts, Nordhavn and Carlsberg City District represent the same kind of area. The difference is the unequivocal commercial discourse in Nordhavn that tends to dominate the LL, leaving other communicative functions in a secondary position. On the other hand, the commercial discourse connected to shops reflects the narrative of Carlsberg City District. However, a commercial discourse is part of the narrative as an underlying motif, the purpose of branding the site as a historical, cultural district welcoming diversity being to sell apartments to citizens and facilities to business owners.

4.6 Conclusion

The texts in the LL display different communicative functions. Concurrently, some relate to other texts within a sign, just as different signs with different communicative functions relate to other signs. The interplay constitutes meaningful signs, and the interaction linking the communicated functions, hierarchies and relations to the most salient features constitutes the linguistic identity.

The development areas of Nordhavn and Carlsberg City District have been branded differently. Nordhavn is branded as a 'sustainable city district', yet no signs

in the study area add to that narrative. The Naming Board selected and implemented the port theme as a linguistic streetscape, but the prominent commercial discourse overshadows it, leaving an unequivocal commercial sense of place. The Naming Board in Carlsberg City District selected and implemented several themes for the linguistic streetscape. However, the two most dominant linguistic narratives are commercial discourse and the notion of Carlsberg City District as a historical, cultural site welcoming diversity, as branded by *Carlsberg Byen*.

The commercial signs on the shop fronts in Nordhavn and Carlsberg City District resemble one another. They are primarily text-sparse, adding a sense of exclusiveness to the areas. In the latter case the text-sparse commercial signage makes room for the narrative of Carlsberg City District as a historical, cultural site welcoming diversity and adding a sense of exclusivity. However, the text-sparse storefronts found in both sites imply an identical target group, meaning that the commercial layers of the LL address the same kinds of people in each area, hence the areas are more alike. Although Carlsberg City District is branded aggressively, and the narrative is visible in the LL, its image as a historical, cultural site is backed up by the listed architecture and sculptures in the area. In this respect, a lot of the identity connected to the narrative stems from visual stimuli other than that of the LL.

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5. Activist Linguistic Landscapes in Urban Districts of Helsinki

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Some citizens use formal channels to act in society and influence its development, such as via letters to editors or citizens' initiatives, whereas others prefer to communicate their opinions through less official networks. This study highlights the latter kind of societal stance taking, with a focus on an underground version of free civic activity, namely social activism in the form of anonymous signs placed in public spaces without permission and with the purpose of changing attitudes and/or behaviour (cf. definitions of activism in e.g. Chambers & Phelps 1993; Mamadouh 2018; Abas & Damico 2019).[1] These transgressive and activist layers of urban linguistic landscapes (LLs) evolve at the intersection between local grassroots movements and globally working social movements, and reflect the societal attitudes of local citizens. Activist LLs give insights into a non-regulated and constantly changing discursive arena of urban landscapes, and allow for the in situ analysis of how local community members display their present take on societal discourses in the collective urban space.

The analysis is based on georeferenced photographs of stickers, posters and graffiti with an activist agenda, collected in twelve urban districts of Helsinki with diverse urban profiles. Taken together, these signs constitute a visible, local and temporally sensitive indicator of how the ideological foundations of society are constructed and perceived in the unofficial layers of Helsinki's urban LLs. The following research questions are addressed:

– Which discourses are dominant in Helsinki's activist LLs? What are their linguistic and discursive characteristics?
– Are there traces of interaction between signs sharing the same LL?
– Do the activist LLs reflect the societal and linguistic profiles of different urban districts?

These questions are studied through the lens of discourse analysis and from a general sociolinguistic perspective on variation in language use. Discourse analysis informs the study of both the interplay among ideologies, discourses and linguistic choices and the relations between activist LLs and on-going societal processes, whereas a

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1. A previous version of this paper was presented online on 2021-09-01 at the 12th Linguistic Landscape Workshop in Gothenburg.

sociolinguistic interest in the systematics of linguistic variation in space motivates the ambition to relate activist LLs to their urban contexts.

The study is linked to previous research on social protest and activism in LLs, including analyses of the LLs of public manifestations conducted by Kasanga (2014), Hanauer (2015), Barni & Bagna (2016) and Ben Said & Kasanga (2016), for example. More specifically, it relates to previous studies on the transgressive layers of activism, such as Vigsø (2010) and Awcock (2021), who analyse political and extremist messages on stickers, as well as Reershemius (2019), who investigates a broader range of stickers in their local urban contexts. It has been observed in previous research that transgressive stickers are particularly frequent in urban centres (Awcock 2021), and specifically in their transit areas (Reershemius 2019). When these stickers convey political messages, the transgressive stance taking constitutes a transient discursive arena encompassing a multitude of societal opinions (Awcock 2021). Most of the individuals who participate in these political and transgressive arenas by attaching stickers are anonymous (Vigsø 2010; Reershemius 2019), although the signs may well be made by identifiable collectives such as antifascist or fascist organisations (Vigsø 2010). Activist LLs of this kind may include traces of dialogue between what are often extreme positions (Vigso 2010; Reershemius 2019), which seemingly reflect a battle over the discursive power of the collective space (Vigsø 2010). As I will show in the analysis, these observations resonate well with the activist LLs analysed in this study.

Below I describe my main theoretical and methodological points of departure, whereafter I present the urban context in focus and the data collected for the study. From these background sections I move on to the analysis, which starts with an overview of the discourses most frequently represented in the data and continues to incorporate the dominant discourses and their characteristics, dialogicality between discourses, and observations on the urban profiles of activist LLs. A concluding discussion ends the chapter.

5.1 Theoretical and Methodological Framing

The focus of the study is on the use of visual language in public places, hence the general framework in this study, as in the other chapters comprising this volume, is the relatively new and rapidly growing scientific field of *Linguistic Landscape* (LL) or *Linguistic Landscape Studies* (LLS) (e.g. Shohamy & Gorter 2009; Shohamy, Ben Rafael & Barni 2010; Barni & Bagna 2015; Pütz & Mundt 2018; Gorter & Cenoz 2020). The research field has developed and expanded rapidly since 1997, when Landry and Bourhis defined LL as 'the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs' (p. 23, see also Gorter & Cenoz 2023 for many other definitions as well as a critical overview of the origins of the term linguistic landscape), such as traffic signs, advertising billboards and street names. More than twenty years later, LL research has come to a point at which the accumulated knowledge is open to new and expanded approaches. The international journal *Linguistic Landscape* (2023) currently promotes a more encompassing definition of the field, describing it as an attempt 'to understand the motives, uses, ideologies, language varieties and contestations of multiple forms of 'languages' as they are displayed in public spaces', hence including the broader concept of language and place, and a wider spread of topics. The present

study relates to this newer definition (Linguistic Landscape 2023), focusing on activist LLs and their linguistic and discursive characteristics in different urban districts.

LL studies do not constitute a homogeneous field with established theoretical groundings or methodological underpinnings, but rather include several approaches from different scientific disciplines (e.g. Pütz & Mundt 2018; Gorter & Genoz 2020). The theoretical foundation of the current study stems from discourse analysis, which sheds light on the interplay among ideologies, discourses and linguistic choices, as well as on the relations between activist LLs and on-going societal processes. The contribution of this research is to expand on previous discourse analytic studies of LLs by adding a sociolinguistically sensitive spatial dimension in analysing how activist LLs differ among urban districts with varying socioeconomic and linguistic features.

The main point of departure is a discourse-analytic interest in activist LLs in their societal and urban contexts. These LLs and their individual signs are analysed in their local and societal settings, and with a focus on the interplay between language and society. In Fairclough's (1993; 2003) terms, discourse refers on a relatively concrete level to the linguistic and social practices that are typical of certain groups and ideologies, whereas ideology is a more abstract concept alluding to a certain view of the world (see e.g. Määttä & Pietikäinen 2014). It is suggested in this study that certain discourses are linked to linguistic choices (see e.g. Kasanga 2014; Mamadouh 2018; Henricson 2020), and that the exploration of this connection could reveal relevant features of the ideologies behind the messages contained in activist LLs.

The study adheres to the sociolinguistic premise that variation in language use is not random, and therefore explores the dynamic relations behind it (see e.g. Bayley 2013). A key point of interest is how activist LLs reflect linguistic and societal dynamics, a question that I approach through the systematic selection of survey areas and comparisons of activist LLs in different urban contexts. Examination of LLs through this lens is an ongoing endeavour in the more recent and promising openings in the field (see e.g. Soukup 2020 and Chapter 9 in this volume).

Studying variation with regard to societal stance taking in the LLs of different urban districts potentially gives insights into how societal attitudes shift from one urban space to another. Thereby, it could also shed light on the segregation patterns of modern cities, in other words on 'the uneven distribution of social groups in the urban space' (Vandecasteele et al. 2019: 67). Here, it is worth noting that, according to Leino's dissertation (2021) in the field of social science, attitudes towards immigrants vary significantly in different parts of Turku, the former capital of Finland and one of its ten largest cities. Leino (2021) found that people living in suburbs with very high or very low proportions of immigrants were more reserved towards them, a tendency also observed in areas in which the population was older and had less education whereas central parts of the city and areas with many young and highly educated inhabitants were characterised by more positive attitudes. Other previous research highlighting urban segregation and social inequality in the Nordic countries includes a project on segregation and gentrification in the LLs of Gothenburg in Sweden (e.g. Järlehed, Lykke Nielsen & Rosendal 2018; Löfdal et al. 2022), and studies by Berlenius and colleagues on segregation in urban and educational spaces in the capital region of Finland (e.g. Kosunen, Bernelius & Porkka 2020; Bernelius, Huilla & Ramos Lobato 2021).

Activist LLs in this study are considered collective entities comprising signs that do not communicate in isolation, but interact with other signs sharing the same space

71

(Scollon & Scollon 2003; Stroud & Mpendukana 2009; Stroud & Jegels 2014). Stroud & Mpendukana (2009) illustrate how billboards in the same commercial campaign are linked to a larger semiotic chain, and how the dialogue among the individual billboards is structured. However, in activist LLs this dialogicality is not designed in advance e.g. for marketing purposes. It rather develops organically at the same time in the same place, as signs advocating opposite ideologies are interconnected by means of intertextuality, or as an antifascist statement in response to a fascist sticker attached to a bus stop one Friday is attached to the same bus stop on the following Sunday. The study of dialogicality thus sheds light on how the authors of signs communicate with each other in activist LLs.

The activist signs in focus in this study are transgressive, in other words they are unauthorised, placed in the public place without permission. The label transgressive indicates that they are norm-breaking because they are in the wrong place, rather than on account of their messages (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Pennycook 2009). Previous research (e.g. Kallen 2010; Karlander 2018; Henricson 2020; 2021; 2022) indicates that transgressive signs are more prone to change (additions, destruction, erasure) than official signs such as of street names. It is also a layer of the LL that is expected to reflect discursive changes in society at relatively short notice, and is thus particularly well suited to the study of publicly displayed societal stance-taking in the here and now. The current study is a snapshot of activist LLs at a certain point of time (i.e. March 2021) and hence is not intended to follow the online evolvement of these unofficial layers of Helsinki's urban LLs. However, discursive layers that remain visible in the urban space, such as destroyed or covered signs, may provide some fossilised evidence of the dialogical evolvement of activist LLs (see also Vigsø 2010).

The combined picture of these theoretical underpinnings guide the analysis. Although LL studies in general are suited to quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, most previous research on social protest and social activism in LLs has been strictly qualitative (e.g. Ben Said & Kasanga 2016; Abas & Damico 2019). The current study deviates slightly from this path in combining a qualitative discourse-analytic approach with some quantitative observations of data. The methodological decision departed from the conviction that both approaches are needed to answer the research questions, and that quantitative observations do not hinder qualitative analyses; in fact, the two approaches rather complement and depend upon each other (see Blackwood 2015).

5.2 The Urban Context and the Data Collection

The data were collected in Helsinki, the capital of Finland and the biggest city in the country. As such, it offers the largest variation in population and urban districts in the Finnish context. Finland is officially a bilingual country, Finnish and Swedish being its national languages. Finnish is the first language of a clear majority (87%) of the population, whereas a small minority (5%) speak Swedish as their first language.[2] Most street signs and other official signs in Helsinki, as in other officially bilingual

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2. All citizens living in Finland are required to register one language as their first official language: it is not possible to register more than one.

Figure 1. Focus districts. Picture: Oona Räisänen (Mysid), CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons; edited by Sofie Henricson.

cities in the country, are bilingual. Almost 80 per cent of Helsinki citizens declare Finnish as their first language, whereas the Swedish-speaking quota is close to the national level at roughly six per cent. About 16 per cent declare a language other than Finnish or Swedish as their first language, most commonly Russian, Somali, Estonian, Arabic and English. (Census data from the Official Statistics of Finland 2020.)

The city of Helsinki is divided into eight major districts, 34 districts and 60 neighbourhoods (Tikkanen 2020). The data for this study were collected in twelve of the districts, covering all eight major districts. When I selected the focus districts I aimed at variation in urban profiles in terms of linguistic, demographic and socioeconomic factors, for example, and I targeted a geographical spread across the city. Figure 1 shows the geographical placements of the focus districts, and Table 1 lists some general socioeconomic and linguistic characteristics. The selection was nevertheless informed by a multitude of factors and holistic descriptions of the districts, hence Table 1 only highlights a small selection of the criteria that guided it.[3]

As Table 1 indicates, the focus districts represent a range of linguistic profiles, with different levels of Finnish, Swedish and foreign-language mixes. As an example, the selected urban districts include the districts of Helsinki with the highest proportions of

3. The main information source in this process was the most recent municipal publication at the time of the data collection, namely Helsinki by District 2019 (ed. Tikkanen 2020), and statistical information related to this publication. Most of this statistical information is available on the district and major-district level.

Table 1. Focus districts and the Helsinki average (based on Tikkanen 2020)

District	Language shares (%)			Income	Education	Inh./ km²
	Finnish	Swedish	Other (top three)			
Ullanlinna	75.7	16.2	8.2 (Russian, English, Spanish)	Very high	Very high	4100
Lauttasaari	79.0	13.6	7.4 (Russian, English, Estonian)	Very high	Very high	6335
Munkkiniemi	81.6	10.8	7.6 (Russian, Estonian, English)	High	Very high	3860
Kallio	86.1	4.2	9.7 (Russian, English, Estonian)	Average	High	11,294
Alppiharju	86.5	4.0	9.5 (Russian, English, Estonian)	Very low	High	13,234
Tuomarinkylä	92.1	2.9	5.0 (Russian, English, Estonian)	Very high	Very high	962
Oulunkylä	85.1	3.7	11.2 (Estonian, Russian, Somali)	Average	High	3286
Jakomäki	64.6	1.3	34.0 (Russian, Estonian, Somali)	Very low	Very low	2942
Kulosaari	74.0	16.8	9.2 (Russian, English, Estonian)	Very high	Very high	1636
Vartiokylä	72.9	4.7	22.4 (Somali, Russian, Arabic)	Very low	Very low	3122
Vuosaari	70.4	4.7	24.9 (Russian, Somali, Estonian)	Very low	Very low	2281
Östersundom	74.5	19.4	6.0 (Russian, Estonian, English)	Very high	High	74
Helsinki average	**78.6**	**5.6**	**15.7 (Russian, Estonian, Somali)**			**2993**

Finnish (Tuomarinkylä, 92.1%), Swedish (Östersundom, 19.4%) and other languages (Jakomäki, 34.0%). The focus districts include urban areas that score particularly high or low on central socioeconomic factors such as income and education, e.g. Östersundom with the highest income level and Jakomäki with the lowest. Apart from the features included in Table 1, I also aimed to cover various urban profiles such as suburbs with many high-rise buildings and small flats, those dominated by large villas and generous square metres, as well as past or current working-class neighbourhoods. Punavuori in the district of Ullanlinna went through a gentrification process several decades ago, for example, and is nowadays one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in the city (e.g. Tikkanen 2020), whereas Kallio is discussed by urban researchers as a district of on-going gentrification (e.g. Mäenpää 1991; Karhula 2015). The data collection was restricted to twelve districts, however, hence many districts of potential interest were necessarily omitted.

I collected all kinds of non-mobile signs in these twelve urban districts. The data thus included official signs authored by national or local authorities (*top-down* signs), unofficial signs authored by private businesses or individuals (*bottom-up* signs) and transgressive signs, in other words unauthorised signs placed in the public place without permission, such as graffiti (on the characterisation of different sign types, see e.g. Ben Rafael et al. 2006). The focus in this paper is on the subcategory of transgressive signs, namely activist signs aimed at changing attitudes or behaviour (see e.g. Henricson 2020).

The choice of a specific sub-set of transgressive signs (i.e. activist signs) was motivated by my interest in societal discourses in urban spaces, and the fact that activist LLs by nature represent a grassroots activity and are thus expected to reflect citizens' own views, rather than political choices and official regulations, or commercial objectives, for example. In contrast to official signs such as those authored by national authorities, activist signs are not bound by legislation or other regulations, nor do they necessarily adhere to linguistic policies or politically correct discourses. Activist LLs are thus particularly suited to the in-situ analysis of community members' visually and publicly displayed views on societal discourses.

The data were collected in March 2021 from stretches amounting to approximately one kilometre in the centre of each district (+0.01–0.09 km). As the districts are of various characters, it was not reasonable to follow fixed criteria for identifying the central stretches of each district. Instead, I studied the districts on map and in place in order to identify central parts of the district, e.g. main streets including many commercial or public services. In some districts, the centre of the district was quite evident, e.g. including the main street of densely populated areas or the only spot with stores and postal services in more rural areas. In other districts, choosing the route was less clear-cut and here, I was guided e.g. by the kinds of places and services included in central areas from other districts. The data set consists of snapshots taken in twelve districts, allowing for the synchronic study of a selection of activist LLs in the focus districts. The data include all the written signs I observed on the selected route, regardless of size but restricted to non-mobile physical signs, and hence excludes mobile signs on vehicles and city soundscapes, for instance. The data collection resulted in 7,800 pictures, including 450 activist signs.

I counted the number of activist signs in accordance with Backhaus' (2007: 66) sign unit, thus counting every sign that could be seen as an item in its own right as

Table 2. The collected data and the activist signs

District	Pictures in total	Activist signs
Ullanlinna	1302	31
Lauttasaari	438	19
Munkkiniemi	640	9
Kallio	889	71
Alppiharju	688	19
Tuomarinkylä	167	8
Oulunkylä	764	16
Jakomäki	300	8
Kulosaari	446	15
Vartiokylä	1106	116
Vuosaari	865	137
Östersundom	195	1
In total	**7800**	**450**

one unit, instead of using larger analytical units such as bus stops and shop windows (cf. Cenoz & Gorter 2006 as well as Chapter 4, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 in this volume). I was influenced in this analytical choice by the fact that activist signs are placed one by one in the public space and, as a rule, are not designed as larger units. The camera used to take the pictures had an inbuilt GPS, hence the photos are geo-referenced.

As Table 2 shows, the numbers of pictures vary considerably among the districts (from 167 in the sparsely inhabited small-house area of Tuomarinkylä to 1,302 in Ullanlinna, which includes the neighbourhood of Punavuori, one of the most densely built-up areas of Helsinki). This aspect reflects the different profiles of the districts. Some (e.g. Kallio, Alppiharju) are much more densely populated than others, some (e.g. Punavuori in Ullanlinna) are filled with shops and cafeterias, while others (e.g. Tuomarinkylä, Östersundom) are more residential or even rural. One picture may include one or many signs. In addition, some signs are documented in more than one picture, including both close-ups and views of the larger context. In that the total data is given in number of pictures and the activist signs in number of signs, Table 2 does not provide a basis for any reflections on the quota of activist signs.

5.3 Activist Linguistic Landscapes in Helsinki

I turn in this section to the main results based on both quantitative and qualitative observations of the data. I present these results in three analytical sections, starting with a general overview of the discourses and languages included, followed by a more qualitatively focused analysis of the activist discourses in the data. I then move on to analyse the dialogicality within the activist LLs. The analysis concludes with a focus

Table 3. The top ten discourses, their main languages and their size in numbers of signs

Discourses	Main languages	Number of signs
1. Antifascism	English and Finnish, also German; in all ten languages	127
2. Fascism	Finnish, also English, symbols, German	82
3. Animal rights/Climate	Finnish, English	45
4. Anarchy	English, symbols	27
5. Pro-drugs	Finnish, (English)	26
6. Communism	Finnish	21
7. Anti-EU	Finnish(-English)	20
8. Religion	English	19
9. Anti-drugs	English	11
10. Conspiracy theories	English	10

on the urban variation among Helsinki's activist LLs. The data comprise 450 activist signs, representing different voices and societal stances. A thorough analysis of all these voices and attitudes is not feasible, hence I will emphasise the discourses that are present in the urban LLs in terms of having higher numbers of signs.

5.3.1 Activist Discourses

The 450 activist signs included in the data convey many kinds of ideological takes on society. Table 3 gives an overview of the quantitative distribution of the discourses present in these signs: it lists all the discourses represented by at least ten signs, resulting in a list of the ten most frequently appearing discourses.

The signs not included in Table 3 consist of various activist messages, of which the only ones with at least five items advocate boycotting Turkey (eight signs), women's rights (eight signs), worker's rights (seven signs) and mental health care (five signs). The remaining discourses are represented by occasional or single items, including signs protesting against COVID-19 restrictions, elections, NATO and capitalism, signs expressing solidarity with specific groups or societies such as the Mapuche people, as well as signs promoting change in the local society, advocating free public transport, for instance.

It is clear from the languages used in the signs that Helsinki's activist LLs are dominated by the majority language Finnish and the omnipresent language English. Finnish is included in about 54 per cent of them (241/450), and English in 44 per cent (197/450). Most activist signs are monolingual (374 in all), either Finnish (198) or English (150), but there are occasional monolingual signs in other languages, too, such as German, Dutch and Italian. The bilingual signs (48 in all) include different language combinations, predominantly Finnish-English and usually in that order, but some combine English and German, or Finnish and Kurdish, for example. There

are few (six in total) multilingual signs in the data, ranging between three (Finnish, English and Swedish) and seven (English, Swedish, Finnish, Spanish, German, French, Arabic) languages. In addition, some signs (22 in total) communicate only via symbols such as T-runes, peace signs and anarchist stars.

The data also include signs transmitting various ideological messages, but many of them appear only occasionally. The two most common discourses present in Helsinki's activist LL are antifascism and fascism, which together amount to almost half of the activist signs (see Table 3).[4] This is a tendency that also appears to describe Helsinki's activist LLs on a more general level: I have found similar results in studies based on both synchronic and longitudinal data collected in station areas in Helsinki (Henricson 2020; 2021).

Previously, there was a tendency to consider fascism a non-topic in the Finnish context, which reflected a historical narrative detaching Finland from general fascist tendencies in Europe and therefore also underestimating the historical presence of fascism in Finland (Silvennoinen, Tikka & Roselius 2016). Currently, Finland is among the EU countries with lower proportions of non-national inhabitants, and the lowest proportion in the Nordic countries (Eurostat 2020). Historically, too, the Finnish nation has not been perceived as one of the colonial oppressors, thus disregarding the injustices against the Sámi (Kuokkanen 2022). Simplified and partly deceptive observations such as these could lead to the misconception that Finland is an ethnically homogeneous nation in which racism, which is an integral part of extreme-right ideologies, is not expected to be a topic of societal relevance (Pantti et al. 2019; Seikkula 2020). Lately, however, there has been an elevated awareness of the presence of fascist and racist tendencies in the country, and clearly increasing research interest in these topics in disciplines such as history (e.g. Silvennoinen, Tikka & Roselius 2016), linguistics (e.g. Lahti 2019), and sociology (e.g. Seikkula 2020).

As is evident in this more recent research, and reflected in the data collected for this study, fascism and racism do unfortunately exist and are topical societal discourses in today's Finland (a point recently evidenced in the intense public debate on racism in Finland in the summer of 2023). As an example, reports published by official agencies (Police of Finland 2016; the Finnish Ministry of the Interior 2019) indicate increases in visible racism, hate crimes and extremism, and many immigrants report experiences of racism. Nevertheless, as is observable in the current data with its large proportions of antifascist signs, opposing forces actively resist the presence of fascism and racism by encouraging human diversity and challenging discrimination.

The fascist signs in the data express nationalist ideology and feed the urge to defend the nation's independence from an experienced threat. Incitement to fight for independence is expressed in texts such as *TAISTELEMME UUDEN ITSENÄISYYDEN PUOLESTA KOHTIVAPAUTTA.COM* 'We are fighting for a new independence towardsfreedom.com'; *KANSALLINEN VAPAUSTAISTELU* 'The national fight for freedom'; and *SUOMI HERÄÄ HERÄÄ SINÄKIN* 'Finland is waking up, and you should wake, too'.

Some fascist signs promote Nazism by simply stating the goal in words, such as

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4. In the activist LLs of Helsinki, antifascist and fascist signs express opposite takes on society. Fascism is here used as an umbrella term to cover signs expressing extreme-right ideologies, such as neo-fascism and neo-Nazism.

KANSALLISSOSIALISTINEN HELSINKI 'National socialist Helsinki', whereas others communicate solely via symbols and/or names of fascist organisations. The fascist symbols found in the data include t-runes and swastikas.

There are also signs that identify perceived enemies of the nation, naming Islam, Judaism, and/or communism, for example. As a case in point, one sign depicts an umbrella with a swastika protecting a man and a woman (symbolising heterosexual normativity) from the dripping blood raining down on them, the rain incorporating symbols of the perceived enemies: a communist hammer and sickle, the Star of David and the antifascist crow (symbolising the main antifascist organisation in Finland). The general message on these signs is that human diversity is a threat to the nation, such as expressed in a sticker that resembles a pack of cigarettes carrying the warning *MONIKULTTUURISUUS ON HAITALLISTA LAPSILLESI JA LAPSENLAPSILLESI* 'Multiculturalism is dangerous to your children and grandchildren'.

Some of the fascist signs explicitly take a stance against antifascist movements. These include a sticker that is very similar to an antifascist sticker carrying the text *HELSINKI ILMAN NATSEJA* 'Helsinki without Nazis', conveying the same message directed to antifascists, i.e. *HELSINKI ILMAN ANTIFAA* 'Helsinki without Antifa', with the antifascist flags crossed out. Another example is a sticker with a picture of a crow, the name of the antifascist organisation represented by the crow, and a knife stuck into the bleeding bird.

In accordance with nationalist ideology, the fascist messages are predominantly written in Finnish. In addition, there are signs in the universal language English, as well as some communication via non-verbal symbols. Occasional German inserts refer primarily to the antifascist movement. In another study (Henricson 2020) I also found single fascist signs with a text in Swedish, the minority national language, but there are no such examples in the current data.

The messages behind the antifascist signs are largely about explicitly fighting fascism, such as in the Finnish text *NATSEJA VASTAAN!* 'against Nazis', the English *SMASH FASCISM*, the German *GEGEN NAZIS* 'against Nazis', the Italian *SIAMO TUTTI ANTIFASCISTI* 'we are all antifascists', and the trilingual (Finnish-English-Swedish) *YHDESSÄ FASISMIA VASTAAN TOGETHER AGAINST FASCISM TILLSAMMANS MOT FASCISM*. Some signs express the wish for a collective urban space without fascism, such as *ANTIFA AREA* and *FASISMISTA VAPAA HELSINKI* 'a Helsinki free from fascism'.

Although many signs express hatred of fascism (e.g., *I HATE NAZIS* and *FCK NZS*), there are also some that advocate love as a means of fighting the hateful discourse. An example of this is a sign without a verbal message in which a red heart destroys the t-rune, which is the symbol of a Finnish fascist organisation that the Supreme Court of Finland (2020) recently banned as illegal.

Apart from denouncing fascism, antifascist signs also take a stand against the division of humanity by means of borders, nations, migration control and discrimination of various kinds. These messages are verbalised thus, for example: *NO BORDER NO NATION; REFUGEES WELCOME BRING YOUR FAMILIES*; and *SICK OF IT ALL FUCK RACISM, SEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA, ANTISEMITISM, TRANSPHOBIA, FASCISM, CONSPIRACY THEORIES*. Hence, the umbrella of antifascism covers messages opposing many kinds of discrimination based on sexuality, ethnicity, religion and so on.

79

Figure 2. An antifascist sign. Picture: Sofie Henricson.

An explicitly positive approach to human diversity is reflected in the linguistic diversity of the antifascist signs. English and Finnish are dominant languages, but the linguistic palette also includes, for instance, monolingual signs in German or Italian, bilingual signs in Kurdish and Norwegian, and multilingual signs in up to seven languages (see Figure 2).

The sticker shown in Figure 2 is an example of an antifascist sign advocating the rights of all humans and opposition against structures that construct divisions between people. The text, which is written in seven languages (English, Swedish, Finnish, Spanish, German, French and Arabic), questions the right of nations to dismiss migrants as illegal and thus to prevent them from participating officially in society. The illustrations allude to fighting against borders and discrimination by means of love rather than hate. The various flowers symbolise human diversity and a peaceful approach, softening and covering up the barbed wire that forms a barrier designed to hurt anyone trying to cross it. Unlike in many activist stickers, the text is written in lower-case soft italics rather than upper-case letters, which further underlines the non-aggressiveness of the statement. The multilingualism signals a positive approach to human diversity and underscores the international network behind the statement.

Apart from these two most frequently represented and interconnected discourses, the highly topical global discussion on the climate crisis, the extinction of species and animal rights is visible in the activist LLs of Helsinki. These aspects are often intertwined, and hence, I have not separated the discourses on animal rights and

climate change. For example, many signs advocating veganism allude to both animal rights and how it benefits the climate, as in a sticker carrying the text *VEGAN FOR THE ANIMALS FOR THE PLANET FOR YOU*. Extinction Rebellion (*Elokapina* in Finnish) is an international grassroots movement that demands radical changes to counteract climate change and the extinction of species, which has been active in Finland in terms of organising demonstrations in the streets of Helsinki (see e.g., Helsingin Sanomat 2021). It has also left some traces in Helsinki's activist LLs: the data include a few signs that spread its messages, most of which are in Finnish or English, and some are bilingual.

Although with lower frequencies, the signs included in the data represent a variety of other societal discourses comprising messages of protest conveying anarchist and anti-EU sentiments, and promoting conspiracy theorists. Another recurring theme is drugs, with messages both for and against their use.

5.3.2 Dialogue and Contestation

As mentioned above, the activist signs included in the data are transgressive, and as such are highly vulnerable to destruction and erasure by both private and official parties. In this respect, however, there are clear differences among the discourses: some signs are more prone to destruction than others, implying that they provoke reactions and that the discourses concerned are contested.

One way of approaching contestation is to analyse the degree of destruction among the signs (see also Reershemius 2019). From this perspective, the two most frequently occurring discourses, namely antifascism and fascism, are both highly contested, in that the majority of all signs advocating either stance are more or less destroyed. The fascist discourse is more highly contested than the antifascist discourse, judging by the state of the signs. Up to 94 per cent of the fascist signs are at least damaged, and as many as 70 per cent are almost destroyed. If only small fragments of the original fascist sticker remain, the messages are probably not transparent to anyone who is not already familiar with the content. On the other hand, although more than half (54%) of the antifascist stickers are partly or almost totally destroyed, many of them remain intact or are only slightly damaged (46%, compared to 6% of the fascist signs).

Fascist signs in particular are seldom left without explicit expressions of opposition. Most signs with fascist messages are destroyed or defaced with antifascist messages, and often both. Hence, fascist and antifascist signs are frequently observed together. In places where one fascist sticker is attached there is usually an antifascist sticker placed near or above it (see the picture on the left in Figure 3). Sometimes a sign is destroyed as a means of reversing the original message (see the picture on the right in Figure 3).

In the picture on the left, a bilingual English-German antifascist sticker has been placed over a fascist sticker with the Finnish and now covered text *KANSA KADULLE PETTURIT VASTUUSEEN* 'People to the streets betrayers to take responsibility' by the organization Kohti vapautta ('towards freedom'). The original message on the sign on the right was *KAUPUNKI KUULUU KAIKILLE PAITSI NATSEILLE* 'The city belongs to everybody except Nazis'. As it appears in Figure 3, the sign on the right however conveys the opposite message because the verb 'belongs' (*kuuluu*) and the preposition 'except' (*paitsi*) have been covered up: thus 'The city for all Nazis' (*kaupunki kaikille natseille*).

81

Figure 3. An antifascist sign covering a fascist sign (picture on the left) and an antifascist sticker with partly covered text (picture on the right). Pictures: Sofie Henricson.

Expressing opposition to an activist sign by destroying it or adding something conveying the opposite message could be considered a form of dialogue (see also Vigsø 2010): it is a dialogue between opposites and is particularly visible in fascist versus antifascist discourses. Apart from what could be described as the fossilised remains of a dialogue between antifascism and fascism in the form of destroyed and covered stickers, or collections of signs with contradictory messages, the dialogicality between these opposing ideologies is at times also designed into the original stickers.

For example, both antifascist and fascist signs often include pictures showing the destruction of the opposite party's symbols. Recurrent symbols of antifascist signs include the *Antifaschistische Aktion* logo with its two flags, a unicorn, and a crow representing the Finnish antifascist organisation *Varisverkosto* (literally 'the crow network'), whereas in the fascist movement they include the t-rune and a swastika. Figure 4 depicts an example of this tendency: the antifascist sign carrying the text *NATSEJA VASTAAN!* ('Against Nazis') is illustrated by four black crows tearing apart a Nazi flag with their beaks.

Another sign of the tense relationship between antifascist and fascist discourses and the dialogue between them is the considerable horizontal intertextuality (see Fairclough 1992), which is strongly evident in antifascist and fascist signs that use the same expressions and visual foundations in expressing opposite messages. Examples include visually highly similar signs conveying either hostility or hospitality towards migrants. The visual foundation of the sign is a family on the run. The verbal message of the original antifascist sign is *REFUGEES WELCOME BRING YOUR FAMILIES*, whereas the fascist message is either *REFUGEES NOT WELCOME* or *INVADERS NOT WELCOME*.

Dialogicality in its more explicit form is thus visible, above all, between antifascist and fascist discourses, but other signs may also provoke reactions. About a third of

Figure 4. Antifascist crows destroying a Nazi flag. Picture: Sofie Henricson.

all stickers addressing animal rights or climate change are almost totally destroyed, although there are no explicit counterarguments against the advocation of animal rights or urging action to counteract climate change and the extinction of species.

The least-contested discourse in the data collection appears to be religion: 16 of the 19 signs in this category are intact or only slightly damaged. It is worth noting that all the signs advocate Christianity, which is the main religion in Finland. Hence, the data does not reveal whether signs advocating other religions would be equally uncontested.

5.3.3 Activist Profiles of Urban Districts

My aim in this last analytical section is to discuss the twelve urban focus districts in light of the possibility to distinguish different activist profiles. First, Table 4 gives a glimpse of the variation in the discourses that were present in the twelve districts.

As Table 4 shows, antifascist messages top the list not only in the city in general but also in many districts. Antifascist signs clearly occur the most frequently in some districts, including Lauttasaari, Kallio and Vartiokylä. In one district (Ullanlinna), the division between antifascist and fascist signs is fairly even. However, there is one district (Vuosaari) in which messages supporting fascism clearly dominate.

It seems from the snapshot of one-kilometre routes in the centre of each district taken in March 2021 that the activist LLs of Munkkiniemi, Alppiharju and Kulosaari are visually fascism-free, in that not a single fascist sticker was documented in the data-collection process. Further, there are districts in which fascist messages constitute a very small element in a predominantly antifascist area, such as Kallio with 40 antifascist and three fascist signs out of 71 signs in total, and Lauttasaari with 10 antifascist and one fascist sign out of 19 signs. Jakomäki and Östersundom are the only districts with no antifascist signs, although the total number of activist signs is also very low in these districts (eight and one, respectively).

Animal rights and climate issues are among the three most frequently occurring discourses in most of the districts (9/12), the remaining three (Tuomarinkylä, Jakomäki and Östersundom) having a small number of activist signs but none advocating animal rights or measures to counteract climate change. The discourse of

83

Table 4. Top 3 discourses in the 12 districts

District	Activist signs	Top 3 discourses (number of signs)
1. Ullanlinna	31	1. Fascism (6) 2. Antifa (5) 3. Animal rights/Climate (4)
2. Lauttasaari	19	1. Antifa (10) 2. Religion (3) 3. Animal rights/Climate-Anarchy (2-2)
3. Munkkiniemi	9	1. Antifa-Animal rights/Climate-Religion (2-2-2) 2. Anarchy-Pro-drugs-Boycott Turkey (1-1-1)
4. Kallio	71	1. Antifa (40) 2. Animal rights/Climate-Anarchy (5-5) 3. Conspiracy theories (4)
5. Alppiharju	19	1. Antifa (4) 2. Pro drugs-Anarchy (3-3) 3. Animal rights/Climate-Worker's rights (2-2)
6. Tuomarinkylä	8	1. Antifa (5) 2. Fascism-Pro drugs-Antimilitarism (1-1-1)
7. Oulunkylä	16	1. Antifa (7) 2. Animal rights/Climate (4) 3. Fascism-Pro drugs (2-2)
8. Jakomäki	8	1. Communism (3) 2. Fascism-Religion (2-2) 3. Women's rights (1)
9. Kulosaari	15	1. Animal rights/Climate-Women's rights-Communism-Conspiracy theories-Mental health-Religion (2-2-2-2-2-2) 2. Antifa-Pro drugs-Free Rojava (1-1-1)
10. Vartiokylä	116	1. Antifa (34) 2. Animal rights/Climate (17) 3. Fascism-Communism (12-12)
11. Vuosaari	137	1. Fascism (54) 2. Antifa (19) 3. Anti-EU (16)
12. Östersundom	1	1. Fascism (1)

communism peaks only in some districts, being included in the top three in Jakomäki, Kulosaari and Vartiokylä and represented by four signs in Vuosaari, but there were no occurrences in the other eight districts.

Given the small numbers of activist signs in some districts, the extreme case in point being Östersundom with one, it is not relevant to discuss the profile of each district separately. However, grouped together, as in Table 5, some tendencies

Table 5. District profiles

District	Education	Central/Peripheral	Foreign-language share	Antifascist/Fascist
Ullanlinna	Very high	Very central	Low	5/6
Lauttasaari	Very high	Central	Very low	10/1
Munkkiniemi	Very high	Peripheral	Very low	2/0
Kallio	High	Central	Low	40/3
Alppiharju	High	Central	Low	4/0
Tuomarinkylä	Very high	Very peripheral	Very low	5/1
Oulunkylä	High	Peripheral	Low	7/2
Jakomäki	Very low	Very peripheral	Very high	0/2
Kulosaari	Very high	Peripheral	Low	1/0
Vartiokylä	Very low	Peripheral	Very high	34/12
Vuosaari	Very low	Very peripheral	Very high	19/54
Östersundom	High	Very peripheral	Very low	0/1

across districts warrant discussion in light of the results reported in Leino's (2021) dissertation showing that attitudes towards immigrants are more positive in central districts with young and highly educated inhabitants, whereas more negative attitudes are evident in peripheral districts in which the populations are older and less highly educated, and with either high or low proportions of immigrants.

Two of the three districts with a clear predominance of antifascist over fascist messages align well with some of Leino's (2021) observations. Lauttasaari and Kallio are central districts with highly educated populations. Many young adults live in Kallio, and the number of speakers of foreign languages is a little below the city average. The fascist predominance in Vuosaari also clearly resonates with Leino's findings. Vuosaari is a peripheral district that scores high on foreign languages and low on education and other socioeconomic features. Why Vartiokylä scores high on antifascism is less obvious. Vartiokylä and Vuosaari are both in Eastern Helsinki, where levels of education, income and employment are below the city average, whereas the proportion of speakers of foreign languages is above the average. Both districts are relatively distant from the city centre.

Vartiokylä and Vuosaari hence show similar profiles in many socioeconomic categories and other background characteristics, but very different top-three activist discourses. Vartiokylä's activist LLs reflect a predominantly positive attitude towards human diversity, whereas those of Vuosaari contain more signs transmitting hatred and fear of diversity as well as of international connections. The pictures were taken in similar neighbourhoods in the districts, namely in the main commercial and cultural centres (Itäkeskus and Keski-Vuosaari). Itäkeskus is often mentioned as an oasis of human diversity and as the main multicultural hotspot of Helsinki. The neighbourhood offers a multitude of shops representing different parts of the world, religious spaces for both Christians and Muslims, and a municipal cultural centre with an international profile (see e.g. the City of Helsinki 2021).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter highlights an underground version of free civic activity in an investigation of publicly displayed societal stance-taking in the form of transgressive and anonymous activist signs placed in different parts of Helsinki's public space. Focusing on a snapshot of the city's activist LLs, I discussed the community members' visually and publicly displayed views on societal discourses in a specific time and a specific place. As the results show, Helsinki's activist LLs include many different discourses and languages. The most visible discourses are antifascism, fascism and animal rights and/or climate issues; the most commonly used languages are Finnish and English, although this varies somewhat from one discourse to another. The antifascist discourse of celebrating human diversity is reflected in the most multilingual language palette in the data set, whereas the fascist nationalist discourse is in line with its adherence to Finnish, the main national language, in combination with the universal and omnipresent English.

According to the data consulted in this study, some discourses are clearly more contested than others in Helsinki's activist LLs. The results on more or less contested discourses are also in line with my findings from a pilot study of activist LLs at the central railway station of Helsinki (Henricson 2020). Fascist signs seldom remain uncontested, responses including erasure and posting opposing messages. Antifascist messages also tend to be destroyed, but to a slightly lesser extent. On the other hand, some discourses do not appear to be provocative in the first place. This holds particularly for religious messages advocating Christianity. The chosen methodology does not provide clear motivations for why these religious messages do not appear to provoke passers-by. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is however the religious affiliation of a majority of Finns, although the membership numbers have been in rapid decline in the last decades, and also many non-members have a positive attitude towards Christianity and perceive it as part of Finnish traditions (Taira 2017).

The data indicates that different districts have different profiles of activist LLs, but that even larger data sets and a more diverse set of approaches are required to determine how the urban profiles of the districts relate to their local activist LLs. Do the amount of activist signs in a district e.g. equal to the activist activity of the district in question, or can numerical differences rather be explained by which districts the municipality is more or less actively cleaning up? Do the activist profiles of the districts reflect the local inhabitants take on these kinds of societal issues, or is this kind of activism on the contrary done in other districts than one's own, perhaps strategically chosen based on flux of people or absence of active police surveillance? These questions can be raised, but not answered based on the data consulted in this study. Nonetheless, in many ways, the districts with clear antifascist or fascist profiles resonate well with Leino's observations (2021) of the district's position in the urban space and its population profile. As implied in the case of Itäkeskus, districts may also develop their own unique urban cultures, which might have a stronger influence on the local discursive atmosphere than socioeconomic characteristics per se can predict.

The results of this study are based on an analysis of geo-referenced photographs documented from the researcher's point of view. It would also be relevant to investigate the topic from the point of view of the authors and readers of these sign, consequently adding to our understanding of how activist messages are spread

in urban LLs and how they are perceived by (different kinds of) passers-by. The findings of this study should thus be substantiated in future studies based on multiple voices and citizens' perspectives that would enhance understanding of how society's attitudinal foundations are visualised and perceived in the transgressive discursive layers of collective urban spaces. Approaching this from the perspective of the model reader, a theoretical approach suggested in Chapter 2 of this volume, would be another intriguing possibility, which could deepen the analysis with regard to whether antifascist and fascist signs are written to model readers who represent similar or opposite ideologies, for example.

Activist LLs constitute a visible, local and temporally sensitive aspect of how the ideological foundations of society are constructed and perceived in urban spaces. As this study has shown, Helsinki's activist LL is a lively arena in which a multitude of societal opinions are expressed. These LLs reflect society, but from a discourse-analytic perspective they are a process in themselves and a means of creating, maintaining and changing society. The different approaches included in the activist signs documented in Helsinki, as well as the dialogue between them, illustrate an ongoing underground but publicly visible negotiation on where society should be heading. The findings illustrate, for example, how approaches to human diversity transmitted in activist LLs vary in some degree between different urban districts of Helsinki, and that one can discuss this variation in light of urban segregation and its uneven division of social groups and socioeconomic resources. Studying the discourses, linguistic choices and urban variations in activist LLs thus sheds light on how society at large as well as its local communities approach and discuss issues such as ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, and hence opens up new societal perspectives on urban segregation. The analysis further shows how a dominant section of Helsinki's activist LLs is engaged in a tug of war between excluding and including all participants as welcome members of society.

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89

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6. Linguistic Landscape between Concrete Signs and Citizens' Perceptions

Exploring Sociolinguistic and Semiotic Differences in Neighbourhoods of Florence[5]

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'Florence is alive and its soul is not all in paintings and palaces. It speaks with each one of us in a *language* as simple and understandable as the mother tongue' (our emphasis). Pavel Muratov wrote these words at the beginning of the 20th century. He described Florence as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, a place that one easily feels is one's own.

The focus of this chapter is on the linguistic landscape (henceforth LL), the set of linguistic and semiotic signs and messages displayed in public spaces (Gorter 2006; Shohamy 2018). Given its potential to reflect and emphasise sociolinguistic and functional changes in neighbourhood structures it could be used as a litmus test of multiple phenomena. The aim of our research was to explore the LL of Florence, the capital city of the Tuscany region (Italy), to find out *which language* this city currently speaks in its neighbourhoods and in its contradictions, and how its inhabitants perceive this *language*.

We chose to explore the LL of Florence because, as will be seen, the city has undergone numerous changes over the last decades. Migration flows, gentrification and touristification processes, the COVID-19 pandemic are just some of the factors that have led to upheavals both in the urban structure of certain neighbourhoods and at a demographic and social level.

In particular, we addressed the following research questions:

– What are the linguistic, semiotic, and discursive characteristics of the Florentine LL?
– How and for what reasons does the LL vary in different neighbourhoods?

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5. Bagna was responsible for the introductory section; Bellinzona for the following sections: *The Linguistic Landscape: Discursive Practices*, *Place Semiotics and Poles of the Linguistic Space*, *The City of Florence*, *Research Methodology and Data*, *Research Areas*, *Results and Discussion*, and *Other Languages in the Linguistic Landscape*; Monaci for section *English in the Linguistic Landscape*; the *Conclusion* is shared.

–   To what degree are Florentine citizens aware of the visibility of languages in different neighbourhoods of the city?

In the next paragraphs we first present the theoretical framework, then we describe the context of the study, the methodology and the research tools, paying attention to the characteristics of the neighbourhoods under investigation. After that, we discuss the results: first we give a general overview of the discourses exhibited in the different districts, and then we focus on and seek to explain the visibility (or not) of the languages that are part of the Florentine linguistic space.

6.1 The Linguistic Landscape: Discursive Practices, Place Semiotics and Poles of the Linguistic Space

The urban LL has long been considered the ideal place from which to present an overview of linguistic situations in varying contexts. Gorter (2006) describes the LL as 'a new approach to multilingualism'. However, holistic and transversal exploration of 'multiple forms of languages'[6] necessitates reference to multidimensional analytical and interpretative models.

The notion of linguistic space, introduced by De Mauro (1980) and taken up by Vedovelli (2011), among others, is a good starting point. It derives from the idea of linguistic competence, understood as the ability of individuals to choose the language they use and to follow the rules in accordance with the context. The term 'space' refers to a heterogeneous and multifaceted set of idiomatic realities that interact in a dynamic way. Linguistic competence is not understood in a vertical sense (in relation to standard Italian) in this model, it rather reflects the ability to move and to *navigate* within the linguistic space.

Linguistic space, although initially conceived of as a model of individual competence, also concerns collective and social facts, meaning the varieties and registers available to a linguistic community in a range of languages. In this sense, it could be defined as a descriptor of the collective linguistic repertoire referring, in the present context of the idiomatic configuration of Italian in its entirety, to a paradigm of sociolinguistic analysis. This purports not only to identify, but also to reconstruct the heritage of collective linguistic uses (Vedovelli 2011: 138). The present-day linguistic space of Italy comprises at least five dimensions or poles, namely Italian, dialects, minority languages, immigrant languages and foreign languages used for international communication (Vedovelli 2011; Bellinzona 2021). This diversity, frequently denied or, conversely, intensified based on political and economic ideologies and interests, can only be reflected in the LL, a carnival mirror of the roles played by languages in societies (Gorter 2012).

LL studies conducted in various Italian cities have purported to explore the linguistic space, sometimes offering holistic descriptions and discussions, but more often focusing on single linguistic poles. In this regard we refer, *inter alia*, to the works of Goria (2012) on dialects, Griffin (2004) on English, Tufi (2013) on minority languages and Bagna, Barni & Vedovelli (2007) on immigrant languages.

6.   See https://benjamins.com/catalog/ll (13/10/2023).

Of course, studying sociolinguistic variation in the LL, as demonstrated in this volume, requires reflection that transcends the level of language to cover the entire 'semiotic aggregate' (Scollon & Scollon 2003). In this sense, the analysis must concern 'the material world and the place that language finds in it' (Scollon & Scollon 2003: 111).

Within the theoretical framework of geosemiotics, and more specifically of place semiotics, the interpretation of visible signs in urban space cannot ignore a series of elements, starting from code preference (meaning the relationship between two or more languages on bi- or multilingual signs) and the type of multilingual arrangement (Reh 2004). Determination of the preference for, or dominance of one language over others requires consideration of the position of languages on signs as well as inscriptions, in other words all systems of meaning that are based on the physical materiality of language and signs in the world, such as layering, status changes, font (Dal Negro 2009; Gorter & Cenoz 2015) and material (Stroud & Mpendukana 2009; Blommaert 2013; Cook 2015). As Backhaus (2007) and Huebner (2006) (*inter alia*) observed, only by aggregating all these semiotic elements is it possible to establish the dominance of one language over others in a sign.

Another major issue in geosemiotics is emplacement, the material location of the signs. The physical placement of a sign in the concrete, material world has a strong influence on its meaning, combined with the discourse(s) it conveys. Scollon & Scollon (2003: 210) define such discourse 'in the narrow sense, language in use; in the broader sense, a body of language use and other factors that form a 'social language'. Signs in geosemiotic analyses of urban space may belong to various discursive categories – regulatory, infrastructural, commercial, or transgressive – which are overlapping, complementary or oppositional, reflecting (social) changes taking place and, in turn, influencing them.

6.2 The City of Florence

Florence has 368,419 inhabitants (Istat 2021) living in an area of 102.32 km². Administratively, the city is divided into five districts: District 1, corresponding to the Historic Centre; District 2, 'Campo di Marte' in the north-east; District 3, 'Gavinana-Galluzzo' in the south-east; District 4, 'Isolotto-Legnaia' in the south-west, and District 5, 'Rifredi', in the north-west. The number of immigrants residing in the city has expanded in recent decades. In fact, 55,139 foreigners were residing in the municipality of Florence in 2020, an incidence of 15.86 per cent of its population and somewhat higher than the Italian average of about 8.7 per cent. The migratory component is not distributed evenly among the various city districts: according to the Migrants Report (Comune di Firenze 2021), District 5 (34.20%) and District 1 (23.03 %) have the most immigrants, followed by District 2 (20.18%), District 4 (14.56%) and District 3 (8.03%). The five most common nationalities are Romanian (14.14%), Chinese (10.67%), Peruvian (9.66%), Albanian (8.45%) and Ukrainian (8.31%).

Florence is also one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Precisely because of these tourist flows, however, there is an ongoing process of touristification (Gotham 2005). Defined in many newspapers as the *glossy Renaissance luxury town*, a

city showcase, the *Las Vegas of tourism*, *Renaissance Disneyland*, it is transforming both its commercial and its residential offer. Tourism gentrification, or touristification, is 'a process of socio-spatial change in which neighbourhoods are transformed according to the needs of affluent consumers, residents and visitors alike' (Gant 2015: 4). This may be one result of specific institutional placemaking policies (Lees, Slater & Wyly 2013), but it also reflects an autonomously developing demand for tourist locations (Gant 2016).

According to the data processed by the Florence Tourist Studies Centre, the general flows in 2018 reached 5.3 million arrivals, and just under 15.5 million presences. This kind of pressure has significant consequences for the city and, above all, for its historic centre.

The consequences of the gentrification or touristification process became even more evident when the same tourist flows came to a halt because of the COVID-19 pandemic: economic crises, bankruptcies and closures have exposed the fragility of the system. As Camarlinghi et al. (2021) point out, the pandemic has made the city an orphan of tourists, giving it the opportunity to redefine and live itself in a different way. In fact, the pandemic has affected all aspects of life, changing the way people engage with each other, do their work, and spend their leisure time, as well as how technology is used, and life is lived in cities and neighbourhoods in general.

6.3 Research Methodology and Data

The purpose of this research was twofold: on the one hand it was to explore the LL of Florence in 2021; and on the other hand, it was to analyse citizens' perceptions related both to the functional differences of the neighbourhoods and to the LL and its characteristics. We considered it necessary to analyse the perceptions of citizens for two reasons: first because, as highlighted in Peck, Stroud & Williams (2018), the LL consists not only of languages and signs, but also and above all of people, of those who conceive, perceive, and live these spaces, signs and languages (Lefebvre 1991). Secondly because of the administrative subdivisions of Florence, which are somewhat problematic for LL research. Each of the five city districts extends considerably, which makes complete mapping challenging, and they are further divided into urban areas that comprise numerous neighbourhoods with borders that are not clearly defined. It is advisable to choose specific and well-defined areas because, as Huebner (2006: 32) points out, each city area has its own linguistic culture, soul and identity that distinguish it from the others.

For these reasons, we arranged focus-group meetings with citizens of Florence (Gibbs 1997; Finch, Lewis & Turley 2003). One advantage of focus groups is that, unlike individual interviews, they allow for a variety of points of view and emotional responses, thereby stimulating interaction, discussion, and comparison. The results of these focus-group meetings were useful both to identify the neighbourhoods to map and, above all, to explore perceptions and awareness of the LL and the visible languages.

The focus groups met during the months of March and April in 2021, at a time when the COVID-19 infection curve in Italy made mobility and, above all, meeting people difficult. For this reason, the meetings were conducted online via the Meet

platform (Stewart & Williams 2005; Gaiser 2008; Stewart & Shamdasani 2015) (see Chapter 2, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 in this volume for other ways of adapting the research design and the data collection to the pandemic).

During the meetings various topics were discussed, in accordance with the two objectives already outlined. The questions posed by the researchers concerned the city of Florence as a whole, the division into neighbourhoods (discussed with the support of a map), the urban and social transformations of the city, the relationship of the interviewees with the city itself and with the different neighbourhoods, the LL (perception and awareness, changes, multilingualism, street art, inclusion/exclusion phenomena). Despite having an interview guide, however, the conversations followed different paths from time to time, adapting to the suggestions and reflections of the participants.

The citizens involved in the study were selected in accordance with various criteria to give us a varied sample in terms of age, gender, job position, socio-cultural level, educational qualifications, language skills, as well as inhabited and frequented areas of Florence. We formed six focus groups (in addition to a seventh pilot group), each one comprising a minimum of two and a maximum of five participants.[7] 21 people, whose essential characteristics we collected in advance via a questionnaire on Google Forms, took part in the study: 10 men and 11 women; one participant was under 25 years old, 13 aged between 26 and 35, two between 36 and 45, two between 46 and 55, and three over 56. Seven people lived in District 1, six in District 2, and two each in Districts 3, 4 and 5.

Each meeting was audio- and video-recorded and the corpus of data collected amounted to about 216 minutes, which after being transcribed was subjected to qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2004) with NVivo 11 Pro (Bazeley & Jackson 2013).

We selected five districts as areas to be mapped (see the section *Research Areas*), which we explored on linguistic walks taken between September and November 2021, on weekdays and during working hours.[8]

The mapping extended over the entire area of neighbourhoods and bearing in mind the semiotic aggregate, therefore without limiting the collection of data to a specific type of sign. In line with what Cenoz & Gorter (2006) propose, the entire establishment was taken as a unit of analysis, such that 'each text belongs to a larger whole instead of being clearly separated' (Cenoz & Gorter 2006: 71, cf. Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 7 in this volume). Nonetheless, we conducted microanalyses of the individual signs that comprised the units. Given our research objectives, it seemed appropriate to consider the LL data from different perspectives, both quantitative and qualitative. The annotation grid, which we derived from the literature review (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Reh 2004; Barni & Bagna 2009; Spolsky 2009; Savela 2018; Bellinzona 2021 *inter alia*), includes references to numerous aspects and taxonomies related to the linguistic, semiotic, and thematic characteristics.

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7. All the meetings were conducted in Italian but, for practical reasons, excerpts from the interviews are presented also in the English translation.
8. With regard to the evolution of the pandemic, we should point out the reduction in infections during the months of the survey, which coincided with a (temporary) resumption of mobility and, in part, of social and commercial activities.
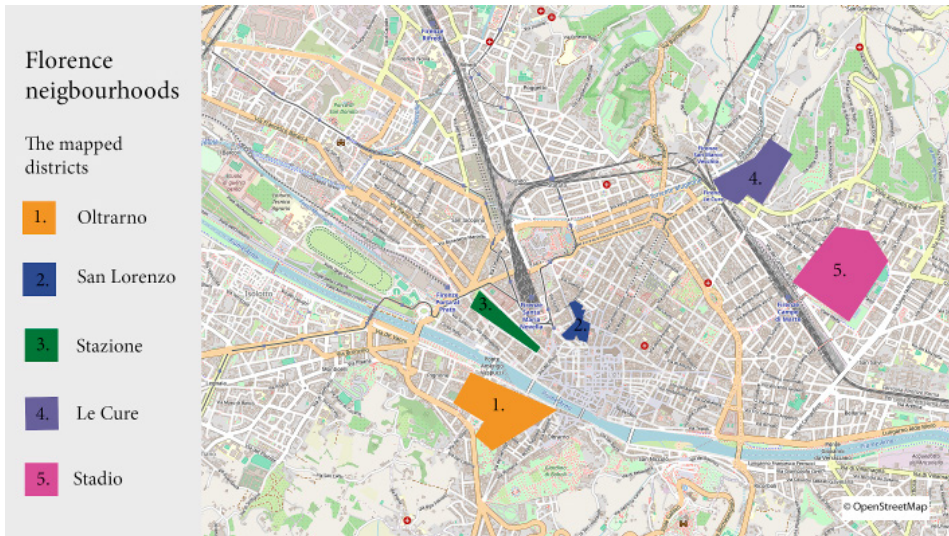
Figure 1. The research areas. © OpenStreetMap, https://www.openstreetmap.org

6.4 Research Areas

The focus-group analysis led to the coding of 346 references of variable length, which were synthesised in 57 tree and child nodes. We named the three tree nodes 'History and perceptions of the city of Florence' (Node 1), 'The subdivision of the city into neighbourhoods' (Node 2) and 'Awareness of the Linguistic Landscape' (Node 3). The encodings related to the first two nodes led to the identification of the five districts of Florence that we mapped: Oltrarno, Santa Maria Novella Station area and San Lorenzo in *District 1 – Historic Centre*; Le Cure and the Stadium area in *District 2 – Campo di Marte*. The map in Figure 1 shows the location and extent of these areas.

We chose the areas in line with the objectives of the study, and therefore investigated areas that were sociolinguistically and functionally different. The following brief description synthesises the results of the focus-group analysis and the historical and sociological surveys (Loda 2006; Zini & Lebole 2007; Burroni 2017 *inter alia*).

The Oltrarno area, coloured in orange, is part of the historic centre of the city, despite being across the Arno River. It is rather extensive, with much to admire including monuments known all over the world, such as the Pitti Palace and the Boboli Gardens. All these contribute to making the area a tourist destination. The streets of Oltrarno are also known for their workshops occupied by artisans, goldsmiths, and restorers, which makes them seem like vestiges of ancient Florence, ensuring the maintenance and conservation of Florentine life. As C. (focus group 1) stated (1), for example:

97

(1) C.: I have had furniture restored in recent years and it [Oltrarno – ed] is an environment almost with rules of bygone times. When you go to these places [to restoration craftsmen – ed] you must be introduced by a person trusted by the dealer, you have to act respectfully.[9]

The area is also popular among young Florentines for its nightlife, at least it was in pre-pandemic times. It is therefore an area with strong internal contradictions: on the one hand it leans towards globalisation, tourism, and modernity; on the other hand, there is strong resistance to this from the inhabitants, who try to preserve the historic characteristics of the neighbourhood.

Represented in blue on the map is the district of San Lorenzo, which is named after the famous Basilica that is at its heart. It is an area that is strongly affected by tourist flows, directed towards the church and the nearby central market square, around which is one of the characteristic city markets that mainly sell leather products. It is an area in which one can appreciate the latest applications of ancient crafts, as G. (focus group 1) explained (2):

(2) G.: There are still some *civaie* in the San Lorenzo area, where *civaioli*, sellers of dried legumes and cereals by weight, still work.[10]

Conversely, the area is one of those in the historic centre accommodating the most inhabitants with a migratory background, who have chosen it for commercial and residential reasons.

The area adjacent to Santa Maria Novella station is characterised by an even stronger presence of immigrants. It comprises two streets (via della Scala and via Palazzuolo), coloured green on the map. As M. (focus group 3) observed (3):

(3) M.: It is very multicultural, there are various shops of different ethnicities, markets and mini markets, hairdressers of various types, afro or otherwise, shops selling food, butchers … it is quite diverse in terms of area and population […] There are mostly foreign people and shops.[11]

The area of Le Cure, on the other hand, is purely residential: it is in District 2, coloured purple on the map. It is a strategic area, immediately adjacent to the historic centre and not far from Campo di Marte station. We chose this neighbourhood not only because of its residential status, but also because it is particularly representative of graffiti and street art. In fact, the wide pedestrian underpass in the main square is constantly updated with new works and murals: every month the walls are repainted to make room for other artists.

9. Original: *Ho fatto restaurare negli anni scorsi dei mobili negli ultimi anni e questo [l'Oltrarno – ndr] è un ambiente quasi con regole di altri tempi. Quando si va in questi posti [dagli artigiani restauratori – ndr] bisogna essere presentati da una persona di fiducia del commerciante, bisogna comportarsi con rispetto.*
10. Original: *Ci sono ancora alcune civaie nella zona di San Lorenzo, dove lavorano i civaioli, i venditori di legumi secchi e cereali a peso.*
11. Original: *È molto multiculturale, ci sono vari negozi di diverse etnie, mercati e mini market, parrucchieri di vario tipo, afro o meno, negozi alimentari, macellerie… è abbastanza diversificata come zona e come popolazione […] Ci sono soprattutto persone e negozi stranieri.*

The last district we mapped, in pink on the map, is adjacent to the Stadium. There are also *free walls* on which street art is accommodated. The Stadium area is also a place in which various segments of the population meet, with numerous sports and other facilities: the building that used to be a venue for concerts and events was converted into a vaccination hub during the pandemic.

6.5 Results and Discussion

In total, 762 units of analysis of the LL were collected during the survey. The LLs under scrutiny turned out to be environments with both common and divergent characteristics. Neighbourhood differences emerged, first, from the quantitative data on the type of area, primarily commercial or residential. Table 1 shows the absolute values relating to the number of units analysed, distributed according to the district and the context (commercial, transgressive, or other).

Units of analysis that are *out of place*, such as graffiti and elements of street art, fall under the label 'transgressive units'. We included top-down regulatory, promotional and infrastructural discourses under the label 'top-down units'. Discourses related to available activities, products and various sponsored events are included under the label 'commercial units'.

In most cases these represent commercial establishments with complex units of analysis comprising several signs. We thought it would be useful (given the discussion to follow) also to report absolute numbers and percentages of signboards, (Table 2), placed in the upper part of the windows and usually indicating the name and/or type of business. Furthermore, again given the commercial context, we took account of the presence of discourses related to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as regulatory signs indicating measures to be respected to limit the spread of the virus (see also Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 in this volume).

Table 1. The distribution of the units of analysis based on district and domain

	Commercial signs	Transgressive signs	Top-down signs	Total
Oltrarno	258 (77%)	33 (10%)	42 (13%)	**333 (44%)**
San Lorenzo	66 (94%)	3 (4%)	1 (2%)	**70 (9%)**
Station	77 (75%)	10 (10%)	15 (15%)	**102 (13%)**
Le Cure	98 (54%)	72 (39%)	13 (7%)	**183 (24%)**
Stadium	21 (29%)	21 (29%)	32 (42%)	**74 (10%)**
Total	**520 (68%)**	**139 (18%)**	**103 (14%)**	**762 (100%)**

Table 2. The distribution of different typologies of commercial signs (signboards and COVID-19-related signs) based on district.

	Commercial units		
	Tot.	Signboards	COVID-19
Oltrarno	258	134 (52%)	**91 (35%)**
San Lorenzo	66	62 (94%)	**12 (18%)**
Station	77	63 (82%)	**11 (14%)**
Le Cure	98	81 (83%)	**27 (27%)**
Stadium	21	10 (48%)	**0 (0%)**
Total	520	350 (67%)	141 (27%)

Among the most obviously present domains in the LL is, as expected, the strictly commercial, which is predominant in the historic centre (Oltrarno, San Lorenzo and Station) and, to a lesser extent, in Le Cure. A high percentage of units (39%) in the latter district turned out to belong to the transgressive domain, which was also strongly present in the Stadium area (29%) where top-down units were nevertheless predominant (42%).

Relevant data on the commercial LL relates to the characteristics of the individual signs that make up the units of analysis. As the data in the table shows, most shops in all the mapped areas except Oltrarno were equipped with signboards. In Oltrarno, however, almost half of the shops communicated information to the public either through linguistic elements present directly on the window, or through a silent LL (only 52% of the commercial establishments had a signboard). This was also the case in numerous art galleries, artisan shops and restoration shops in the neighbourhood. As C. (focus group 1) explained (4):

(4) C.: When you pass these places, they do not even attract attention: from the perspective of marketing, visibility, perhaps things to which we, I mean young people, are more sensitive. You pass them and at best they seem like invisible businesses, at worst they seem really bad places that you don't want to enter.[12]

The name of the business is usually shown on the signboard or on the window, whereas other information is placed on the façades of the businesses in the form of stickers, sheets of paper, posters, murals and blackboards. These texts range from information related to opening hours to communications among inhabitants of the

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12. Original: *Quando si passa davanti a questi luoghi non attirano nemmeno l'attenzione: dal punto di vista del marketing, della visibilità, forse cose a cui noi, intendo i giovani, siamo più sensibili. Ci si passa davanti e nel migliore dei casi sembrano attività commerciali invisibili, nel peggiore dei casi sembrano posti davvero brutti, in cui non si vuole entrare.*

neighbourhood concerning the menu of the day and requests for social justice, from promotional information about events organised in the area to rules aimed at limiting the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The discourse on COVID-19 (explored in depth in Bagna & Bellinzona 2023), which is in evidence in the commercial LL in all neighbourhoods in the form of a handbook of accepted, recommended and prohibited behaviour, also emerges in the transgressive LL. This domain is particularly receptive to social and current issues, which are perceived as more urgent. This is exemplified in photos 1 and 2 in Figure 2 (Le Cure). In the former, entitled 'Antibody against hatred', the pandemic and its lexicon constitute the starting point encouraging people to reflect on other issues. The latter photo is of two posters designed to promote an event: one hand is squeezing the dome of Florence Cathedral as if it were an orange, and beside it is the text, 'Squeezing Florence: that's enough!'. The event has the slogan, 'We won't get back to normality because normality was the problem': it is a protest linked to the effects of tourism on the social fabric of the city, which is made even more evident by the pandemic that has emptied Florence of tourists, thus triggering a severe economic crisis.

Whereas it is possible to find protest discourses in the Le Cure underpass, the Stadium area is different. There are ice cream shops with signboards in purple, the colour of the city's football team, pizzerias named 'Offside', street names reflecting sporting events and personalities, themed paintings, and murals: the entire LL emphasises the neighbourhood obsession, namely the culture of sport. Photo 3 (Figure 2) is an example of a mural that emphasises the ability of sport to unite and to promote integration.

Photo 4 (Figure 2) is of one of the numerous signs documented in Oltrarno that convey protest/solidarity discourses. In fact, there is a poster promoting mutual aid among inhabitants of the neighbourhood in terms of food support.
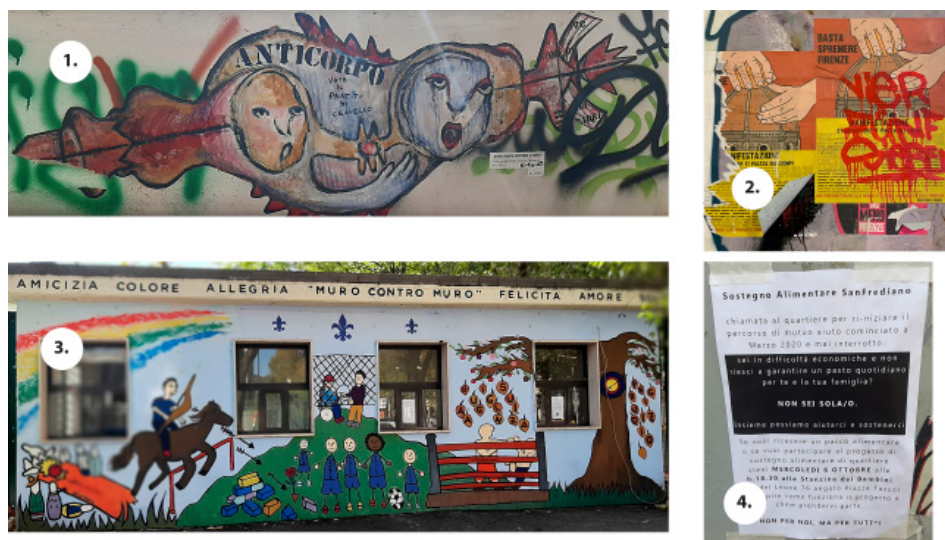
Figure 2. Discourses in the Florentine LL. Pictures: Carla Bagna, Martina Bellinzona and Viola Monaci.

It is therefore clear how discourses with differing content meet and collide in LLs, encouraging each neighbourhood to take on a distinctive aspect. However, the discourses do not rely totally on images and texts: languages, as powerful semiotic devices, are also able to convey meanings.

In terms of linguistic diversity, we documented occurrences in 15 languages, in addition to Italian, and a total of 392 monolingual and 272 bilingual units, and 33 presenting texts in three or more languages. Even from a linguistic perspective, each district had its own characteristics. In the following paragraphs we consider the peculiarities of each language and each area, focusing first on the visibility of English and then shifting to other languages.

6.5.1 ENGLISH IN THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE

Florence is a city which speaks English. On the quantitative level, traces of English were documented in 327 occurrences, equal to about 43 per cent of the total. Of these, 50 were monolingual units of analysis, 245 bilingual (in 104 of which English was the dominant language) and 32 were multilingual (in 12 of which English was dominant). However, the perceptions of informants in the focus groups were quite different, as evidenced in what G. (focus group 2) stated (5):

(5) G.: I honestly don't [notice the presence of the English language – ed], maybe only in the graffiti […] At most you can see this language a little more in areas where migrants reside, but not in Florence.[13]

According to this testimony, therefore, the English language is not visible within the Florentine LL, except sometimes in Street Art or in areas affected by the presence of immigrants and foreign residents, as a form of linguistic facilitation. F. (focus group 5) also referred to the absence of the English language (6):

(6) F.: Especially with English then … that is, in restaurants you may find more particular languages, but English, French, just not. Maybe something in Spanish…[14]

In short, in her view, English would not be used in the commercial field because it is not considered interesting and does not transmit positive semiotic values. However, the results of the LL analysis paint a very different picture, as shown in Table 3.

The presence of the English language affects the commercial domain the most, especially in the districts of the historic centre (Oltrarno, San Lorenzo and Station). It is even visible in Le Cure, especially in the transgressive sphere. The district in which it is most visible in percentage terms is the Station, which is not surprising given that it is a transit area frequented by tourists, with numerous luggage storage areas and facilities for exchanging money. The very function of these places requires them to display information in English, as R. observed (focus group 1) (7):

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13. Original: *Sinceramente non [noto la presenza della lingua inglese – ndr], forse solo nei graffiti […] Al massimo si vede un po' di più questa lingua nelle zone dove vivono gli immigrati, ma non a Firenze.*
14. Original: *Soprattutto con l'inglese poi… cioè, nei ristoranti si possono trovare lingue più particolari, ma inglese, francese, proprio no. Forse qualcosa in spagnolo…*

102

Table 3. The visibility of English in the Florentine LL[15]

	Commercial signs			Transgressive signs	Top-down signs	Total
	Tot.	Signboards	COVID-19			
Oltrarno	125 (49%)	51 (37%)	9 (10%)	7 (21%)	13 (31%)	**145 (44%)**
San Lorenzo	32 (48%)	25 (42%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	**32 (46%)**
Station	43 (56%)	30 (50%)	3 (27%)	4 (40%)	8 (32%)	**55 (54%)**
Le Cure	35 (36%)	15 (20%)	0 (0%)	35 (49%)	6 (46%)	**76 (41%)**
Stadium	2 (18%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	4 (19%)	12 (29%)	**19 (26%)**
Total	**237 (46%)**			**50 (36%)**	**39 (38%)**	**327 (43%)**

(7) R.: English seems to be the dominant language in some businesses, such as currency exchange and souvenir shops. D [another participant in the focus group – ed] rightly spoke of restaurants and this is the case mainly in places where tourism is stronger.[16]

With regard to the multilingual strategy evident in units of analysis in which two or more languages were documented, English was used to complement other languages, especially Italian, in 146 units, in an overlapping manner in 94 units, and as a duplicate language in only 24 cases. It is worth pointing out that, in most cases, duplicated texts were used on top-down signs, posted by the municipal or regional authority. Photo 1 in Figure 3 shows an example of this, namely an institutional sign with an informative function aimed at tourists, outlining the history and characteristics of a church in Oltrarno.

Although in most cases it was not difficult to identify specific named languages on the signs because they tended to be highlighted graphically in a different way or markedly divided, mixed and hybrid linguistic use was observed on some signs (see also Chapter 3 in this volume). This may have reflected an imbalance in language skills, or it could have been part of a creative strategy to create funny and captivating names in which the pun is rendered by blending different languages. The restaurant in photo 2 (Figure 3 – Le Cure) is a case in point: the name chosen for the place, 'Beerbante', plays on the assonance of the English word beer – / ˈbɪr / (one of the varieties offered by the business, indicated on the icon above the photo) and the first part of the Italian word birbante – / birˈbante /, a maliciously or playfully spiteful, but also crafty and shrewd person.

15. The percentages shown in brackets refer to the total in the respective category, as shown in Table 1 and 2.
16. Original: *L'inglese sembra essere la lingua dominante in alcune attività commerciali, come il cambio valuta e i negozi di souvenir. D. [un altro partecipante al focus group – ndr] ha parlato giustamente di ristoranti e questo avviene soprattutto nei luoghi dove il turismo è più forte.*

On the other hand, the commercial sphere linked to leather goods is not very creative on the linguistic level. Florence is well-known for its leather products, and San Lorenzo and part of Oltrarno are full of shops selling leather goods (see, for example, photo 3 in Figure 3 – Oltrarno). Eighty-one per cent of the analysed units relating to leather goods were mono- or bilingual, with English texts that tended to comprise the single word 'leather'. The choice of English in this case was tourism-related.

There are several reasons why English is used in other types of business, however. An example is given by shops that offer technological services and hairdressers. Both categories of commercial establishments have above-average usage of English, 86 and 63 per cent, respectively, of the total. Hence, in addition to presenting signs rich in texts and therefore with a strong information density, they tend to use the English language. Although Italian is often used with reference to the services and products offered, the name of the shop is in English, which is commonly considered the language of technology and, as such, implies that the shop is part of the international scene. Similarly, hairdressers (as well as vintage and other shops in the clothing sector) tend to define themselves by using English, which (as a semiotic system) conveys values linked to modernity, trendiness, and fun.

Figure 3. Examples of English usage in the LL. Pictures: Carla Bagna, Martina Bellinzona and Viola Monaci.

A final element that we should highlight relates to the preponderance of English in signs belonging to commercial businesses run by people with a migratory background. Photo 4 in Figure 3 (Oltrarno) is of a mini market, whose owners are of Asian origin, and there is no space for languages other than Italian and English. The presence or absence of other languages in the Florentine LL is the subject of the discussion in the next paragraph.

6.5.2 Other Languages in the Linguistic Landscape

The quantitative analysis showed that languages other than English and Italian were hardly visible in the LL of the various districts: in total, only 80 units of analysis (10% of the total) have occurrences in other languages (Table 4).

Table 4. The distribution of other languages in the mapped districts

	Arabic	Chinese	Dialects	Fr, Germ, Sp	Other[17]	Total
Oltrarno	2	3	11	9	6	**28 (9%)**
San Lorenzo	4	1	2	1	3	**9 (13%)**
Station	3	4	7	12	3	**29 (28%)**
Le Cure	0	4	1	3	1	**9 (5%)**
Stadium	0	0	0	1	4	**5 (7%)**
Total	**9**	**12**	**21**	**26**	**17**	**80 (10%)**

The first point worth noting is the overlap between the number of units of analysis with occurrences in other languages and neighbourhoods with a particularly heavy presence of immigrant communities or substantial tourist flows (San Lorenzo, Station and Oltrarno). This further confirms the indicative function of the LL (Scollon & Scollon 2003), namely to convey content to various readers in a usable manner (Spolsky & Cooper 1991; Ben-Rafael 2009).

At the same time, there is a mismatch between the visible languages and the languages (probably) spoken among the communities residing in the territory. Even this data is not unexpected: as Vandenbrouke (2015) argues, the direct visibility-vitality correlation is no longer supported by empirical data in light of the sociolinguistic changes taking place in present-day societies. The participants of the focus groups also noticed this, in some cases providing their own interpretations of the phenomenon: as P. (focus group 1) remarked (8):

(8) P.: I have not happened to see anything in Spanish or Romanian, perhaps because they [the languages – ed] are not so dissimilar from our language; perhaps they

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17. The label 'Other' includes Japanese (6), Hindi (2), Russian (2), Turkish (2), Bengali (1), Sinhalese (1), Latin (1), Dutch (1) and Thai (1).

[the speakers – ed] prefer to learn Italian and use that, although there is a fairly strong Peruvian community in Florence, I think.[18]

Later during the discussion, however, P. shifted the focus to other languages, namely Arabic and Chinese, which he described as very visible in the urban LL (9). He explained their distribution as follows:

(9) P.: So, connected to the fact that the signs are often in other languages, it is because older foreigners have not integrated.[19]

The data we collected contradicts this stereotype. As we observed the presence of Arabic in the LL, for example, we noticed that it was always as a duplicate, or overlapping with Italian (photo 1 in Figure 4 – Station area), added as a complement to communicate untranslatable information, in particular in relation to *halal* foods. We should add that the presence of Arabic is marginal not only on signboards but also on other signs placed on shop windows, which have a regulatory or promotional function.

Another text worth mentioning was documented in Oltrarno (see photo 2 in Figure 4). It is a poster containing information about an anti-eviction group that was active in the area, the aim of which was to help people and families in difficulty. The text is presented, duplicated, in Italian, Arabic and English, and the linguistic choices, added to the content of the message, produce a discourse of solidarity, not only among the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, but also between members of different linguistic communities. However, it is noteworthy that the English translation is faithful to the Italian text, whereas there are numerous errors in the Arabic version, both in the spelling (for example, the word committee was written اجته instead of لجنة, probably confusing the letters ل and ا, and ن and ت which, on the keyboard, are adjacent to each other), and in the grammar and punctuation.

We also noted an error in the sign shown in photo 3, Figure 4 (Oltrarno): instead of duplicating the English text, 'San tea house', the Chinese text states 'Tea room of the eighth grade'. The presence of Chinese in our corpus, as of Arabic, is limited. Occurrences in Chinese refer to commercial signs, mainly in restaurants. F. (focus group 2) suggested an interpretation of this (10):

(10) F.: There are some shops that tend to have Italian names, on the other hand the restaurant, which is more attractive with a foreign name, has a foreign name. It depends on the use you want; if you go to a restaurant you expect to find a different culture.[20]

18. Original: *Non mi è capitato di vedere nulla in spagnolo o in rumeno, forse perché [le lingue – ndr] non sono così dissimili dalla nostra lingua; forse [i parlanti – ndr] preferiscono imparare l'italiano e usare quello, anche se a Firenze c'è una comunità peruviana abbastanza forte, credo.*
19. Original: *Quindi, se i cartelli sono spesso in altre lingue, è perché gli stranieri più anziani non si sono integrati.*
20. Original: *Ci sono alcuni negozi che tendono ad avere nomi italiani, mentre il ristorante, che è più attraente con un nome straniero, ha un nome straniero. Dipende dall'uso che se ne vuole fare; se si va al ristorante ci si aspetta di trovare una cultura diversa.*
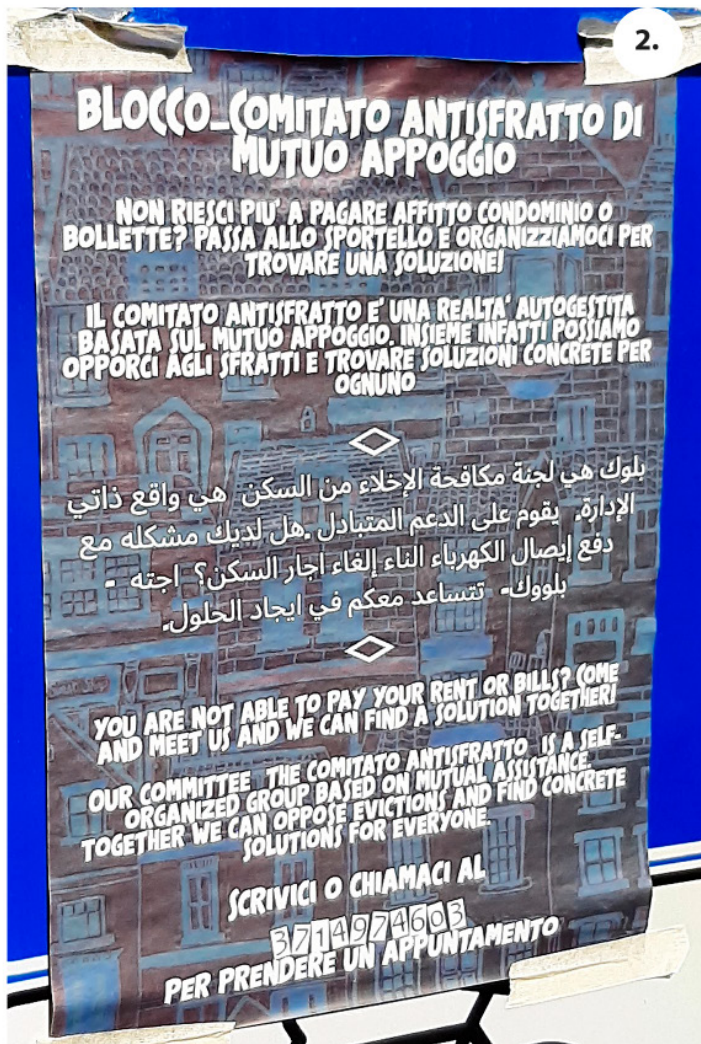
Figure 4. Arabic and Chinese in the LL. Pictures: Carla Bagna, Martina Bellinzona and Viola Monaci.

107

Languages are used for their aesthetic qualities, communicating with a presumably cosmopolitan, open-to-the-world and sophisticated clientele (Heller 2003). Therefore, it is not so much a question of conveying real meanings, it is rather to 'acquire cultural capital by utilising the symbolic economy' (Leeman & Modan 2010: 354).

With reference to the data reported in Table 4, it seems that among the most visible languages are German, Spanish, French and Russian. Each of them has heterogeneous functions, depending on the neighbourhood: for example, French is mainly used in Oltrarno in the names of businesses, which exploit its symbolic and evocative power linked to fashion and elegance. However, in the Station area (which is most affected by this and the other languages), it mainly fulfils the role of linguistic facilitator for tourists. The signs conceived for a foreign public on vacation are the most diverse from a linguistic perspective: of the 80 units of analysis considered here, 10 are monolingual, 39 bilingual (usually with Italian or English) and 31 are multilingual. Almost all of the 31 multilingual occurrences are single messages aimed at tourists, such as menus, or regulatory texts connected to COVID-19.

Finally, the Oltrarno and Station areas are particularly interesting given the presence of dialects and vernaculars. In Italy, this is a rather recent phenomenon that is common to all large Italian cities (Bernini, Guerini & Iannaccaro 2021).[21] It could be interpreted in light of the change in attitudes towards dialects, which were stigmatised as a sign of ignorance until a few years ago: nowadays they are generally appreciated and associated with positive values.

It has been observed that dialects are used above all in commercial communication linked to catering, the aim being to create a homely atmosphere, to evoke ancient practices and traditions and to represent genuine and local food. Therefore, it is the dialect that becomes the bearer of connotative values linked to the local identity rather than the semantic content of the terms. An example of this is photo 1 in Figure 5 (Station area), related to the sign of a tavern called 'i' Vinaino' (the little vintner): the linguistic typicality, realised in a shared Florentine cliché through i', for the singular masculine determinative article il in front of a consonant, to convey the typicality and genuineness of the proposed food.

A similar occurrence is shown in photo 2 in Figure 5 (observed in Le Cure). In this case, the type of business is rendered in Italian (pescheria – fish market) but the dialectal rendering is both in the name (i' cavalluccio viola – the purple horse) and the pun on the right, 'Crudo o cotto – bono tutto' (raw or cooked, everything is good). In these cases, too, the use of well-known expressions appears to serve the objective of involving the expected public in an intimate, community dimension in the sharing of local gastronomic dishes.

Photo 3 in Figure 5 (San Lorenzo), in turn, gives an example of a regional term that is commonly used in Florence and other Tuscan cities. We refer to the word 'mescita', which means the sale and distribution of wine in glasses for consumption.

The last two cases we consider worthy of note, illustrated in photos 4 and 5 (Figure 5 – both in the Station area), also have dialectal uses with different functions. In both cases they are signs with a regulatory function: the first is placed outside

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21. It is important to specify that this is not a phenomenon isolated to the Italian context: studies on the commodification of local varieties and dialects, and their presence in the LL, have been conducted in various contexts, European and otherwise (see, for example, Strand 2015).

Figure 5. Dialect in the Florentine LL. Pictures: Carla Bagna, Martina Bellinzona and Viola Monaci.

a pub frequented by young people and aimed at raising awareness of the potential disturbance nightlife causes in the neighbourhood; the second is placed on the window of a restaurant, aimed at regulating entrances to prevent COVID-19 infections. The choice of dialect here is intended to soften the intensity of the imperative, and to convey confidence, ideally to bring the user of the sign closer to its creator.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the LL of some districts of Florence, focusing on manifestations of the different poles of the linguistic space (De Mauro 1980), and comparing the visual data with the perceptions of citizens. From a linguistic and semiotic perspective, traits common to the different mapped districts were observed: over the years, touristification (Gant 2015) has served to promote the English language (Barni & Bagna 2010). Our qualitative analysis showed how the language is used primarily to facilitate tourist-related commercial purposes, given its role as a lingua franca. At the same time, however, it also and above all appears as a device to activate values that convey an aura of prestige, implying that the shop, for example, is part of the international scene as 'a device to establish a trendy cosmopolitan image to native Italian speakers' (Griffin 2004: 7). However, the inhabitants involved in the focus groups perceived this data differently. The lack of correspondence between the visibility of languages and the awareness of citizens is of note and is one of the most

significant findings of this study. This must also be taken into consideration for future studies, which must necessarily have an all-encompassing vision of spaces and people (Peck, Stroud & Williams 2018) and their interaction.

As far as other languages are concerned, the visibility of immigrant languages and those that function to facilitate international communication has been documented as poor, attributable only in part to the interruption in tourist flows due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, it seems that languages other than English and Italian are used mainly to offer experiences: their presence in the LL should therefore not be interpreted as enhancing linguistic diversity or as having ethnic connotations, but rather as having identity connotations (Ferrini 2016). In other words, the use of Chinese, Japanese, French or Spanish does not serve an internal function in a community, it is rather intended to attract the attention of the Italian (or 'Western') population by evoking certain semiotic values. Only Arabic in our corpus has an informative function, albeit limited to certain contexts and certain neighbourhoods.

The above leads us to different conclusions. On the level of linguistic use, the different neighbourhoods have their own characteristics that reflect the functions for which they are responsible (e.g. commercial, residential) and, at least in part, the presence of individuals with different linguistic repertoires. Although not all languages spoken by immigrants find space in the LL, there is no doubt that the areas most affected by the presence of different ethnolinguistic communities are also those in which the LL is more likely to be multilingual.

More than linguistic differences, however, what emerged clearly from the analysis is a semiotic heterogeneity between neighbourhoods: different signs, produced by different actors, combine to make the identity of the neighbourhoods clear, reflecting and emphasising it at the same time. In short, the semiotic urban space serves and reflects the identity and atmosphere of the district (see also Chapter 4 in this volume). Citizens themselves are partly aware of these differences and, if opportunely stimulated and enabled to dialogue with each other, appear to be attentive to the functional differences between neighbourhoods, and also reflective on the visibility of languages in the LL.

The analysis, as anticipated, also revealed a limited degree of awareness of effective urban multilingualism, with informants convinced of the total absence of languages other than Italian in the LL or, *vice versa*, of the predominance in certain areas of the city of other languages (Arabic and Chinese above all). This could be interpreted in two different, but complementary ways. On the one hand, overexposure to English, a language perceived as close to a lingua franca and learned at school, goes unnoticed, blending into a LL so familiar as to be invisible. Facilitation for tourists, which Florentines do not need, and English shop signs are not processed on a cognitive level, and thus become imperceptible. On the other hand, awareness of the presence of different ethnolinguistic communities on the territory, added to the lack of familiarity with graphic systems distant from the Italian one, lead to the emergence of linguistic stereotypes. In other words, it is sufficient to know that people of another nationality live in an area, or to see a sign in Arabic, for people to believe that the entire LL is 'invaded' by other languages (Minuz & Forconi 2018).

The above perceptions do not differ from what was detected during the pre-pandemic period in various Italian cities, and for this reason what emerged in this

110

data requires reflection that must not be restricted to researchers and linguists, but must also involve the entire educational system, including language teaching and citizenship education. Nowadays more than ever, activities that involve LL observation and analysis facilitate the realisation of this task.

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113

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114

7. Affect and Responsibility in the Pandemic
New Attitudes in the Linguistic Landscape of Milan

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In the wake of what Eckert (2012) calls the 'third wave of sociolinguistics', which focuses on the dynamic interplay between linguistic practices and the social landscape, the study of linguistic landscapes (LL hereafter) has undergone a critical turn (Barni & Bagna 2015) in focusing on the aspects that make it an indicator (and a producer) of social change or differentiation (Blommaert 2013). Actors in the LL manifest their agency through linguistic/semiotic mechanisms such as language choice, and the use of multimodal displays (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010). Such actions create (or replace) indexical and value orders on different spatiotemporal scales (Blommaert 2015), entering into a dynamic relationship with the social context. In this way, individuals also negotiate and redefine their identities (Blackwood, Lanza & Woldemariam 2016), moving between the limits and possibilities of the context (the place and its 'rules'), which in turn is influenced by their relationships and affiliations. Thus, the communities to which they belong are changed or redefined by the practices, attributes and symbolic projections of their members (Gaiser & Matras 2020).

The critical turn that marked the transition from quantitative to mainly qualitative research (Shohamy & Gorter 2009) proved to be useful in the study of LLs in contemporary global urban agglomerations (Sassen 2005), characterised by high levels of superdiversity (Vertovec 2007) attributable to the presence of immigrant communities, as well as widespread informal multilingualism that is not always recognised in official policies. From this perspective, language choice in the LL could be interpreted as an assumption of responsibility by the social actors involved (Siragusa & Ferguson 2020a) for their community and the host society. Language choice legitimises the use of minority languages in public space, and establishes emotional connectedness with the homeland (Breier 2020). On the other hand, recent research on LLs has explored how affect emerges from contexts and how space may be affectively charged (Wee 2016; Wee & Goh 2019; Motschenbacher 2020; Yao 2020).

As a further element of complexity, social actions occur in online as well as offline spaces, and local signs may refer to the online public sphere. Thus, the LL could be better understood 'as part of a network of texts (online/offline), mediated practices, artefacts, experiences and semiotics' (Maly & Blommaert 2019: 19). The pandemic accelerated this process and strengthened the online/offline nexus, especially in the case of transnationally connected migrant communities. Moreover, it generated an immediate sense of crisis and disruption that affected all aspects of daily life, thereby arousing feelings of anxiety and fear, as well as challenging the sense of collective identity, especially in the most vulnerable communities (Demertzis & Eyerman 2020).

115

Many immigrants experienced economic, health and logistical difficulties in their lives, as well as being very concerned about, and involved in, what was happening in their countries of origin. They were caught between the ever-changing rules imposed by institutions during the different phases of the emergency and the emotional, cultural and utilitarian loyalties to their own communities, and they had to make important choices in a very short timeframe. The speed of these changes emerged particularly in the commercial LL, the subject of the study reported here, as shops and restaurants were affected the most by the different lockdown arrangements and had to find solutions so as to maintain contact with customers and preserve their businesses.

Our research aim is to study how the trauma of the pandemic changed the LL of migration in Milan with regard to two main aspects: first, how the emotions connected to the pandemic were displayed in the commercial LL and secondly, which linguistic practices migrants adopted in the LL in order to negotiate their position towards the host society and towards the communities they belong to. In other words, we intend to examine the actions and discursive processes put in place by social actors in reaction to the crisis and the linguistic/semiotic resources that distinguish the new affective regimes that are visible in the commercial LL of migration. We thus aim to show the relevance of these aspects from the perspective of sociolinguistic variation.

After briefly outlining the context of migration in Milan, we will focus on our theoretical and methodological framework. The subsequent analysis addresses the transformations linked to the pandemic, in both the physical and the virtual LL associated with it, during the main phases identified from February 2020 to June 2021. Finally, in the concluding remarks, we discuss the main results, and the limits and strengths of the mixed methodological approach developed during the research process.

7.1 The Sociolinguistic Context

The first waves of immigration to Italy date back to the 1980s. They became substantial in the 2000s, leading to what is now a stable balance of around five million (8.3% of the total population). Foreign nationals are mainly concentrated in the north, particularly in Lombardy where 1,150,000 of them live (23% of the total). Of these, 250,000 (22%) are in the Municipality of Milan, where they represent 18 per cent of the population. Moreover, Milan and its surroundings have the largest number of foreign-owned enterprises in Italy (50,959, which is 10% of the total), most of which are shops specifically within the commercial sector under study. Despite being among the worst affected by the pandemic, the Milan region saw an increase of 1.5 per cent in new start-ups during the year 2020, against a reduction of 0.8 per cent on the national level.[1]

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1. All the data in this section were retrieved from the statistics page of the City Council of Milan: http://sisi.comune.milano.it/, and from two groups of reports on immigration published by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy: https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/Pagine/La-presenza-dei-migranti-nelle-aree-metropolitane-online-i-rapporti.aspx and https://www.lavoro.gov.it/priorita/Pagine/Pubblicati-i-rapporti-2020-Le-comunita-migranti-in-Italia.aspx (all the webpages mentioned were last consulted on 12 May 2022).

Table 1. The countries of origin of foreign-born residents in the Municipality of Milan

		31/12/2019	31/12/2020
1	Philippines	41,557	40,990
2	Egypt	41,387	40,897
3	China	32,538	32,798
4	Peru	18,084	17,589
5	Sri Lanka	17,492	17,427
6	Romania	15,564	15,360
7	Ecuador	11,993	11,513
8	Bangladesh	10,429	10,488
9	Ukraine	8,806	8,632
10	Morocco	8,380	8,259
TOT.	**All foreign-born residents**	**281,582**	**280,310**

Turning to the main ethnolinguistic groups present in the municipality of Milan, Table 1 lists the top ten nationalities, which remained unchanged during 2020.

Changing focus from nationalities to language groups reveals that Arabic speakers (mainly Egyptians) comprise the largest community, they are very active in the commercial sector and are visible in the LL of Milan. Closely following them are Spanish-speaking communities from Latin American countries (hereafter LAs), mainly comprising Peruvians and Ecuadorians, to which may be added another 12,673 Spanish-speaking LAs (mainly from El Salvador, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Colombia). In third position are Filipinos, but their almost exclusive employment in the domestic sector and their very low level of entrepreneurship, as registered in the reports of the Ministry of Labour, make them scarcely visible in the commercial LL. The fourth-biggest language community is the Chinese, historically rooted in a single neighbourhood (the Via Paolo Sarpi area) and now very active in a number of commercial sectors (trading in low-cost household goods and clothing, electronic repairs and catering) throughout the city.

Arab-speaking and Chinese-speaking communities are characterised by a strong commercial vocation. LAs have less of a presence in the business sector, but they are highly visible in the LL because they offer products and services primarily to members of their own community (restaurants, hairdressers, travel agencies, organisers of events and celebrations, for example). Thereby they emphasise aspects of identity at the same time as targeting Italian customers by playing on their linguistic affinity and certain cultural traits that Italians appreciate, such as music and good food (Calvi & Uberti-Bona 2020; Calvi 2021).

Finally, we will give some spatial references regarding the presence of foreign-owned shops in Milan. The city is administratively divided into nine main zones and, on a lower level, 88 neighbourhoods. In this spatial grid, such shops are distributed in a polycentric manner in the peripheral belt, peaking in the area of Via Padova (northern suburbs) with its concentration of Spanish-language business activities (mainly catering and entertainment).

117

7.2 The Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Previous research on the commercial LL of migration in Milan has highlighted the continuous process of negotiating identities and meanings between shopkeepers and the public by means of a wide repertoire of linguistic and semiotic resources. Attitudes vary according to the different communities, the distance between their languages and Italian, and the commercial sector in question. The presence of culturally marked signs is very strong, especially in the case of LA restaurants (Uberti-Bona 2016; Calvi 2021), consistent with the high degree of sociability of these groups and the affective values associated with food, especially in migration contexts (Bagna & Machetti 2012; Yao 2020). Moreover, the collective linguistic practices (Siragusa & Ferguson 2020b: 10) that develop within the spaces delimited by the LL in which the use of immigrant languages is legitimised, can support individual responsibility in language choice (Calvi 2020).

7.2.1 METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

On the operational level, in our research on the commercial LL of immigration, and from the perspective of LL as social action, our unit of analysis is the *shop* (which falls within the *marketplace* category as defined by Kallen 2010; see also Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 in this volume). This includes all the signs that are visible or exposed to the public, possibly distributed over several subunits (shop windows, interiors), by a single actor (always the shopkeeper) (Cenoz & Gorter 2006). The COVID-19 signs follow the guidelines issued by the authorities, for instance, and many are ready-printed (*top-down*), but they must be seen in the *bottom-up* business context created by the shopkeeper.

The pandemic posed a challenge to research on the LL, and we had to find alternative paths (see also Chapter 2, Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 in this volume). The main qualitative tools normally used in such research include the collection and analysis of LL images and ethnographic interviews. During the pandemic, however, it was not possible to collect images systematically, and it was equally impossible to conduct interviews face-to-face (Chan et al. 2020). This apparent drawback prompted us to develop a more complex and more comprehensive approach commensurate with the situation, within the framework of what has been called *blindsight ethnography*, i.e. 'detecting phenomena by observing related things around them' (Hidalgo & Kahn 2020: 188).

To identify the most representative units we compared the different images and other materials with each other and with those previously collected, trying to identify emerging phenomena and the most appropriate categories in which to analyse them in continuous back-and-forth movement from data to theory. In other words, we adapted the methodological and theoretical framework to the object of study, on a level of analytical flexibility and simultaneity inspired by the Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2006). We related different elements drawn from different channels, at different times and in different language groups. This spiral process also allowed us to integrate the increasingly interconnected data of the 'offline' LL with those of the 'online' LL (Blommaert & Maly 2019; Gorter & Cenoz 2020) of social networks, and Facebook in particular, on which shopkeepers were trying to maintain their workflow and their contact with customers during lockdown.

118

7.2.2 Responsibility and Affective Regimes

With regard to the theoretical framework, we considered the concept of *responsibility* particularly suitable for explaining changes in linguistic practice caused by the pandemic: indeed, responsibility should be understood, first and foremost, as 'the ability to respond, or mount a response to a situation at hand' (Siragusa & Ferguson 2020b: 10). When the pandemic broke out, the LL revealed the linguistic practices migrants adopted to negotiate their position vis-à-vis the society in which they lived, but also vis-à-vis the community to which they belonged and their country of origin.

From a broader perspective, the concept of responsibility has a social dimension linked to the actions and discursive processes put in place by social actors in reaction to the crisis, and in negotiating its cultural meaning (Alexander 2004; Demertzis & Eyerman 2020). Shopkeepers are aware of the influence they may exert on the community and therefore assume responsibility as mediators between institutions and their customers. They promote respect for the rules, while also trying to rebuild the sense of community that the pandemic challenged.

This assumption of responsibility on the part of shopkeepers is a reaction both to the social pressure exerted by the authorities, including on a discursive level ('stay at home'), and to economic factors. This is supplemented with an affective dimension comprising the values, feelings and atmospheres (Böhme 2017; Androutsopoulos & Deumert 2021) experienced, shared and negotiated among the entire community. Precisely because of its collective dimension, the LL is a very sensitive indicator of the discursive processes by which different communities try to make sense of unexpected events that affect interpersonal relationships.

The traumatic aspect of the pandemic also prompted us to study how emotions were displayed in the LL. Based on the collective dimension of emotions and affective practices (Wetherell 2012), the notion of *affective regime* is particularly well-suited to putting affect in place, and, as noted above, it is an emerging concept in LL research. Wee (2016) explores this link between space and affect in his seminal study, proposing the concept of affective regime, 'a set of conditions that govern with varying degrees of hegemonic status the ways in which particular kinds of affect can be appropriately materialized in the context of a given site' (Wee 2016: 109).

The displaying of COVID-19 rules constrained the affective regime of all public places during the pandemic. However, the degree of formalisation varied, being highest in institutional sites such as schools, airports and hospitals, and lower in shops where there is a wide range of individual solutions and unofficial signs. In the case of shops, instructions about appropriate behaviour based on legal requirements are somehow mediated by a general orientation towards respect and care for others and an appeal to the shared values and experiences of the immigrant community.

7.2.3 Classification Criteria and Data

Over time we have recorded significant variation both on the linguistic level (e.g., language choice and vocabulary) and with regard to the affective aspects and symbolic values associated with the various signs, as well as to the level of awareness, intentionality and responsibility of those who produced them. We therefore considered the dynamic dimension of LL, which is manifest through different chronotopes (Blommaert 2015).

119

Our data were collected in three of the main multi-ethnic neighbourhoods of Milan (Via Padova, Baggio and Lorenteggio, located respectively in the northern, western and south-western suburbs). The dataset comprises more than 900 photographs from approximately 130 units, taken at different times during the pandemic, approximately 400 posts from 40 Facebook pages, as well as 12 interviews conducted in April 2021. The data mainly concern the Latin American LL, but also include images of shops run by Chinese, Filipinos and other communities.

We classified and cross-referenced the data following the development of the crisis in public health, taking into account several contextual aspects. The chronological axis was the main factor influencing data collection and the type of items available. We were able to identify three main phases or waves: the first and most severe lockdown in spring 2020; the long period of the continual opening and closing of businesses, from June 2020 to March/April 2021; and the more extensive re-openings after the release of the vaccine, between May and June 2021.

Other criteria for classifying the data included the channel through which they were collected (physical LL, Facebook, interviews); the product categories concerned, affecting communication strategies; and the different ethno-linguistic communities involved. We thus related the evolution of the most significant features of the context to the linguistic, discursive or indexical aspects emerging in the LL units.

In the first phase, it was only possible to collect a couple of dozen photos in short shopping trips in the period from 24 February to 9 March 2020, in the Baggio area, while in early May 2020, it was possible to collect around fifty photos in the Lorenteggio area just before the first reopenings; in total, the photos of the first phase portray between twenty and thirty shops run by foreigners in the two areas. In the same period, we started to collect the Facebook posts of around thirty shops. In the opening moments of the second phase, we collected around 300 photographs, in particular of about thirty LA shops in the Via Padova area, as well as an increasing number of Facebook posts. Finally, in the third phase, we were able to carry out the fieldwork more systematically, again in the Via Padova area, collecting over 400 photographs of some eighty shops run by foreigners of all nationalities, including the 12 interviews with shopkeepers.

In what follows, the analysis of the data will be based on the chronological criterion indicated above, and will therefore be divided into three sections corresponding to the three main epidemic waves.

7.3 The First Wave: Fear and Solidarity

Italy, and in particular Lombardy, was the first European country to be afflicted by the outbreak of a new coronavirus that developed in China at the end of 2019. The first Italian patient, a man from the small town of Codogno near Milan, was hospitalised and in a serious condition on 21 February 2020. Hospitalisations grew exponentially over the next two days, leading on 23 February to the 'closure' of eleven small towns in Lombardy and Veneto, the closure of all schools and universities in Lombardy from 24 February, and finally to the hard national lockdown from 9 March until early May. Places re-opened progressively during the month. This phase was characterised by the shock of the shutdown, which rendered the LL suddenly silent, but also by the

emergence of new attitudes of shopkeepers towards customers, new discourses and new affective regimes.

The Chinese were the first foreign-born traders to react to the situation, closing their shops even before the official lockdown was in place, perhaps to protect themselves from possible aggression given that the outbreak of the pandemic provoked an immediate surge of anti-Asian racism (Blommaert 2020). In those early days it was still possible to collect a few examples of the signs displayed by Chinese traders in the Baggio area. This material is sparse, but it is extremely interesting in terms of grasping the first transformations of the LL produced by the pandemic.

All the signs were in Italian, and they all conveyed the idea of an unexpected situation perceived as very temporary. Most notices only announced closure for the
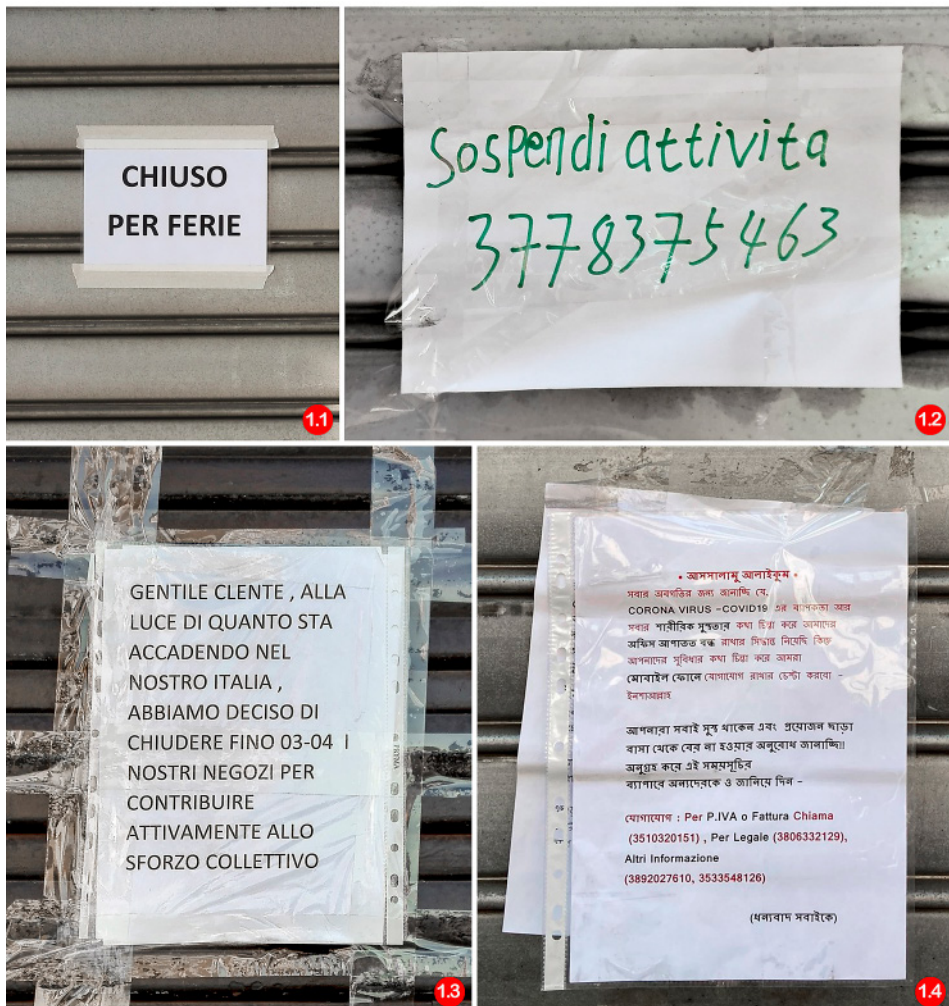
Figure 1. Image 1.1. Closure notice of the Chinese tailor shop *Sartoria Riparazione*. Image 1.2. Closure notice of the Chinese massage parlour *Ragazza d'oro*. Image 1.3. Closure notice of the Chinese cafeteria *Jackpot*. Image 1.4. Closure notice of the Bengali service centre *Crosspoint*. Pictures: Marcella Uberti-Bona.

holidays, or the 'suspension' of activity (Figure 1, Images 1.1 and 1.2). Others offered brief explanations for the closure (*a causa della situazione sanitaria* 'due to the health situation') and apologised for the inconvenience caused to customers.

Notices such as the one visible in Figure 1 (Image 1.3) are particularly interesting as an innovative element of the LL. In fact, here the Italian language was not used as a 'mimetic' strategy to attract customers with various origins (Uberti-Bona 2016), it rather denoted a sense of belonging to the general community and the sharing of a collective responsibility. The shopkeeper *positions* (Davies & Harré 1990; Martin & White 2005) himself on the side of all the actors involved in the fight against the pandemic, either by means of an inclusive 'we' referring to the host community (*quanto sta accadendo nel nostro Italia*, 'what is happening in our Italy'), or by means of a 'we' referring to shopkeepers (*I nostri negozi*, 'our shops'), which underlines their agency (*per contribuire attivamente allo sforzo collettivo*, 'to contribute actively to the collective effort'). In this way, shopkeepers take responsibility in relation to the place in which they live. An affective regime of solidarity as a value is established to counteract the fear generated by the pandemic, emphasising that feelings of solidarity (and responsible behaviour) are desirable. This aspect, emerging from the LL, is consistent with the spread during the pandemic of peer-to-peer solidarity networks as an alternative to charitable forms of solidarity (Sitrin & Colectiva Sembrar 2020).

Some essential businesses continued their activities amidst severe restrictions during the lockdown, communicating their new business arrangements by means of notices attached to the lowered shutters, such as *Noi lavoriamo in casa per la sicurezza di tutti*, 'we are working from home for everyone's safety' (Money transfer *Floris Remittance Service*, Filipinos, Via Rismondo, March). The same pattern was repeated on other notices during this period, some of which are in languages other than Italian, such as Bengali (see Figure 1, Image 1.4: 'Assalamu Alaikum and for everyone's information, we have decided to close our office for the time being due to COVID-19 and for the physical well-being of everyone, but we are thinking of your convenience. Try to keep in touch by mobile phone Insha 'Allah you are all healthy and I request you not to leave home unnecessarily. Please take note of this Let others know about it too. Thanks everyone'). The different language choice targets interlocutors who may have difficulties accessing the Italian language[2] and who share the same religious values (note the Muslim greeting formulae).

At the same time, many shopkeepers began to reinforce their presence in the virtual LL of social networks, developing their social action and solidarity practices. The invisible lines that connect the physical with the virtual LL (Blommaert & Maly 2019) thus acquired new value. Our research also moved in this direction. We found plenty of material posted on Facebook by LA shopkeepers, who were already active on it before the pandemic as an extension of their commercial activity. We did not find as many signs of active presence among the other two main communities of foreign-born traders in Milan, namely the Chinese and Arabic-speaking North Africans, and we assume that they used other channels.

Many LA shop owners posted both commercial announcements concerning

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2. Hopkyns & van den Hoven (2022) tackle the issue of inequalities linked to the lack of accessible information in contexts of strong linguistic diversity, in the case of COVID-19 signage in two Abu Dhabi work contexts.

122

delivery services and comments on the situations in Italy and Latin America, urging the community to participate in aid initiatives, and sharing news on the COVID-19 situation in Peru and Ecuador in particular.

The innovative element in the home-delivery service that many small venues had previously introduced was the contextual referencing to the lockdown, which emphasised the service as a form of active solidarity, but also as a way of building customer loyalty by adding an emotional element. For instance, the *El Hornero* restaurant promoted the dish with the highest identity value for Peruvian customers (*pollo a la brasa*, 'charcoal-grilled chicken') on its Facebook page using its Spanish name within a discourse in Italian, together with the Peruvian flag as a strong identity marker (and a large image of a chicken):

1) In quarantena, il pollo a la brasa ti aspetta! 🍽️🇵🇪
   Ti portiamo il miglior pollo alla brace di Milano a casa tua!

   ('During your quarantine grilled chicken is waiting for you! We will bring the best charcoal-grilled chicken to your home!') (El Hornero, 15/04/2020)

We should also note the use of *proximity devices* (Caffi & Janney 1994), i.e. the different linguistic strategies (here the use of the familiar form of address *tú*) expressing affective closeness between the speaker and the interlocutor. This was a distinctive feature of the Latin American LL even before the pandemic (Calvi 2021), but during the lockdown it responded to an increased need for proximity and solidarity.

These values are expressed in the use of the Spanish language and of the inclusive 'we', but always within a polyphonic discourse encompassing community membership, expected behaviour and feelings (the call for unity in the following example), the voice of authority and a positive attitude towards the host country (underlined by the Italian flag):

2) 🙏🇪🇨🇵🇪🇨🇴🇨🇺🇧🇷🇩🇴🇧🇴🇸🇻🇨🇱🇺🇾🇻🇪😍🇮🇹
   En éste momento, tenemos que estar más unidos que nunca y respetar las normas de las Autoridades solo asi podremos vencer este enemigo inviible [sic]
   🇪🇨🇵🇪🇨🇴🇨🇺🇧🇷🇩🇴🇧🇴🇸🇻🇨🇱🇺🇾🇻🇪

   ('At this moment we have to be more united than ever and respect the rules of the Authorities, this is the only way we will be able to defeat this invisible enemy') (Mundo Latino, 17/03/2020)

Other shopkeepers developed their agency in the sphere of solidarity by promoting various initiatives, such as *Un latino ayuda a un latino* ('One Latino helps another': *Las Brisas del Perù*, 23/04/2020), and *Almuerzo solidario* ('Solidarity meal': *La olla de barro*, 16/04/2020), cooking meals offered by customers to LAs in economic difficulty. They also organised promotional events live on Facebook as well as small lotteries, but the main topic (explicit or implicit) in the interaction with the public was always the strong concern about the pandemic, both in Italy and in Latin America. In this way, they contributed to giving a sense of 'place' (Scollon & Scollon 2003; Cresswell 2015) to the virtual LL, and to the construction of an affective regime based on solidarity and collective responsibility (Chouliaraki 2018: 264).

123

7.4 The Second Wave: Social Rules and Community Belonging

From May 2020, when gradual reopening was being envisaged, messages in the physical as well as the virtual LL became more commercial in nature (opening dates and hours, contact numbers, new services offered), particularly mentioning the safety measures deployed. Appeals for unity and solidarity among Latin Americans and for compliance with the rules issued by the Italian government (such as social distancing and the use of face masks) were reiterated. This was particularly prevalent during the second pandemic wave from November 2020 until February 2021, which was worse than the first and again concentrated in northern regions.

The succession of openings and closures during this period allowed us to do some image collection but also directed our research more decisively to the Facebook pages of foreign-born shopkeepers, particularly LA restaurateurs who tightened the offline/online nexus of communication to minimise the damage done by closing (Blommaert 2019; Maly & Blommaert 2019).

We observed the persistence of an affective regime promoting attitudes of solidarity and community membership in the physical LL, but also the emergence of new phenomena and new discourses, specifically the presence of a large number of signs detailing safety measures. By displaying these signs the shopkeeper acts as a mediator between the voices of the authorities and the public. An affective regime promoting respect for the rules is thus imposed, addressed to both the ethnic community, as a way of encouraging responsible behaviours, and the host country, as a way of reassuring the majority population about the same. However, the instructional role of the texts is somewhat mitigated, such as by using personal forms of address. Thus, respect for rules is reinterpreted as a form of solidarity and commitment to others.

The second innovative element of this period was the prominence of signs announcing various forms of take-away services – when they were permitted – and delivery. These signs, not new in themselves, now dominated the display, showing an obvious promotional purpose, but also an emotional connection with the community. In other words, the *broader atmosphere* (Phyak & Sharma 2021) of the pandemic increases the 'affective potentials of the concrete semiotic resources in perceived space' (Björkvall, Van Meerbergen & Westberg 2020: 4).

On Facebook, at the same time, posts about openings, closures, home deliveries and takeaways created a strong link with the physical place to which they referred, whereas affective and value interactions acquired their own characteristics on account of the different medium. Thus, posts and comments constructed time-space configurations, or 'places', in which solidarity is explicitly linked to a sense of belonging and ethnic identity, 'lodging such identities firmly in highly specific, circumscribable chronotopic forms of context' (Blommaert 2019: 486).

In the following we analyse some examples of the main innovations during this period.

The window of the Peruvian food shop *Perú alimenta* (Figure 2) shows how innovative elements are embedded in the pre-existing affective regime, oriented towards nostalgia for the country of origin and its gastronomic traditions, as is typical of food-related activities (Yao 2020; Calvi 2021). It shows the same identity references to the country of origin as before the pandemic (Calvi 2016): the logos of Peru and 'made in Peru', the motto in Spanish, *Un rinconcito de Perù en Milano* ('A little corner

of Peru in Milan'), and the name of the importing company (*Peru alimenta*, 'Peru feeds') that represents a 'nurturing' homeland for LAs. The multimodal composition integrates identity assertion and commercial promotion by flaunting the geographical origin and the collective memory through objects of nostalgic sensibility as symbols of belonging, and as guarantees of authenticity (Yao 2020).

In addition, the signs with COVID-19 rules (the requirement to wear a mask and the number of customers allowed) orient shoppers to new attitudes and values, which then make up the affective regime of the place. All the signs are in Italian and appear in different versions (Figure 2, Image 2.2). The presumably older ones, handwritten, probably in haste as food shops remained open throughout the lockdown, have short texts: s*empre usare la mascherina, grazie*, 'always use a mask, thank you'; and *possono entrare 2 persone, ringraziamo per la collaborazione*, 'only 2 people may enter, we thank you for your cooperation'. The most recent ones are also self-produced but with the help of a computer and a printer. By replicating these signs calling for compliance the shopkeeper takes a clear position as a mediator between the authorities and the community to which he belongs, making the societal discourse his own (the stipulations are signed in the name of the shop) and adapting it to the recipient with proximity devices (Caffi & Janney 1994) (marked in bold): *la mascherina è la **nostra** principale protezione **usiamola** sempre nel modo corretto coprendo bene anche il naso, Perualimento **tu** mercado*, 'masks are **our** main protection, **let's** always use them correctly, covering the nose well, Perualimento, **your** market'.

Figure 2. Image 2.1. The window of the shop *Peru alimenta*. Image 2.2. A detail of the window of the shop *Peru alimenta*. Pictures: Maria Vittoria Calvi.

125

Figure 3. Notice of the Pakistani money transfer shop *Universal Services*. Picture: Marcella Uberti-Bona.

Alongside these signs are others (three notices about new products, a poster about the presidential elections in Peru in September 2020 and a sign offering a service – *barman en tu casa*, ('a barman in your house'), which tend to revive the link with the country of origin through the exclusive use of Spanish. The election sign signals a commitment to remain involved in the political affairs of the country of origin (Boccagni 2008), whereas the notice about the bar service is linked to the pandemic emergency, here evoked in a non-explicit way. These allusive points of view (García Negroni 2019) contextualise the communication, but aim to counterbalance the negative emotions aroused by the pandemic.

There is also a poster, now almost completely covered by other signs, advertising a pre-COVID-19 music event. This stratification recalls different contexts and dynamically connects different chronotopes (Blommaert 2015) and affective regimes.

A different type of 'personalisation' of COVID-19 signs was photographed in a Pakistani shop offering money-transfer services (Figure 3). In sharp contrast to the shop's product category, its window display includes various exotic products (bottles of cosmetics, coconut oil and spices), imported from different geographical areas. There are no specific references to Pakistani gastronomy or other cultural traits, nor to the Muslim religion, and there are no texts in Urdu. The sign is an ordinary A4 computer-generated sheet, illustrated with flowers and small animals in different colours both in the background and in the printed characters, with shadow and three-dimensional effects applied to the word *avviso* ('notice'). The text is written in almost incomprehensible Italian, an obvious 'translation' from the language of

the shopkeeper, without resorting to standard formulae: *Avviso. Si prego entrate uno alla volta al negozio. Metter un metero di distanza tra uno dal altro. Grazie* ('Notice. Please enter the store one at a time. Keep a one-meter distance between one another. Thank you'). The overall effect, precisely because it is so linguistically distant from the standard, shows the retailer's intention to mediate the official and bureaucratic language of generic anti-COVID notices by creating a more personal communication to connect with customers. Moreover, the aesthetic canon of the non-verbal elements of the sign creates a scenic atmosphere, or *tuned space* (Böhme 2017: 162), that constitutes an indexical reference to typical Pakistani street shops, reproducing their taste for the colourful and decorative juxtaposition of a multitude of products.

We will now give an example of the prominence of delivery and takeaway services offering safe and supportive solutions and influencing the *atmosphere* of the place (Böhme 2017), thereby reinforcing the social experiences and everyday practices that are best aligned with its affective regime (Androutsopoulos & Deumert 2021). The *Criollo II* Peruvian restaurant offers a typical takeaway menu (*pollo a la brasa* and Inka Cola), in the following words: *En los tiempos difíciles te lo hacemos fácil*, 'In difficult times we make it easy for you' (Figure 4). The image of the chicken is similar to those displayed before the pandemic, but the phrase adds an implicit reference to the pandemic ('difficult times') as well as the need for responsible behaviour and supportive help ('we make it easy for you').

Figure 4. The window of the restaurant *Criollo*. Picture: Maria Vittoria Calvi.

127

As noted above, there is a polyphony of voices (including shopkeepers, the authorities, ethnic organisations and third-party entrepreneurs) in the physical LL that express belonging to a migrant community as solidarity, in the sense of mutual aid, an active link with the country of origin and loyalty to the host country. The rules are presented as guaranteeing security for the community and the actors involved.

The activity of LA restaurateurs in the virtual LL intensified during this phase, thus connecting the physical place in which the dishes are produced with the living contexts of the customers as well as with the distant space of the countries of origin. This change in communication channel opened up a further perspective for our research. Like any virtual LL, Facebook's LL is more verbally articulate, makes greater use of the expressive medium of emoticons and other audio-visual resources, and promotes customer reactions and interactions. We could therefore indirectly capture some of the symbolic tools involved in the construction of a specific spacetime configuration and its affective regime, within the framework of blindsight ethnography (Hidalgo & Kahn 2020), collecting, at the same time, some of the observers' reactions to the LL.

In real space, the restaurant is at the centre of a circle of which the radius is the distance up to which deliveries can be made. The shop windows include multiple references to the venue's Facebook page, and to the links needed to order online. For its part, the Facebook page is a window onto the restaurant, showing photographs of the interior and the clientele (when it was open), and repeating addresses, phone numbers and menus, for example.

The affective regime of solidarity is always present on the Facebook pages of LA restaurants, thanks to the high frequency of keywords such as *patria*, *comunidad*, *unidos*, *bendiciones* ('homeland', 'community', 'united', 'blessings'), mainly used in Spanish.

On 7 June 2020, for example, the restaurant *Las brisas del Peru* posted a promotional message accompanied by a photograph of a girl standing outside the restaurant and holding an advertisement (Figure 5). It reads: 'Good morning [sun emoticon]. Not only do we try to offer you the #best seasonings, but we also #work to ensure that you have a pleasant #experience [heart emoticon]. We look forward to serving you from 12 o'clock. #LasBrisasDelPerú'.

The image triggered an immediate response from one customer, who criticised the inappropriate behaviour of the girl: *Que paso [sic] no tiene mascarilla la muchacha* ('What's going on? The girl is not wearing a mask'). Another customer responds, reassuring the complainant and explaining that the photograph was old (or more precisely, that it belonged to a pre-pandemic chronotope):

3) Son fotos pasadas La modelo es del 2017 qndi kien es asiduo sabe k se come bien 😁👍

    ('They are old photos The model is from 2017 so regular customers will know that you'll eat well') (Las Brisas Del Peru, 6/7/2020)

Thus, customers react to this online semiotic stimulus (the photograph of a girl without a mask) as if the 'transgression' had occurred in the real, offline world: the Facebook page is perceived as a physical space or, better, as a (chronotopic) 'place' in which social interaction directs, promotes or censors certain types of behaviour, evaluating them morally (Blommaert 2019).

128

Figure 5. A Facebook post by the restaurant *Las brisas del Peru*.

7.5 The Third Wave: Cautious Hope

As the second and more serious pandemic wave came to an end in April 2021 the government began to plan a series of gradual 're-openings'. These new conditions allowed us to carry out some fieldwork activities aimed at verifying the changes that occurred over time, the discourses that were evoked through the embodied affective practices (Wetherell 2012) and how they related to the materiality of place (Yao 2020: 9). We were also able to interview some shopkeepers, and to observe their semiotic choices from a different, ethnographic perspective.

Again, during this phase COVID-19 signage constituted the most significant sign genre in our research – sign genres meaning 'functional classes of signs that draw on similar resources and arrangements to accomplish a socially typified communicative act' (Androutsopoulos & Deumert 2021: 166). These signs were ubiquitous, although now overshadowed by messages about reopening logistics, such as opening days and hours, menus, as well as references to online delivery sites or QR codes for menu downloads. It is precisely the latter (characteristically small stickers showing the logos of the online networks) that showed how the offline/online nexus was now fully consolidated. Both channels (the material shop and its virtual location on Facebook) reinforced the identity of the place, which now included a hopeful and resilient orientation towards the full resumption of activities and of community relations.

COVID-19 signs tended to be standard messages in Italian, or translated into the language of the shopkeeper (mainly Arabic, Bengali, Sinhalese and Tamil). Some were homemade, the enunciation of the rules being inserted into an affective regime to foster a sense of solidarity and security and the hope of being able to resume the

129

social habits of the community. This return to previous habits could be described as reparation of a kind to make amends for what was hitherto felt like 'compressed cultural trauma', meaning 'that the trauma drama begins immediately, but makes no prediction that it will result in indelible marks on the social body' (Demertzis & Eyerman 2020: 22). The trauma discourse takes place almost virtually in this digital age of instantaneous communication, thus becoming more fluid and unpredictable, as well as rapid.

For instance, the whole display in the recently launched *El Pikeito* restaurant (Figure 6) is an explosion of Peruvian cultural signs, starting with the choice of language, almost exclusively Spanish, and the food images. On the street are four easels with colourful handwritten drawings, and a tall, printed sign advertising typical Peruvian dishes. The shop sign (*Pikeito autentico sabor peruano*, 'Pikeito authentic Peruvian flavour') and the window with the shop's motto prominently displayed at the top and repeated on one of the blackboards (*El Pikeito donde se come rico y se paga poquito*, 'El Pikeito, where you eat well and pay little'), appeal to the tastes (and budgets) of the LA clientele, in stark contrast to the period of closed shops and empty streets. The shop window and glass door are littered with stickers containing all the information needed for food orders. COVID-19 signs, in contrast, are concentrated on the glass door, being less visible when it is open inwards. However, a purple sticker is clearly visible in a central position on both the door and the shop window (Figure 6, Image 2). The text, in Italian, is the same in both notices: *Per favore mantieni la distanza di sicurezza* ('Please maintain social distance'), but the orientation towards the interlocutor through the familiar form of address signals not only respect for the rules but also the re-institution of convivial practices that are typical in restaurants.

The interviews, conducted at the end of April 2021, confirmed what we found in the LL, but the addition of a new channel of data collection brought to light aspects we had not recorded and that helped to complete the picture drawn thus far. The questions mainly concerned attitudes towards the pandemic and compliance with the rules, including the perspectives of customers.

Below we report a fragment of an interview with the owner of the restaurant *El Chorrillano*, near Via Padova, concerning the point of view of shopkeepers regarding the anti-COVID rules:

4) Lo que ha pasado ha sido muy duro para nosotros restoradores // porque la comune // si ayuda, no nos podemos lamentar pero es una situación en el mundo // muy muy dura // gracias a dios hemos abierto […] vinieron a controlar la policía // todo todo todo // pero después ya nos lo dieron [el permiso] […] Milano te enseña a vivir diferente // a respetar tantas cosas […] El que es agradecido con la ciudad la respeta […] el que recién […] todavía tiene la mentalidad que es más vivo que otro. Es también difícil tratar de enderezarlo o de entenderlo, "oye amigo no", o a veces está lleno y quieren entrar primero […]. Pero es nuestro trabajo y nosotros tratamos de mejorar; innovar, es difícil pero ahí estamos.

What has happened has been very hard for us restaurateurs // because the city council // yes, it does help, we can't complain, but this is a very very hard // situation in the world // thank God we have opened […] they came to check up on us, the police // everything everything everything // but then they gave it to us

Figure 6. Image 6.1. The window of the restaurant *El Pikeito*. Image 6.2. A purple sticker on the window of the restaurant *El Pikeito*. Pictures: Maria Vittoria Calvi.

[the permit] […] Milan teaches you to live differently // to respect so many things // […] Those who are grateful to the city respect it […] One who's just arrived […] still has the mentality of wanting to be the smartest. And it's hard to try to put him right, or to understand him, "look, man, no", or sometimes they want to push to the front when there's a queue. […] But it's our job and we try to improve; it's hard to change, but we try. (El Chorrillano, 24/04/2021)

As the extract shows, the restaurateur takes a position vis-à-vis both the authorities who enforce the rules and the community, including the disrespectful behaviour of newcomers. In this, as in other cases, we conclude that shopkeepers tend to behave responsibly and to produce in their shops an affective regime in which 'nostalgia' for the country of origin becomes not just a tool for commercial promotion (Yao 2020) but also a way of enhancing positive feelings, responsible behaviour and solidarity.

7.6 Conclusion

Previous research has highlighted how cultural and identity elements are manifested through different linguistic and semiotic elements in the ethnic LL of a global city such as Milan, especially in the case of food-related activities, which are strongly oriented towards a nostalgic affective regime (Yao 2020). The use of the mother tongue, alternating with the dominant local language, also expresses a strong emotional link with the culture of origin. At the same time, the willingness to act as reflexive social agents (Alexander 2004: 10) in the context of the host society is expressed through various discourses and forms of mediation (Calvi 2020).

A pandemic triggers a series of innovations, largely shared by all public places, but which in the case of the ethnic LL take on particular traits. First of all, the often-prominent presence of signs and notices inviting compliance with the rules conveys the voice of authority. Interestingly, this affective regime of respect is constructed mainly through the verbal code, with the exception of the icons relating to masks and social distancing. However, these advisory acts are often mitigated through proximity devices that encourage a positive response from customers by creating, from the very first moments of the pandemic, an affective regime based on a sense of belonging to the community and oriented towards solidarity. Thus, by mixing official and unofficial signs, shopkeepers and restaurateurs position themselves as community leaders and mediators, constructing their own discourse of the crisis. Another innovative element is represented by the tightening of the online/offline nexus, which extends the sense of place to the virtual LL.

These variations in the LL create different layers over time. In the first phase, the scant material collected was nevertheless sufficient to show the response of shopkeepers who, also through their choice of the Italian language, placed themselves as responsible actors in the face of the trauma that threatened not only their activity but also their sense of social solidarity.

Messages oriented towards respect for the rules increased in number during the second phase, as did those based on a sense of solidarity, which mend pandemic-related fractures, thereby bridging distances through affective proximity. The third phase witnessed a joyful and triumphant return to sociality, expressed through a

multitude of cultural symbols and identity signs. Nevertheless, the affective regime based on respect for rules maintained its central position.

On the methodological side, we collected and cross-referenced data from three different channels (the physical LL, the virtual LL and interviews), at different moments (the three phases), and belonging to different genres (COVID-19 signs, home delivery and takeaway notices, messages of solidarity). This mixed methodological approach, and its continuous adjustments to the pandemic situation, suffered from the logistical limitations of the various phases. However, the lack of systematicity was more than compensated for by the variety of data and the reiteration of the collection itineraries (in the physical LL and online), which made it possible to highlight the immediate responsiveness of the LL with respect to the context and the mediation work of the shopkeepers.

This work has thus highlighted how the pandemic contributed to reinforcing the sense of community expressed in the LL of migration and to strengthening the interaction between the material and the online LL. Moreover, we believe that the data collected, precisely because of the existing limitations, constitute valuable evidence of the variation produced by a traumatic event in the linguistic landscape.

Acknowledgements

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135

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8. Rules and Recommendations on Unofficial Signs

COVID-19 Signscapes in Helsinki and Stockholm

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The outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 triggered a sudden, global need for efficient crisis communication, not least to convey various new and evolving rules and guidelines to citizens. New signs in the linguistic landscape (LL) constituted one form of direct and efficient communication, informing readers about topics related to the pandemic and about how to act to prevent the spread of the virus. As Lou, Peck & Malinowski (2021) point out: the 'linguistic landscape, with its longstanding focus on the role of language and other semiotic resources in the construction of public spaces […] is a crucial nexus of meaning-making in the COVID-19 pandemic'. Thus, the topical signscape has evolved rapidly, as authorities as well as commercial and private actors partake in the dissemination of official rules and recommendations pertaining to the current situation.

Although the topical purpose of this specific signscape could be summarised as *how to stop the spread of COVID-19* (cf. Marshall 2021), the specific guidelines mediated through the LL need to be legitimised to convince the public about their necessity. According to van Leeuwen (2007: 93), legitimation explicitly or implicitly provides answers to certain *why* questions: Why should we do something (in a certain way)? Why should I wear a face mask? Why is it necessary for me to keep a distance from others? In the context of COVID-19, the social practices that are mediated through the LL include both following and being restricted by specific social expectations and patterns of behaviour that are regulated and governed by official guidelines. Suddenly emerging new rules and recommendations affecting every citizen's everyday life need to be legitimised in a way that convinces the reader of the need to act in the prescribed way.

In this chapter, we present a study of urban LLs in two capital cities discussing different aspects of sociolinguistic variation: the use of different languages in two different countries as well as variation in legitimation practices. We take a qualitative look at the evolving COVID-19 signscapes of Helsinki and Stockholm during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on how rules and recommendations were presented on unofficial signs. More precisely, the aim of our study is to describe how official guidelines given by the respective governments and health authorities on matters such as keeping a distance, using face masks, washing hands and staying at home when feeling sick, were communicated and legitimised on signs created by various commercial and private actors. Thus, our two main research questions are as follows:

137

1) What official recommendations and rules are communicated on unofficial signs by whom, and in which languages in the COVID-19 signscapes of Helsinki and Stockholm?
2) What legitimation strategies are used on unofficial signs communicating COVID-19-related rules and recommendations?

This approach facilitates discussion not only about how these new additions fit into the LL, but also and more closely about the recontextualization of official guidelines on unofficial signs and the different authors who visibly communicate about the pandemic in public spaces.

COVID-19 signscapes could be considered from at least two distinctive perspectives. On the one hand, not only do the signs function as mediators of simple guidelines, they also reflect political and juridical discourses, and through the different legitimations even the administrative culture of each country, actualised in a worldwide crisis. Should the highly *situated* (see Scollon & Scollon 2003: 146) signs thus be considered a new legal genre? Signs in COVID-19 signscapes could at least be interpreted as part of a regulatory discourse (see Scollon & Scollon 2003: 167). On the other hand, the COVID-19 signscape could be considered an example of *communicating risk* (see Candlin, Crichton & Firkins 2016). Such communication needs to be understandable as well as convincing, in other words accessible and efficient. Efficiency and accessibility are strongly tied to visibility – of the sign itself (see e.g. Tan & Ben Said 2015: 165) as well as of the language on it. It is therefore interesting to analyse how these tasks are approached by different authors in the LL.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the following section we tie our study to some previous research in the LL field. Next, we present our methodology and data before discussing the theoretical framework of the study. We report the results in two sections, the first concerning language and author visibility in the studied COVID-19 signscapes, and the second taking a more in-depth look at examples of linguistic and visual realisations of legitimation on the signs. We conclude the chapter with a discussion connecting the perspectives noted above.

8.1 COVID-19 and risk communication in LL research

Qualitative studies within the LL field have drawn from the visible language use of public spaces to discuss a growing number of different topics (see Barni & Bagna 2015). Aside from obvious questions pertaining to issues of language policy (cf. Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke & Blackwood 2016: 434–436), the LL could also function as an arena for other political discourses. Rudby (2015), for example, points to the structures of discursive power that potentially connect the LL to different contested topics involving conflicts and exclusion in society.

Risk communication has not been a specific focus in previous research, however, although signage related to safety and security may be a significant component in different LLs (e.g. exit-signs as mentioned by Scollon & Scollon 2003). Tan & Ben Said (2015) illustrate the complexity of such communication in their case study of official emergency signage in Japan. Although the meaning of these signs is not generally difficult to comprehend, the specific instructions may be confusing or hard to follow

138

without knowledge of the Japanese language or the local area (Tan & Ben Said 2015: 165). Sub-optimal placement, inconsistent design (e.g. the use of pictograms) and an overall lack of visibility may constitute further obstacles to efficient communication about disaster awareness and evacuation instructions (cf. Tan & Ben Said 2015: 163–164).

More recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic has aroused the interest of LL scholars, as evidenced in the growing number of publications (see e.g. Lou, Peck & Malinowski 2021). Marshall (2021), for example, studied the rapidly changing LL in Vancouver during the first months of the pandemic, noting the placement and positioning of COVID-19-related signs as key factors: official signs are strategically placed to encourage social distancing, for example (Marshall 2021: 200–202). The discursive construction of the COVID-19 signscape in Marshall's (2021: 211) examples are characterised by *discursive convergence*, meaning that the official signs are complemented with grassroots semiotic artefacts (painted stones) promoting messages of social care, solidarity and kindness, all with the common goal of reducing the effects of COVID-19.

Lees (2021) combines perspectives from LL studies and sociology of translation to discuss English translations of COVID-19-related notices in Thessaloniki, Greece. An interesting point that Lees (2021: 350) makes about notices put up by various businesses is that they often convey rules stipulated by authorities. 'In this sense, we are dealing with a very original category of signs that transcend traditional categories', Lees writes (ibid.), raising questions about who engages in the communication about COVID-19 and with what communicative goals. Situationality in terms of notices and the use of pictures are among the factors that could facilitate interpretation of the intention behind the signs, even if the translations of non-professionals are not precise (Lees 2021: 352, 357). Overall, one could say that translations do have a significant impact on language visibility – and on the salience of particular information – in LLs (see e.g. Koskinen 2012; Malinowski 2018). Translations from one official language to the other and thus the presence of a minimum of two language versions of official information issued by authorities is a cornerstone in the LL of countries with more than one official language, such as Finland. Language visibility following language rights is conveyed through translation.

In another study with a take on translations and COVID-19, Ahmad & Hillman (2021) discuss communication strategies in Qatar in relation to language policy and the need for effective crisis communication. They conclude that the use of migrant languages in awareness campaigns is also an issue of establishing trust (Ahmad & Hillman 2021: 330). The lack of linguistic inclusion in the COVID-19 signscape is a theme noted in several studies (e.g. Marshall 2021: 210). The case study in Abu Dhabi conducted by Hopkyns & van den Hoven (2022) not only sheds light on existing inequalities in the availability of COVID-19 information in linguistically diverse contexts, it also highlights the difference between the generally monolingual handmade signage produced by private individuals and the predominately bilingual signage produced by the authorities. Ekwall, Ädel & Nyström Höög (2021) studied COVID-19 warning signs in a Swedish context. Having discussed how instructions, cues and prompts communicate the message 'keep a distance', they conclude that the designs are non-standardised, and constitute an emerging genre marked with wide variation. They also highlight the tension between verbal and visual resources, as well as between signage placement and the choice of materials.

139

In sum, the ongoing situation with COVID-19 has given rise to a new dimension of LLs with a variety of signs communicating about the pandemic. These are approachable from different perspectives, and thus highlight how the LL is not simply about language visibility: it is also interesting in relation to different discursive practices (cf. Lou, Peck & Malinowski 2021; Marshall 2021). Furthermore, as Lees (2021) points out, COVID-19 signscapes include new types of hybrid signage that disseminate official guidelines although authored by businesses and private individuals. Such textual innovations also create new forms of juridical discourses combining text types not typically used for giving citizens information about legal decisions and recommendations. In addition to contributing to the understanding of language visibility, the situationality of signs and the use of visual resources in COVID-19-signscapes that have been found important in other studies, we add in this chapter a further perspective to the LLs of COVID-19 by highlighting the role of legitimations.

8.2 The Regulatory Framework during the Pandemic: Data and Methodological Remarks

Before describing our data, methods and theoretical framework in more detail, we briefly introduce the regulatory framework in the two countries relevant to our study. Both Finnish and Swedish are official languages in Finland, which means that all legislation and official texts concerning 'the life, health, safety of the individual and in respect of property and the environment' must be made available in both languages (Language Act 432/2003: Chapter 7, Section 32). Sweden's main language is Swedish (Language Act 2009: 600). Although beyond the main focus of this chapter, it is worth noting that several minority and immigrant languages are also spoken in both countries, even though the immigrant community is significantly larger in Sweden than in Finland. Regulations covering the use of immigrant languages are set out in legislation other than the Language Acts. Health authorities in both countries provide some COVID-19-related information, such as posters, in a range of different languages including both English and the major immigrant languages (see Nordman & Syrjälä 2024).

The two countries differed in terms of how they responded to the pandemic, and in their legal frameworks. Finland's law providing the regulatory basis for its pandemic response is the Emergency Powers Act (1552/2011), which defines various emergency conditions and gives the government the power to issue emergency decrees on a temporary basis. Some restrictions were also based on the Communicable Diseases Act (1227/2016). A temporary COVID-19 Act (Act to prevent the spread of COVID-19 2021:4) entered into force in Sweden in January 2021, allowing the authorities to take measures aimed at reducing the spread of the pandemic.

Our data set consists of a sample of approximately 100 photographs of COVID-19-related signs taken in Helsinki and in Stockholm, thus covering over 200 different signs in total. The data were collected in both cities during different stages of the pandemic, with a main focus on late spring 2020, complemented during the first half of 2021. The earlier data represents the signage at the outbreak of the pandemic when signs and official recommendations and rules directed at citizens on how to act were new and created a rapidly evolving COVID-19 signscape. The data we collected one year later describes more established signscapes. As such, the data set illustrates the

progression of discursive and multimodal practices during the first one-and-a-half years of the pandemic (see also Chapter 7 in this volume).

We collected our data in the same way as in many LL studies (see Gorter 2014), namely by photographing relevant signs that we came across while walking through the LLs in urban areas of Helsinki and Stockholm. We considered all types of signs related to COVID-19, regardless of author, placement, temporality and materiality, for example (see the discussion below for observations on semiotic resources used on the signs). However, the data set should not be considered a general representation of the respective LLs – nor of all COVID-19-related signs present in these cities. Instead, we took more of an ethnographic approach (see Van Mensel, Vandenbroucke & Blackwood 2016: 440), meaning that we started with a more sporadic selection of data guided by our everyday lives. Because the official recommendations at the time discouraged unnecessary travel, allowed only limited access to official and commercial services, and encouraged working from home, we collected the data on limited occasions and in a limited number of locations when we were on other errands (see also Chapter 2, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 in this volume).

Thus, we collected most of the signs from suburban residential and commercial areas near our respective homes in south-eastern Espoo outside Helsinki and in southern Stockholm. We also visited our respective university campuses and used public transport. The later data set (from 2021) also includes signs from the very centre of Helsinki. Although this approach does not allow for a precise quantitative discussion, we argue that the data sample reflects the LLs encountered in everyday life during the pandemic, and thus documents qualitative examples of communication practices consistent with the stated aims of this study.

We included both official and unofficial signs in the data collection, but only the latter are considered for the purpose of this study. In other words, our observations below are based on a selection of approximately 145 unofficial signs (65 from Helsinki and 80 from Stockholm). Different authors created signs during the pandemic with the aim of informing and regulating the behaviour of the general public. In many cases the signs mediate guidelines imposed by authorities, whereas commercial and private actors produced them (and enforced different rules and recommendations) – either following plans laid down by corporate offices or, which was more likely, ad hoc and on the local level. It is in these types of signs that interesting discursive practices lie, and a new genre of public (juridical) texts is to be found: this motivated the selected focus.

As such, the signs discussed in the analysis were created and/or signposted by different businesses including shops, restaurants and cafés, or even private individuals. Drawing a definite line between official and unofficial signs is not always straightforward, however. For example, our selected data set includes both locally authored, spontaneous signs and signage centrally designed for nationwide supermarket chains. Similarly, we excluded all signs from public transport authorities and on university premises (official actors bound by language legislation and official language policy), despite the fact that some signs were clearly authored and posted by private individuals. We discuss the (authors of) specific signs in more detail as part of the analysis.

Focusing on the research questions stated above, our qualitative analysis is based on methodological and theoretical perspectives from research on LLs and

141

sociosemiotics, discourse analysis and the concept of legitimation (van Leeuwen 2007), also drawing upon perspectives from translation studies (see below). First, we base the short discussion on language use, authorship and the multimodality of the COVID-19 signscape on a straightforward analysis of the signs from the LLs. Second, in a more in-depth look at discursive practices we utilise van Leeuwen's (2007) discourse-analytic concept of *legitimations*, as described in the following section. Although our qualitative take only allows us to highlight examples of possible strategies for communicating and legitimising rules and regulations, by including data from both Helsinki and Stockholm, we make some comparisons between discursive practices in the course of the pandemic in the two neighbouring countries.

8.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study could be described as sociosemiotics combined with perspectives from discourse analysis and translation studies. The aim is thus not only to describe what is communicated and by whom, but also to analyse *how* information of a juridical character is translated into signs and legitimised in the LL. Different translation processes are required in the creation of signs related to COVID-19: it is a question not only of translation between languages, but also of reworking authoritative texts into visual signs (by different authors). The process is thus both inter-semiotic and intralingual (cf. Jakobson 1959; Pitkäsalo & Kalliomaa-Puha 2019).

The main focus in this chapter is on the *legitimation* of various COVID-19-related rules and recommendations. We follow van Leeuwen's (2007: 92) model and refer to the following main categories: *authorisation*, *moral evaluation*, *rationalisation* and *mythopoesis*. According to Van Leeuwen (2007: 91–92), discourses construct legitimations for social practices that need to be explained and justified. More specifically, legitimation is constructed in discourses to enable systems of authority and power to legitimise their practises. Legitimations provide reasons for why certain discursive practices take the form they do (van Leeuwen 2005: 280).

As van Leeuwen (2007: 97) also states, authorisation means legitimation with reference to laws, personal or impersonal authorities such as government or a health authority, tradition and custom, and he summarises these in three sub-categories: *custom*, *authority* and *commendation*. *Authority legitimatio*n is often expressed by means of verbs such as *mean* and *say* with reference to *personal* (teacher, parent – could be a minister here, the prime minister or the president) or *impersonal* (laws, regulations or injunctions) *authority*. *Commendation* refers to experts (e.g. health authorities, the government) or role models. *Custom* (van Leeuwen 2007: 96–97) divides into the authority of tradition (this is how we have always done it) and of conformity (doing it like 'everyone else' does it).

Moral evaluations, in turn, are based on moral values and presuppose shared values. They have no specific linguistic form and thus the discourse analysis must go beyond the purely discursive pattern and instead recognise them on the basis of 'common-sense cultural knowledge' (van Leeuwen 2007: 98). The use of adjectives such as *good*, *bad*, *useful* and *normal* may indicate moral evaluation, as do phrases such as *taking care of each other*.

142

Rationalisation falls into the two sub-categories, namely *instrumental rationalisation* and *theoretical rationalisation*. The former is legitimation referring to the purpose of an action, its goal and its effects and effectiveness. According to van Leeuwen (2007: 100–101), instrumental rationalisation is always connected to morality, however indirectly, if it is to function as legitimation. Theoretical rationalisation is grounded in some sort of truth, 'the way things are' (van Leeuwen 2007: 103). It typically takes the form of a definition, an explanation or a prediction, employing verbs such as *is*, *means*, *constitutes* and *symbolises* (van Leeuwen 2007: 104). Theoretical rationalisations are often combined with elements of morality and authority: several types of legitimation may co-exist in a certain text, such as when rationalisation is followed by moral validation.

Finally, mythopoesis amounts to legitimation by storytelling. Van Leeuwen (2007: 105–107) distinguishes between *moral tales* and *cautionary tales*. The protagonist in the former is rewarded for either engaging in legitimate social practices or restoring the legitimate order, but in the latter case is faced with an unhappy ending as a result of not conforming to the specific norms of social practice. Examples of mythopoesis are not very common in the LLs studied here.

Legitimation may be based on different multimodal resources such as pictures and other visual elements alongside the written text (van Leeuwen 2007: 107–108). A picture of a person with authority, for example, may accompany authorisation, and visual symbols such as hearts symbolising care could strengthen moral evaluations. When it comes to interpreting the discourses in LLs, however, other aspects such as place semiotics (e.g., emplacement, see Scollon & Scollon 2003) must also be considered.

8.4 Results

We will now describe the empirical findings about the COVID-19 signscapes in Helsinki and Stockholm, first by looking at what kind of information is communicated, by whom, and in which languages. One interesting point concerns the extent to which unofficial signs mediate official guidelines, hence passing on information that under normal circumstances is predominantly or solely communicated on official signs. As such, the examples we discuss below are similar to the 'hybrid signs' that Lees (2021) highlighted. On the theoretical level, such signs could also be interpreted as the recontextualization of official rules and recommendations found in different legislative and authoritative texts. This is not recontextualization from social practice to (written) discourse on how to act (van Leeuwen 2008: 1), however: the recontextualization in COVID-19 signscapes happens the other way around, namely from written documents to (desired) social practices.

As hinted above, another noteworthy characteristic of the COVID-19 signscapes is the highly situated nature of the signs. Scollon & Scollon (2003: 145–146) differentiate between *decontextualized*, *transgressive* and *situated* signs, the last category including cases when the meaning of the sign is shaped by its placement. This certainly applies to many of the signs related to COVID-19, such as those setting out requirements to wear a face mask or giving information about the maximum number of customers allowed at a shop entrance. Karlsson (2021) discusses further Swedish examples, describing

143

how floor stickers about safe distance are placed on the customer's path, thus linking the directive to an individual's next action. The materiality of the signs is generally also of interest, in combination with language visibility and multimodality. Although not part of our analysis, the potential differences between sign types should be kept in mind with reference to the examples discussed below, among other differences between the handmade signs of smaller, local actors and the centrally produced signs of chain stores.

Overall, the COVID-19 signscapes observed in Helsinki and Stockholm mediate the same topics of information, namely instructions for and reminders about *keeping a safe distance from others*, *washing your hands*, *staying at home when feeling sick*, *coughing or sneezing into your sleeve* and *prioritising contactless payments*. As expected, however, considering the very different approaches and national strategies and measures taken by the two countries during the various stages of the pandemic, some differences emerged. All these topics draw at least in part from the official recommendations in the two countries, which also differed. One very obvious difference concerned the recommendation on wearing a face mask. In Finland, as in many other countries, wearing a face mask in public spaces was either strongly recommended or compulsory during most of the pandemic, whereas the practice was only recommended in Sweden, directed more specifically towards specific occupations or situations. How the recommendations were implemented more or less visibly by different actors varied both between the countries and within them during different phases of the pandemic. Consequently, this specific topic was largely absent from the unofficial signs in Stockholm. Another example of how the signs reflected specific societal actions during the pandemic is the specification of *how many people may enter a shop or a restaurant at a time*. These formed a sort of sub-genre in Stockholm in that the information was required by law in Sweden, but not in the same way in Finland. Another type of communicated information concerned the reasoning behind different rules and recommendations, which we discuss further in the section on legitimation.

8.4.1 LANGUAGE AND AUTHOR VISIBILITY

Referring to language use and visibility, Ben-Rafael et al. (2006), among others, point out that choice on signs with respect to language (and authorship) can be viewed from the perspective of the dominance of one language over another, and could also be tied to power relations between dominant and subordinate groups. They suggest that choices apparent in the LL are also governed by the expected influence on its consumers (Ben-Rafael et al. 2006: 10). Linking this to our first research question, going beyond pure description and adding an explanatory interest to results on language visibility, requires a basic understanding of how multilingual signs are created in a specific contextual framework. Language choice on unofficial signs may well be connected to the author's knowledge of other languages, i.e. the ability to create signs in more than one language. Thus, while official signs are usually translated into other languages by professional translators, unofficial signs tend to be dependent on the language skills of the private actor creating them. Regardless, language visibility does have an impact on the effectiveness of a sign: the reader needs to understand the language used in order to be able to act in the desired manner.

Most of the unofficial signs in our data set were monolingual, written in Finnish in Helsinki and in Swedish in Stockholm. This is in line with previous findings on

144

COVID-19 signscapes cited earlier, indicating a lack of linguistic inclusion in these signs: Hopkyns & van den Hoven (2022), for example, point out how signage by private individuals is often monolingual. In cases in which more than one language was used on unofficial signs, English was predominantly the second language in both Helsinki and Stockholm. One could assume that signs including both Finnish and Swedish would be more visible in Helsinki, given that the city is officially bilingual. This is not the case in our data set, however: the few examples of signs with Swedish as the second language were found in the *Stockmann's* department store (which has an established bilingual image) and in shops belonging to a nationwide supermarket chain. One common element in these signs is that they were all centrally designed (and professionally translated), i.e. not produced by private individuals. As such, the language visibility here is regulated not only by the language skills of individual actors, but also by their choice to display existing language versions of different signs.

Unofficial signs featuring more than two languages are thus rare in our data set. All the trilingual signs found in Helsinki feature Finnish, Swedish and English, in that particular order (see e.g. sign 1 in Figure 2). Although few in number, these bi- and trilingual signs tend to offer the same information in both or all languages (i.e. showcasing *duplicating multilingualism* according to Reh's 2004 typology). Multilingualism – or rather, additional English – is also present in the COVID-19 signscape through parallel monolingual signs (see e.g. sign 3 in Figure 1). Many such signs in our data set are floor stickers (cf. Karlsson 2021), with some versions only in English, and all these examples were found in Helsinki. Languages other than Finnish, Swedish and English do not appear on unofficial signs in our data set in either city. By way of comparison, the use of other languages is sporadic even on official signs, as discussed in more detail in Nordman & Syrjälä (2024).

Although not generally multilingual, the signs dealing with COVID-19 are highly multimodal. Beside the written language(s), pictures and symbols of different kinds illustrate the recommendations given in the texts. Pictures may be used as semiotic resources to make signs more inclusive, and as such the strategies regarding the use of non-verbal signs could almost be considered an additional language choice. The use of pictures to mediate rules and recommendations requires the translation of written information from verbal to non-verbal signs. Some signs use strict intersemiotic translation, i.e. only pictures and no textual elements. The pictures portray face masks, arrows between people illustrating a safe distance, or hands being washed, for example. One could argue that using pictures guarantees access to information (cf. *access to justice* in Pitkäsalo & Kalliomaa-Puha 2019: 30–32) given on signs, regardless of the reader's language knowledge. Hence, using pictures could guarantee that every reader understands the information mediated on the sign. However, using only pictures to illustrate the recommended precautions does presuppose that the intended reader: a) is aware of the COVID-19 pandemic, b) already has an understanding of the official rules and recommendations in effect, and c) is convinced of their necessity. Our data set supports this presupposition, in that the frequency of signs comprising only pictures grew during the pandemic in both countries (on both unofficial and official signs).

Finally, in relation to our first research question, we turn to *author* visibility. As Malinowski (2009: 108) points out, human agency is often disregarded in the study of LLs in favour of the dichotomy of *top-down* and *bottom-up* signs (see also the difficulty

in the functional categorisation of LL items as noted in Blackwood 2015: 40–42, for example). Within the field of translation studies, too, human agency, especially of translators' agency, has assumed a stronger role since the emergence of translation sociology (see e.g. Pym 2006; Wolf & Fukari 2007, Kinnunen & Koskinen 2010; as well as Venuti 2008 on translator (in)visbility). Translations are part of LLs – signs in more than one language are products of translation, whether by professional translators or private individuals – thus translators are also authors in the LL.

The specific translator still remains invisible to the readers of the signs, however, even if the same individual writes or puts them up. One could study the visible authorship of COVID-19 signs from at least two perspectives: first, with regard to the specific sign displayed – it is not necessarily any particular individual who is the formal sender of the information, but the store, restaurant or other business; and second, with regard to the rules and recommendations that are being communicated – imposed by national health authorities or the government, for example. The following discussion concerns the authors of specific signs: the latter kind of authorship is addressed below as part of the discussion on legitimation.

As is commonplace with other types of signs in the LL, the most common way of making the author of the COVID-19-related signs visible is to put the company name or logo on the sign as a separate semiotic entity – with the specific purpose of communicating authorship. The name or logo is normally placed at the bottom of the sign, as shown in Figure 1.

As pointed out earlier, many of the signs related to COVID-19 are highly situated: the meaning is at least partly shaped by the sign's placement at the entrance of a shop,

Figure 1. Author visibility on COVID-19-related signs (signs 1, 2, 3, 4 from Helsinki and signs 5 and 6 from Stockholm), also illustrating the varied forms of COVID-19-related signs in the two capitals studied. Pictures: 1–4 Lieselott Nordman, 5–6 Väinö Syrjälä.

146

for example. This feature also influences the intended reader's understanding of its authorship. A sign placed by the entrance gives customers the impression that it was authored by the specific business, even if no author is visible on it. Many such signs in our data set, with no visible author, were home-made, either handwritten or custom-printed and more private in character, used by smaller local businesses. Nevertheless, most signs make the author visible, as mentioned above. Accordingly, the emplacement and the visible author in combination inform readers who is communicating the specific message. Signs with and without visible authors feature in our data set from both cities.

One particularly interesting example in the data is a sign in which the author is visible, but not in the way described above: the shop chose to communicate current recommendations in the form of a letter to customers. The sign was displayed in the shop window (in two parallel versions, in Finnish and English), written on a sheet of white A4 paper with no additional visual elements. It reads:

> Dear Marimekko-community,
> We are happy to have you back!
> For safety reasons we are taking the following precautions:
> We limit the number of customers
> in our store to maintain a safe
> distance between people.
> We clean and disinfect
> surfaces frequently.
> Hand sanitizer is always
> available in our stores.
> We recommend using card payments.

This 'letter' addresses customers as part of the 'Marimekko community', the use of the *Marimekko* company name also being the only reference to the author of the sign. Overall, the style of the text is quite informal, addressing the reader directly ('We are happy to have you back'). Although presented in an unusual format, this sign is an illustrative example of signs without a visible author relying on their emplacement, as well as of the information communicated in the COVID-19 signscape. As mentioned above, the issue of author visibility is also connected to the legitimation of the information. Thus, we focus our attention in the following section on the second research question concerning the legitimation strategies found on the signs.

8.4.2 Legitimation

Authors have different ways of legitimising the same social practices (e.g. keeping a distance, wearing a face mask) mandated by official rules and recommendations. Our interest lies in identifying the legitimation strategies at play on unofficial signs communicating about COVID-19. Examples from the three categories, namely *moral evaluation*, *rationalisation* and *authorisation,* are visible on signs in both cities, as discussed below. The fourth of van Leeuwen's (2007) categories, *mythopoesis*, is not visible on any of the unofficial signs in our data (and is only rarely used on public signs).

Legitimation strategies are not always easy to place in any one of the aforementioned categories. In fact, many signs present combinations of different strategies: examples

147

are discussed further in the sub-section following those devoted to the three specific categories. In other cases there is no explicit legitimation. Thus, we end the section with a discussion about signs that communicate some rules and recommendations, but lack legitimation.

8.4.3 Moral Evaluation

Moral evaluation draws upon a shared understanding of moral values. Legitimation with reference to moral values focus on what is considered good or bad, natural, healthy or normal, for example (van Leeuwen 2007: 97, 100). There is general consensus that it is a good thing to limit the spread of COVID-19. However, being a good thing already conveys a moral value as in *good* – versus *bad* if the pandemic is not controlled. Moral evaluation is among the most common forms of legitimation present in our data set. Legitimation in this form is present on signs either verbally or with the addition of a graphic element such as a heart. The graphic element may be part of a template for all COVID-19-related signs used by a specific business. For example, every COVID-19-related sign in one Swedish grocery store carried the message 'Do your shopping with consideration (for others)' (Swedish *Handla med hänsyn*), with two hearts creating the footer on the template.

Moral values reflected in observable forms of legitimation by means of moral evaluation refer to health and safety, and caring for others. Following recommendations is presented as equal to showing consideration, thus helping both oneself and others. You are a 'considerate shopper' if you follow the guidelines on the sign (Swedish *Handla med hänsyn*), for example, and you do this 'for the good of all' (Swedish *för allas väl*; *för allas omsorg*). By keeping a distance or wearing a face mask you 'show consideration'. Readers are thanked for their consideration, for keeping a distance and for using a face mask, and the form of address is the personal and inclusive *you* (English *thank you for caring*, Swedish *tack för din omtanke*; *tack för att du håller avstånd*).

As mentioned above, using pictures as semiotic resources, either alone or in combination with text, could also emphasise moral values. One example of this is visible on sign 6 in Figure 1 above, used by the Swedish supermarket *Hemköp*. The sign consists of a text reading 'Thank you for working together with us to protect each other' (Swedish *Tack för att vi hjälps åt att skydda varandra*), followed by a red heart. The concept of protecting each other is thus considered morally good. As van Leeuwen (2007: 98) points out, moral evaluations are not necessarily explicit in texts (primarily referring to longer texts than signs), but shared moral values may still be read 'between the lines'. The use of hearts and thanking the reader for acting in a certain way could be considered more implicit moral values in the COVID-19 signscape.

8.4.4 Rationalisation

Legitimation through rationalisation refers to the goals and effects of social practices (van Leeuwen 2007: 92, 101), for example. Alongside moral evaluation, rationalisation is the most common form of legitimation found on COVID-19-related signs in both Helsinki and Stockholm. Moreover, the two forms of legitimation are often used together, as we discuss further in the subsection on complex legitimation. Rationalisation is based on a causal argumentation such as, 'do this, and this will

follow'. In the context of the COVID-19 signscapes studied here, rational legitimation refers most frequently to preventing the spread of the virus, or to the general health and safety of oneself and others: 'By acting like this, we keep each other safe'. Rational legitimation is included in the *Marimekko* sign discussed earlier as follows: '*For safety reasons* we take the following precautions' (third line, cursive added here); the reader is then presented with the precautions in question.

8.4.5 AUTHORISATION

Signs using authorisation for the purpose of legitimation in our data set were more common in Stockholm than in Helsinki. Authorities referred to in Stockholm include both specific legislation (as in sign 2 in Figure 2 below) and the national health authorities (i.e. *Folkhälsomyndigheten*, the Public Health Agency of Sweden) – as in 'The Public Health Agency recommends to keep a distance to each other' (Swedish *Folkhälsomyndigheten rekommenderar att hålla avstånd till varandra*, sign 3 in Figure 2). Authorities are also referred to in a more general sense, such as in *regional recommendations* or *official guidelines*.

Helsinki had fewer examples of signs using authorisation as legitimation. When it was used, the legitimation referred either to authority in a more general sense ('Our region has a valid mask recommendation', sign 1 in Figure 2; 'Follow regional recommendations'), or to 'health authorities' in general, or to a specific authority
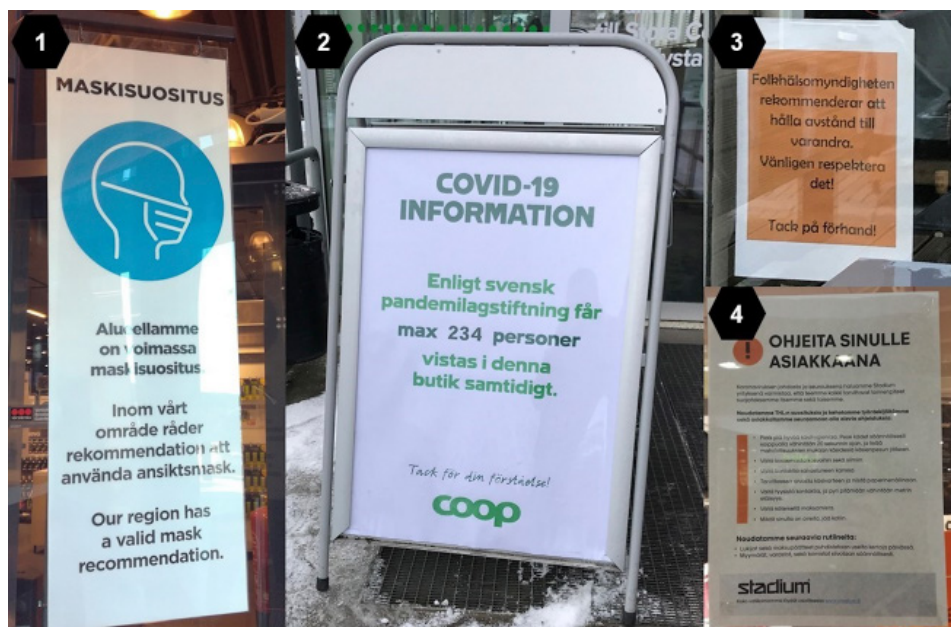
Figure 2. Signs using authorisation as legitimation: 1) Helsinki: authority in a more general sense referring to regional recommendations (English *our region has a valid mask recommendation*, Swedish *Inom vårt område råder rekommendation att använda ansiktsmask*, Finnish *Alueellamme on voimassa maskisuositus*); 2) Stockholm: authority with reference to legislation *Swedish pandemic legislation* (Swedish *svensk pandemilagstiftning*); 3) Stockholm: authorisation with reference to the national health authority in Sweden *Folkhälsomyndigheten*; and 4) Helsinki: authorisation with reference to the Finnish national health authority *THL*. Pictures: 1, 4 Lieselott Nordman, 2–3 Väinö Syrjälä.

149

(occasional reference is made to both the Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare, *THL* as in sign 4 in Figure 2, and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, *Työterveyslaitos*). We also found examples in Helsinki in which the Swedish-language versions referred to 'health authorities' (*hälsovårdsmyndigheterna*) more generally, whereas the Finnish-language version named a specific agency (The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, *Työterveyslaitos*). Whether this was a mistake or a conscious generalisation in the Swedish translation remains unknown to us.

However, we found no references in our data from Helsinki to specific legislation dealing with the pandemic, such as could be seen on signs in Stockholm where some signs specifically referred to the COVID-19 Act, or more generally to 'Swedish pandemic legislation' (Swedish *svensk pandemilagstiftning*). This form of legitimation was visible on signs giving information about the maximum number of persons allowed to be in a shop at the same time (e.g. sign 2 in Figure 2): 'According to Swedish pandemic legislation a maximum of 234 persons are allowed into this shop at the same time' (Swedish *Enligt svensk pandemilagstiftning får max 234 personer vistas i denna butik samtidigt*). Signs of this type in themselves were required under the legislation in question. To anyone not familiar with the context, the rationale behind the restrictions might seem to be the legislation and not the underlying pandemic.

Here we do not consider the name or logo of a business to be legitimation through authorisation, in that shops or businesses are not authorities *per se* in society with respect to pandemic restrictions (although they have the authority to *enforce* the official guidelines in their own premises). We rather interpret author visibility as authorisation only in cases in which a national- or regional-level authority is used on a sign as a *reason for*, i.e. as legitimation of, the enforcement of recommendations and the rules presented on the sign (see the examples presented in Figure 2). The individual businesses in our data had not been assigned such an authoritative role in society or on the signs.

8.4.6 COMPLEX LEGITIMATION

Many signs combine different types of legitimation, thereby creating even more complex forms. In our data set of COVID-19 signs, for example, moral evaluation is combined with either authorisation or rationalisation, the former combination being the most observable. Moral evaluation on the sign may be verbal, and/or with a graphic element such as a heart. As discussed earlier, in some cases the graphic addition was part of the shop's general template for all of its COVID-19-related signs.

Figure 3 shows one of these signs (sign 1), wherein the moral legitimation is in the footer: 'Do your shopping with consideration (for others)' (Swedish *Handla med hänsyn*), with two hearts added. Meanwhile, the legitimation in the text on the sign connotes authority in referring to the pandemic law in Sweden. A second example from Stockholm is a sign using no less than four forms of legitimation. First, there is a moral evaluative statement, 'We care about you who do your shopping here' (Swedish *Vi bryr oss om dig som handlar här*); second, there is legitimation with reference to authority, 'We follow official guidelines' (Swedish *Vi på Coop följer Svensk Dagligvaruhandels riktlinjer och Folkhälsomyndighetens rekommendationer*) the third is another moral evaluation, 'So you as a customer can feel safe' (Swedish *för att du som kund ska känna dig trygg*); finally, there is legitimation through rationalisation, 'to minimise risks and limit the spread of the virus' (Swedish *minska risker och begränsa*

Figure 3. Complex forms of legitimation. From the left: 1) Stockholm: Authorisation (the new pandemic law) + moral evaluation (Do your shopping with care + two hearts); 2) Stockholm: Moral evaluation (We care about you) + legitimation with reference to authority (Swedish Food Retailers Federation + national health authoritiy) + legitimation by moral evaluation (so that you can feel safe) + legitimation by rationalisation (to minimise risks and limit the spread of the virus; 3) Helsinki: Moral evaluation (we take care of each other) + legitimation with reference to authority (we wish you to follow the regional recommendations regarding the use of face masks). Pictures: 1–2 Väinö Syrjälä, 3 Lieselott Nordman.

smittspridning). Thus, the sign combines three different types of legitimation (see sign 2 in Figure 3).

We found the same pattern in Helsinki. A sign might refer to moral evaluation with the addition of a statement such as, 'We take care of each other' (Finnish *Pidämme huolta toisistamme*, Swedish *Vi tar hand om varandra*) at the top or bottom, followed by an explicit reference to general authorities: 'We require you to follow the regional recommendations regarding the use of face masks when shopping with us' (Swedish *Vi önskar också att du iakttar den regionala rekommendationen om ansiktsmask då du handlar hos oss*) (see sign 3 in Figure 3). Hearts as graphic elements where less common on signs in Helsinki.

As van Leeuwen (2007) points out in his discussion on rationalisation, even though it can never function as legitimation in the absence of moral evaluation, combined with moral evaluation it often 'remains oblique and submerged' (van Leeuwen 2007: 100). Interestingly, however, our data show a somewhat different pattern. Many signs combine rationalisation as legitimation with some form of moral evaluation, either as a separate textual element on the sign (e.g., 'We take care of each other') or by adding a picture emphasising care and solidarity (e.g., a picture of a heart). However, as we pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, COVID-19 signs are highly situated discourses (Scollon & Scollon 2003). Given that the social and societal context is an international health crisis and the dangers of the spread of a new virus, perhaps it is not surprising that moral values are more heavily emphasised than in other discursive contexts.

151

8.4.7 NO EXPLICIT LEGITIMATION

A rather large number of signs in our data set had no visible legitimation. Many of them consisted of only one picture illustrating how to act – such as a picture of a face mask or an illustration of two people keeping their distance (see e.g. sign 4 in Figure 1). Other signs again only gave brief instructions on what to do ('Follow these instructions: Wear a face mask, remember to keep a distance, remember to wash your hands.'). Short verbal directives were often combined with an illustrative picture. For example, the directives 'Wear a face mask' and 'Remember to wear a face mask' could be combined with a picture of a face mask (see e.g. sign 2 in Figure 4). On another level, a homemade sign in our data combined the text 'Keep a distance' with a hand-painted picture of two people keeping their distance, an arrow illustrating the distance, and the '1.5 meters' added under the arrow (the recommended distance varied during the pandemic and between the countries; in Finland it was predominantly two meters). Translating official guidelines into multimodal signs using both textual elements and pictures exemplifies intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1959; Kourdis 2015) as a method of communicating official guidelines during the pandemic, both in the unofficial signs studied here and on official signs (see Nordman & Syrjälä 2024).

Communicating rules and recommendations could thus be considered a clear and straightforward form of communication. It nevertheless presupposes a basic and established knowledge of the current pandemic situation, and of official recommendations at the present time in the present place, as well as an understanding of why specific actions are needed. This holds especially when no author is visible on the sign to help the reader contextualise what is stated on it. With reference to the above discussion on author visibility, signs with no legitimation tend to cohere with signs with no visible author present. This is noticeable on home-made signs in particular.

With regard to the presence or absence of legitimation, one could argue that the very placement of the sign legitimises it contextually (Scollon & Scollon 2003). Thus, the place, namely the shop, the supermarket or the coffee shop, could be considered the author with the authority to give directions to the customer, rather than a mere mediator of official guidelines. The fact that COVID-19 signs are highly situated in time and place might encourage the reader to 'read' an authority figure into them even if no author or authority is visible. As discussed earlier, however, at this stage we chose not to interpret the name or logo of a shop or other enterprise as evidence of legitimation through authorisation. Nevertheless, it is an interesting question.

The fact that single signs are frequently part of a restricted topical signscape in a restricted area such as a shopping centre does imply that in all probability they are read not as individual entities, but as part of bigger multimodal units consisting of different COVID-19 signs. If these other signs carry various forms of legitimation to convince readers of the need to act in a certain way, perhaps not every sign needs to legitimise the mandated action. One could also argue that assumed shared knowledge based on the specific context, time and place equates to the author finding it unnecessary to make specific legitimation visible on a sign if the intended reader is assumed to 'know' that recommendations are based on official decisions made by the country's authorities. These questions concerning possible explanations for the absence of legitimation are beyond the scope of this study, however, but they warrant attention in future research.
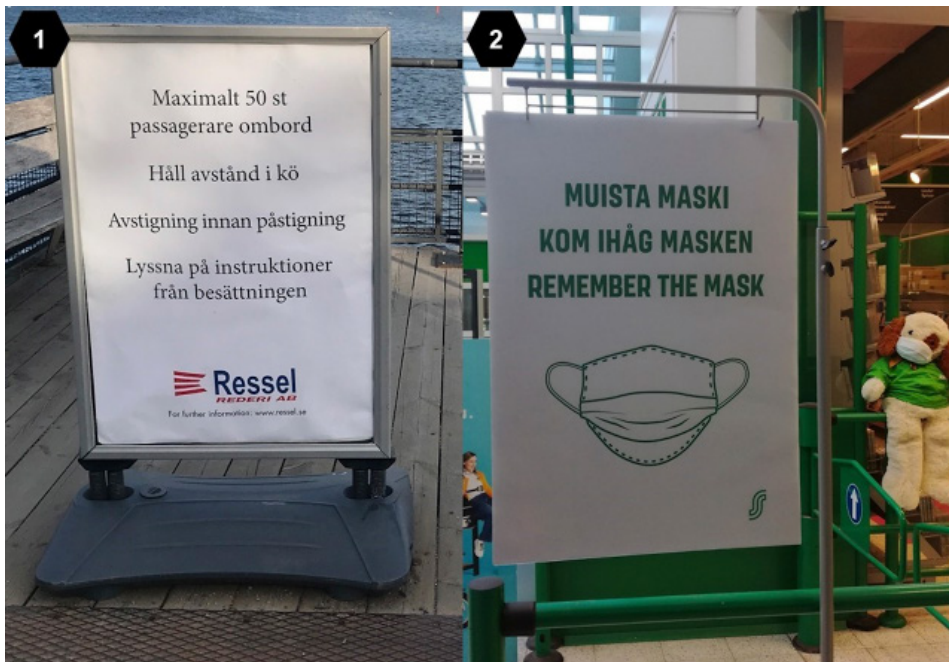
Figure 4. Signs without explicit legitimation (sign 1 from Stockholm, sign 2 from Helsinki). Pictures: 1 Väinö Syrjälä, 2 Lieselott Nordman.

8.5 Conclusion

In LL context, one tangible outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the appearance of a new topical genre of signs in public spaces, namely signs informing and instructing the public with the aim to prevent the spread of the virus. Furthermore, rules and recommendations imposed in political and juridical decisions are communicated directly into the scenes of everyday life through intersemiotic translation. Thus, COVID-19 has given rise to a new genre of juridical texts in the form of highly situated public signs directly addressing the citizen. From a linguistic perspective, as observed in Helsinki and Stockholm, this signscape is not as multilingual as might perhaps have been expected given the international crisis the pandemic created. Multiple languages are used, but not consistently. Instead, different multimodal resources are used for effective and inclusive communication.

In line with other studies investigating the LLs of COVID-19, our observations from Helsinki and Stockholm highlight the role of unofficial signs, created and posted by different commercial and private actors, as mediators of official guidelines (cf. *discursive convergence* as discussed by Marshall 2021; *hybrid signs* noted by Lees 2021). Therefore, it is worth considering how different authors legitimise the rules and recommendations, thus making it part of the wider COVID-19 discourse. As noted in our analysis above, the communicated recommendations – and the expected actions – are mainly legitimised by means of moral evaluation (which does not always need to be stated) or rationalisation, and sometimes authorisation. *Caring* is considered a good moral value with which the general public identifies, as well as

153

part of the general discourse of health care. The legislative background of the rules and recommendations only becomes visible in the few cases in which authorisation in the form of specific laws or named authorities is used as legitimation (in a sense creating a specific sub-genre of signs). In that 'caring' is seldom used to legitimise legal decisions in other contexts, the COVID-19 signscape could be described as the result of combining two professional discourse patterns, namely healthcare and legal discourse.

A more detailed analysis of a more comprehensive data set would be needed to draw proper conclusions concerning the differences between cities, different authors and types of signs at which we have only hinted. Nevertheless, based on the case study we can already point out several themes that should be discussed further. These include the use of multimodal resources and how LL legitimation and authorship are interpreted by the public in practice, personal references and means for addressing and how addressing practices might be linked to legitimation in different languages and countries, as well as the underlying translation processes and strategies, not to mention issues of language policy (related to both official and unofficial signs). The COVID-19 pandemic has given us a chance to enhance understanding of risk communication and its role during a global crisis. Analyses of all ongoing research in LL studies and in other related fields could facilitate the identification of different discourse patterns, as well as of effective and inclusive forms of communication.

154

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155

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9. A Multimodal Approach to Physical and Virtual Linguistic Landscapes across Different Spatial Scales

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The study of linguistic landscapes (LL) has become established in recent decades as a field with a strong interdisciplinary orientation. Originally defined as the study of languages and their visibility in public signs, LLs are now investigated across diverse disciplines including applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, language policy, geography, urban studies, semiotics and multimodality research, to name just a few (for an overview, see Gorter 2013). The interdisciplinary nature of the field is likely to have contributed to its theoretical and methodological development (Gorter & Cenoz 2017), which has led to a renewed understanding of LLs through the extension of the research from physical to virtual environments (Ivkovic & Lotherington 2009). Hence, research on LLs has added 'to our knowledge about societal multilingualism by focusing on language choices, hierarchies of languages, regulations, and aspects of literacy' (Gorter 2013: 191).

This chapter introduces a novel methodology for studying LLs and multilingualism on various spatial scales by combining multiple sources of data, which we developed as part of a project aimed at describing the LL of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area in Finland. We discuss the study of LLs in relation to recent theories of multimodal communication, the aim being to enhance understanding of the communicative situations and the media under analysis, as well as the methodological requirements (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017), which we also contrast with theories of physical and virtual spaces in human geography (Kellerman 2016).

Against this background, we show how a combination of quantitative data from a population register and social media platforms can provide a generic view of the LL, and how the richness and diversity of languages observed in these data sets may be quantified using measurements developed in information sciences and ecology, as suggested in Peukert (2013). We then apply spatial statistics to these measurements to identify research sites for ethnographic fieldwork, which involves photographing the LL and conducting on-site go-along interviews. Finally, we illustrate how the data produced by ethnographic fieldwork can be related to register and social media data using location information.

158

9.1 Defining the Scope of a Linguistic Landscape

Arguably, anyone embarking upon a study of LLs must decide what is being studied and where. The former – what is being studied – relates to how the concept of LL is defined and what falls within its remit. Landry and Bourhis's (1997: 25) frequently quoted definition has been used to circumscribe the objects of analysis, namely that '[t]he language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combine to form the LL of a given territory, region or urban agglomeration'. According to Gorter (2019: 41–43), however, this definition no longer adequately characterises the diversity of phenomena studied under the umbrella of LL studies, which now regularly take on diverse linguistic and semiotic phenomena across multiple spatial scales.

The definition of LL has implications for methodology and data collection. If an LL is understood as the languages that are visible in the public space – regardless of the signs that carry them – then access to the data must be secured, for example, by photographing the signs (Gorter 2019: 50). On the other hand, researchers who are concerned with how individuals experience and interact with the LL may use videography to record interviews or go-along walks, which adds a temporal dimension to the 'visual' data (Troyer & Szabó 2017). In both cases, however, the ability to collect and analyse data is largely constrained by the resources available. A single researcher cannot survey an entire city, which leads to the second decision concerning the choice of research site.

Choosing the research site is the first step in studying the LL of a given location, and is naturally affected by the scale, scope and characteristics of the environment. Urban environments are particularly challenging given their sheer size and the fact that they are 'composed of a multiplicity of sub-populations and neighbourhoods representing a diversity of linguistic, social, economic and/or ethnic backgrounds' (Hult 2014: 511). Because the LL varies from one location to another, the choice of research site inevitably affects the results. In line with this view, Blackwood (2015: 41) argues that surveying public signs across entire cities is simply not feasible, but notes that technological advances may enable this in the future. Hong (2020), for example, shows how computer vision can be used to locate signs in Google Street View images, which allows scaling up the volume of data and extending the size of the research area. In many cases, however, researchers study LLs in specific locations, such as major public transportation hubs or pedestrian streets full of commercial real estate (Gorter 2019: 43–45).

Blackwood (2015: 41) argues that the choice of research sites should be more systematic, particularly in quantitative analyses of LLs. Recent research has argued for increased attention to sampling (Soukup 2020) and the use of demographic data and geographic information systems (Lu, Martens & Sayer 2022) for choosing research sites. Another alternative is provided by new sources of data for language use, which are currently emerging at the intersection of research on computer-mediated communication (CMC) and LL studies (see e.g. Androutsopoulos 2014). Whereas CMC studies cover private and public communication on social media platforms, online discussion fora and other digital media, the field of LL studies focuses predominantly on the languages used in public space (Androutsopoulos 2014: 75). However, public space is being rapidly transformed by digital technology, specifically

the combination of both hardware and software as discussed extensively in the field of human geography (see e.g. Dodge & Kitchin 2005; Zook & Graham 2007; Kellerman 2016).

Hiippala et al. (2019: 291–293) argue that previous conceptualisations of physical and virtual spaces in human geography could also enhance understanding of the relationship between LLs across both spaces. Introducing a particularly useful notion, Kellerman (2010) proposes that virtual spaces are now converging into their physical counterparts to form an intertwined 'double space'. This convergence is enabled by location-aware mobile devices, which allow users to access virtual spaces while remaining on the move in the physical space. Kellerman (2010: 2993) posits that the relationship between physical and virtual spaces be characterised along the dimensions of organisation, movement and users (Kellerman 2010: 2993). Whereas organisation as a dimension mainly concerns the properties of physical and virtual environments, movement refers to mobility within these spaces, and users to the individuals who inhabit them.

Each dimension is characterised by more fine-grained distinctions between physical and virtual spaces. On the organisational dimension these include matter, among other things, which contrasts the material and tangible nature of physical space with the immaterial and intangible qualities of virtual space. Further distinctions along the movement and user dimensions include time and interaction, respectively, which underline how physical space affords embodied interaction in real time, whereas virtual space supports asynchronous interaction over distance (cf. Hiippala et al. 2019: 293). Given that all forms of language use and communication examined within LL studies take place across physical and virtual spaces, understanding the formation of a 'double space' and its characteristics assumes crucial significance. In what follows we discuss communicative situations across physical and virtual spaces from the perspective of multimodality theory.

9.2 A Multimodal Perspective on Physical/Virtual Linguistic Landscapes

In terms of communication and interaction, it may be possible to elaborate Kellerman's (2010) proposed distinctions by drawing on theories of multimodal communication proposed in Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala (2017). Kellerman's (2010: 2993) distinctions concerning matter (material/tangible vs. immaterial/ intangible), interaction (embodied vs. disembodied) and language (national – domestic vs. mainly English – international), for example, could all be considered in light of the concept of materiality. This concept rests on the assumption that any communication must ultimately involve the manipulation of some materiality to become perceptible, which applies equally to embodied face-to-face interaction and externalised communication using mass media (Bateman 2021a). According to Bateman (2021a: 41), the characteristics of materiality can be described along the dimensions of temporality, space, participant roles and transience, in other words whether traces of manipulation on some materiality remain observable as time progresses. These dimensions constrain communicative situations that are supported by the materiality and determine which modes of expression are available for making and exchanging meanings.

160

The dimensions of materiality proposed in Bateman (2021a) are intended as an 'external language of description' for characterising communicative situations and artefacts before applying any 'theory-internal' concepts to their analysis. As such, they are closer to the definition of a sign suggested by Backhaus (2007: 66), namely as 'any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame', which he points out is physically rather than 'semantically' motivated. One could enhance the description of some materiality along the dimensions introduced in Bateman (2021a) by drawing on the concept of a medium, which Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala (2017: 123) define as 'a historically stabilised site for the deployment and distribution of some selection of semiotic modes for the achievement of varied communicative purposes.'

A medium emerges when a community of users begins regularly to manipulate some materiality for specific communicative purposes, as a result of which these practises stabilise and generate expectations concerning the patterns of production and consumption of the said medium. The medium of a printed tabloid newspaper serves as a canonical example: anyone encountering a tabloid newspaper could make assumptions about its content and the semiotic modes that are used to communicate the content to readers because the broad purpose of this medium in society is common knowledge. These semiotic modes are generally understood in multimodality research as socially shared resources for making meaning (Kress 2014). Crucially, both media and semiotic modes are always anchored in particular communities, which enables their use for communication.

9.2.1 Communicative Situations and Media

Figure 1 exemplifies four communicative situations that can help understand the role of media in physical and virtual spaces through the abstract schema proposed in Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala (2017: 87–88). The sign producers and consumers in the figure stand for the roles taken by participants in communicative situations, which are drawn from the entire pool of potential roles available for sign producers and consumers within a community (e.g. speaker, designer, observer, …). The term 'canvas', in turn, refers to any materiality associated with a medium that may bear traces of intentional manipulation that can be perceived and taken up for interpretation by sign producers and consumers (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 89). These canvases can have different material properties, which may be described along the dimensions proposed in Bateman (2021a).

To begin with, situation A in Figure 1 shows a communicative situation in which a sign producer manipulates a static and permanent canvas on some external medium, which multiple observers may perceive. Examples of such communicative media in physical spaces include street signs, advertising billboards, shop signs, stickers and graffiti, all of which have been studied extensively in LL research (Gorter 2013). The extent to which sign consumers recognise these media and the communicative purposes they serve depends on their familiarity with or membership of that particular community (cf. Scollon & Scollon 2003). Although 'transgressive' media such as stickers and graffiti may be recognised by a wider community, they can also serve more specific communicative purposes among smaller communities that actively produce and consume them (Henricson 2020, see also Chapter 5 in this volume). In the process of making and exchanging meanings these media may theoretically deploy
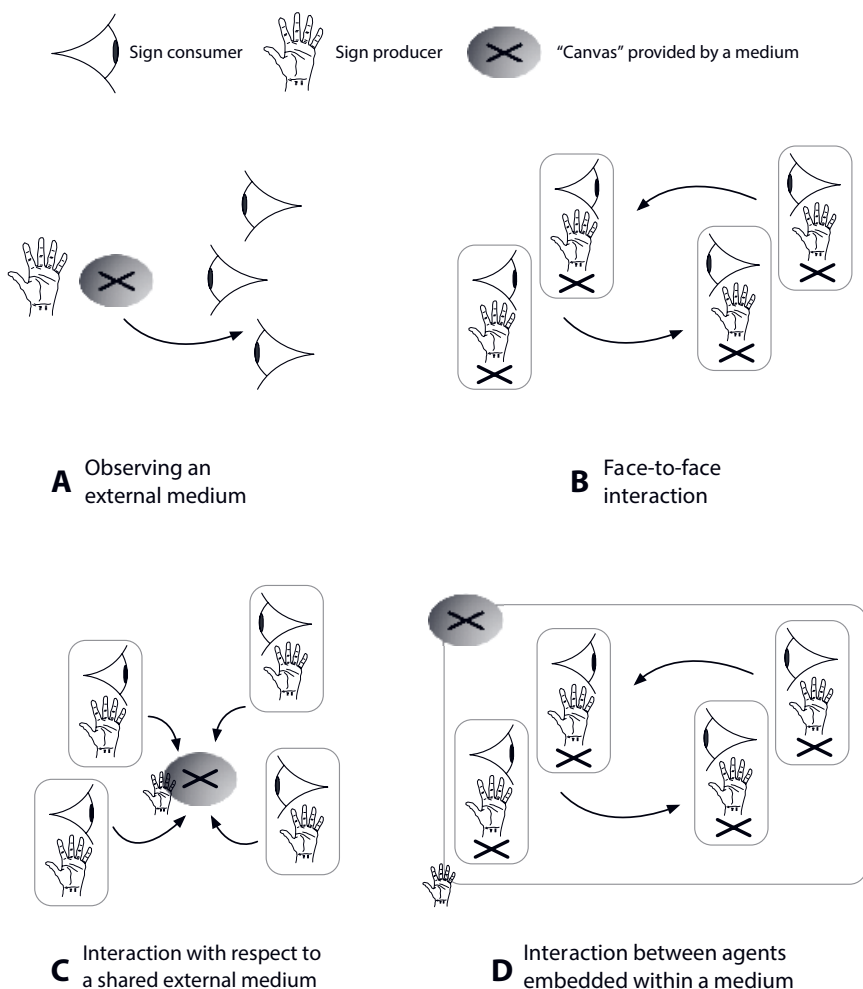
Figure 1. Examples of communicative situations in physical and virtual spaces. Picture: Tuomo Hiippala.

any semiotic modes that are recognised within the community, as long as they are supported by the underlying materiality (see e.g. Stroud & Mpendukana 2009).

Situation B, in turn, exemplifies everyday face-to-face interaction in physical space, in which the participants take on the roles of sign producers and consumers. In this case, the medium they manipulate by the participants is the body, whose materiality provides a bundle of dynamic and fleeting canvases that allow drawing on coordinated combinations of spoken language, gestures, posture and gaze, as commonly deployed in all forms of embodied interaction (Mondada 2016; Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 342–343). In terms of language, face-to-face interaction in urban environments may also involve diverse linguistic repertoires, which are not limited to local or national languages but are rather defined by the participants and their roles in the communicative situation (Pennycook & Otsuji 2014).

Situation C shows several participants interacting with respect to an external medium, such as a social media platform, which allows them to take on the roles of

both sign producers and consumers. However, its design may constrain the properties of the canvases available to the participants based on their roles. For example, video-sharing platforms such as YouTube allow the creator to manipulate the 'main' canvas for audio-visual media, whereas the observers can only view this canvas. The platform provides another canvas to enable distanced interaction between the creator and viewers – a comments section – that provides a different set of semiotic modes to support asynchronous interaction. Again, the linguistic resources used in these interactions may be extremely diverse and depend on participant roles in the communicative situation (see e.g. Androutsopoulos 2015; Yao 2021).

Finally, situation D features a communicative situation in which the participants are embedded within a dynamic and fleeting canvas on an external medium, as exemplified by embodied agents interacting in a 3D virtual environment. Being embedded in the medium as embodied agents, the participating sign producers and consumers are able to draw on embodied communication just as in situation B. Simultaneously, they can make use of semiotic modes that are available on other canvases, such as the text chats present at the interface with the medium, which bears some resemblance to situation C (Jucker et al. 2018). In addition to dealing with communicative situations that unfold within the medium, a human that controls an avatar in a virtual world must inevitably interact at an interface with the virtual environment in some physical space, which illustrates how communicative situations and media become embedded within one another across the double space (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 127).

9.2.2 Communicative Media, Space and Linguistic Landscapes

With regard to the definition of the double space, it should be acknowledged that the distinctions proposed by Kellerman (2010: 2993) focus on differences between physical and virtual spaces. However, the examples in Figure 1 show that communicative situations and media may exhibit similar material characteristics regardless of whether they take place in physical or virtual space. Furthermore, they may be embedded within one another and span both physical and virtual spaces. As exemplified in Hiippala et al. (2019: 293), participants engaged in face-to-face interaction at a given physical location may simultaneously interact with other participants on social media platforms using mobile devices and positioning technology. These technologies provide an infrastructure for communicative media, and particularly digital media, which appear to be driving the convergence of physical and virtual spaces (cf. Hepp 2022).

Communicative media also carry the physical and virtual LL, given that any semiotic mode involving language use must inevitably participate in some medium (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 124). The material characteristics of these media also determine the methods required to study their contribution to the LL. Again, with reference to the examples in Figure 1, a researcher may photograph static and permanent physical media at a given location, as is commonly done in LL studies (Gorter 2019), listen to dynamic and fleeting face-to-face interactions overheard on the street (El Ayadi 2021), or record them on video to recover the interactions for later analysis (Troyer & Szabó 2017). However, such observation-based methods can only capture material traces of these communicative media and the languages deployed in them that are directly observable. Understanding how individuals perceive such

media and the languages used on them, in turn, is beyond the scope of observation and requires the use of alternative ethnographic methods, such as interviews.

The aforementioned issues related to materiality and access to data apply equally to digital media, which can do radically different things with the same underlying technological-physical materiality (Bateman 2021b). One digital medium, such as a social media platform, may use the materiality to set up multiple 2D canvases with different communicative affordances to support interaction among users (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 363). Alternatively, another medium may use the same materiality to realise a canvas with a 3D virtual environment for simulating embodied interaction (Jucker et al. 2018). Previous research has shown that ethnographic methods may effectively be used to study these media (Androutsopoulos 2015), but digital media also differ in the extent to which they afford access to data.

9.2.3 ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIVE MEDIA

Whereas some social media platforms allow the retrieval of user-generated content systematically via an Application Programming Interface (API; see e.g. Hiippala et al. 2020: 15–16), on account of their material properties, 3D virtual environments rarely afford programmatic access that would allow the recovery of detailed information about interactions on the platform. In the view of Kellerman (2010: 2993), a virtual 3D model of a given location in a physical space – such as a 'digital twin' – may closely resemble the corresponding physical location in terms of form. However, according to Jucker et al. (2018: 96), such spaces may also be 'weakly structured' in that they impose minimal constraints on the embodied interactions that may take place on the dynamic and fleeting canvas provided by the virtual environment. Because such interactions are construed dynamically, embodied communication is just as challenging to capture in virtual spaces as it is in a physical space.

Social media platforms, in turn, set more constraints on user-generated content, which also allows for its structuring (Eisenlauer 2014). Structured content can also be distributed via an API, which can be enriched by metadata collected from the platform. Furthermore, platform users are often encouraged to generate additional metadata by associating their content with physical locations via the practice known as geotagging. Associating content with a physical location via geotagging allows a social media platform to establish a stronger connection between the virtual and the physical in terms of time and space via timestamps, coordinates and other metadata. However, the high volume of data available on these platforms requires the use of computational methods to support the analysis (Hiippala et al. 2019).

The above discussion highlights several potential targets for the study of LLs across physical and virtual spaces: first, to determine the communicative media that carry the LL; second, to consider their material properties and how they affect access to data; and third, to identify appropriate methods for capturing and analysing the data. Given the wealth of communicative media that may be relevant to the study of LLs across the double space, it would also be worth considering how to combine information from various sources. The focus in the following section is on how best to combine multiple sources of data to explore the physical and virtual LL of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area in Finland.

164

9.3 Data and Methods

9.3.1 Approaches to Register and Social Media Data

We draw on two sources of data to acquire a large-scale view of the languages used in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The first data set is the Population Information System, a longitudinal register maintained by Statistics Finland that contains information on every individual who resides in Finland either permanently or temporarily. The register is updated yearly and features approximately 140 demographic variables covering every individual, including information on self-reported first language, family relations, educational and income levels, and approximate home location within a 250-metre grid. Combined with information on the first language, home locations allow the use of spatial methods to locate potentially interesting areas, such as grid cells with a high number of unique languages, while also tracking their changes over time (Väisänen et al. 2023). However, the first language of an individual – assigned upon entry to the register – does not necessarily reflect the languages used in everyday life. As such, the register data provides 'demolinguistic' perspectives on the languages that are present in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (de Vries 1990; Extra 2010), which allow contextualising observations of the languages used in diverse communicative situations.

The second data set consists of geotagged social media content from Twitter and Instagram. This content is produced dynamically by users who participate in communicative situations on these platforms. As noted above, many social media platforms impose structure on communicative situations, enrich the content with metadata and distribute it through an API. The combination of social media content and spatiotemporal metadata allows investigation of both language use and daily spatial mobility, in other words how users move about and when (Kellerman 2016). This information, in turn, may be used to describe virtual LLs associated with given physical locations and how they change over shorter and longer timescales (Hiippala et al. 2019; 2020). Unlike register data, however, social media content provides limited demographic information on users (cf. Sloan 2017). Furthermore, users of social media do not necessarily reside within the study area and may include tourists and visitors who actively shape the LL (Bruyèl-Olmedo & Juan-Garau 2015). In this way, social media content can also provide insights into populations that are not covered by register data.

We collected social media content programmatically through APIs. For the Twitter data we used a tool developed by Väisänen et al. (2021), whereas the Instagram data had been collected for an earlier study (Tenkanen 2017: 22). We used data from 2015 because it includes full data sets for both platforms for the entire year. Access to APIs has been increasingly limited since 2018 due to misuse, which prevents the collection of up-to-date information (see e.g. Bruns 2019). Given the high volume of social media data, we pre-processed it by removing non-human accounts (e.g. bots) and cleaning up textual content (e.g. removing emojis), as outlined in Hiippala et al. (2019: 296). We then segmented the textual content into orthographic sentences before using automatic language detection to predict the language of each one. Finally, we aggregated the observations for individual languages in both the register and the social media data into the same 250-by-250 metre grid. This allowed us to contrast the individual-level register data with information on daily mobility and language use on social media.

9.3.2 Data-Driven Selection of Research Sites

The combined register and social media data gives a broad view of the languages used in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Addressing the issue of selecting research sites in large and diverse urban environments (cf. Blackwood 2015: 41), we applied measurements developed in the fields of ecology and information sciences to quantify the richness and diversity of the languages observed in each grid cell. These measures, which commonly describe the richness, evenness and abundance of observed entities, have been successfully used to measure the diversity of both physical and virtual LLs on various spatial scales (Peukert 2013; Hiippala et al. 2019; 2020).

More specifically, we used Simpson's diversity index and Shannon entropy to measure the linguistic diversity of each grid cell located in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Simpson's diversity index corresponds to the probability that two randomly chosen samples belong to different languages. This measure is sensitive to abundant languages, and its values range between zero and one. Shannon entropy, in turn, describes the amount of information needed to describe the identities of languages within a grid cell. Entropy is sensitive to both rare and abundant languages, and ranges from zero (only one language present) to high values that represent higher diversity, but rarely exceeds four.

After calculating the above-mentioned values for each grid cell we used bivariate local Moran I, a measure of spatial autocorrelation, to evaluate whether clusters of grid cells with high values on both measures occurred randomly. Spatial autocorrelation refers to the way similar phenomena tend to cluster in space. Moran's I identifies statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) clusters of grid cells with high values for both Simpson's diversity index and Shannon's entropy. We conducted the same analysis for both register and social media data. We then used the temporal metadata available for social media content to assess whether both diversity measures remained high throughout the day, which would imply consistent human activity in the grid cell. Finally, we conducted an overlay analysis to compare the extent to which the observations of the register and social media data overlapped.

We based our selection of three research sites for ethnographic fieldwork on both diversity measurements and local knowledge, as highlighted in Figure 2. The first site, Aleksanterinkatu, is a culturally significant major street and a tourist landmark in the centre of Helsinki, attracting both locals and tourists. As such, the location resembles a typical site in LL studies (Gorter 2019: 43–45). As evidenced in observations from social media data the street remains linguistically diverse throughout the day, but is not diverse according to the register data. The next site, Kauppakartanonkatu, is a suburban street positioned close to several shopping centres, of which one specialises primarily in ethnic retail goods. Although this location is linguistically diverse according to both the register and the social media data, the diversity measures for the latter do not remain high throughout the day. The third site, Pihlajamäki, is a suburban residential neighbourhood with a local shopping centre, that is linguistically diverse according to both register and social media data, and the diversity values remain high throughout the day.

9.3.3 Documenting the Linguistic Landscape

We carried out ethnographic fieldwork at each selected site on the basis of the register and social media data. With a view to connecting the spatial and ethnographic

166

Scan the QR-code or visit
https://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe202402136964
to view a high resolution map.
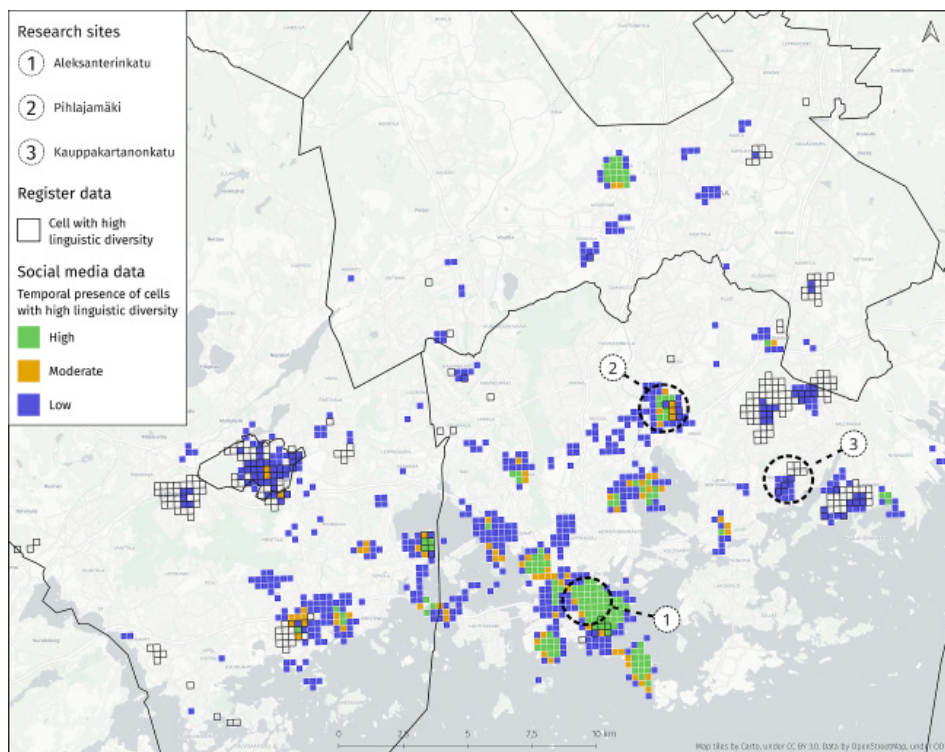
Figure 2: A map of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area showing statistically significant clusters of grid cells with high linguistic diversity for both register and social media data. In the latter, temporal presence indicates whether a cell remains linguistically diverse over different times of day. Each day is divided into five temporal categories: morning (06:00–10:00), noon (10:00–14:00), afternoon (14:00–18:00), evening (18:00–22:00) and night (22:00–06:00). Cells with a high temporal presence remain highly diverse over four to five times a day, moderate three times and low once or twice. Picture: Tuomas Väisänen.
Map tiles by Carto, under CC By 3.0. Data by OpenStreetMap, under ODbL.

methods we recorded all the observations made during the ethnographic fieldwork on a GoPro Hero 8 camera, which uses GPS to track its location. As Larsson et al. (2021) showed, it is possible to map location information provided by GPS reliably to temporal interview data, which allows the linking of observable behaviour and place narratives to particular moments in space and time. Hence, location information allows the bridging of descriptions of the physical and virtual LLs that are produced by spatial, computational and ethnographic methods. Arguably, this produces a more comprehensive description of the languages used across the double space.

We began the fieldwork by photographing physical media at each research site to document the languages used and to familiarise ourselves with the place.

167

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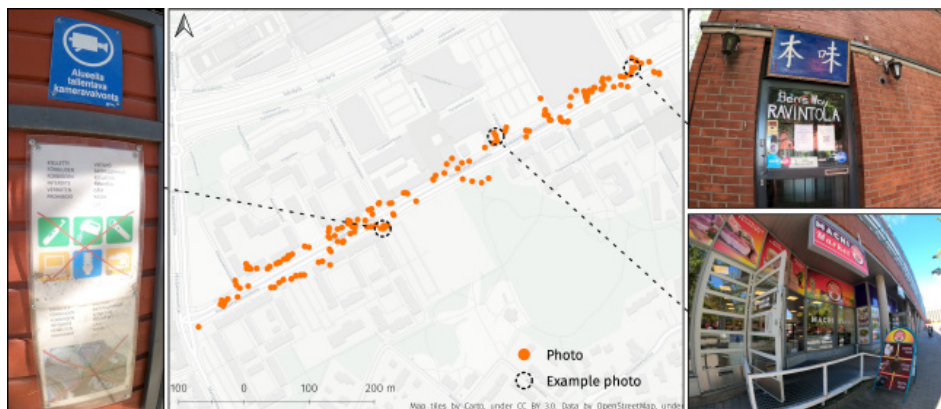
Figure 3: Examples of physical media on Kauppakartanonkatu. The dots on the map indicate where each photograph was taken. Picture: Hanna-Mari Pienimäki & Tuomas Väisänen. Map tiles by Carto, under CC By 3.0. Data by OpenStreetMap, under ODbL.

As Shohamy (2018: 25) notes, visible displays of language have 'functional and/or symbolic purposes' that provide a sense of the status of languages in a given place. Documenting the languages present in physical media serves to make sense of the linguistic diversity at the location, in other words which languages are used and for what purposes (Stroud & Jegels 2014). Figure 3 shows photographs of physical media taken on Kauppakartanonkatu, whose locations were recorded using the GPS tracker of the GoPro Hero 8 camera.

Complementing the photography, we recorded reflections on the overall atmosphere of the location in fieldwork notebooks and diaries to allow the comparison of observations across research sites.

We also recorded discrepancies in the way languages were visible or audible, particularly in relation to observations from register or social media data. The field notes and diary entries helped us to identify potential 'entry points' for recruiting participants in the go-along interviews. The most effective entry points for recruitment were places or activities that did not require people to be constantly on the move; where they remained relatively still to take photographs of tourist attractions or sat down to have coffee outside a kiosk.

9.3.4 Go-along Interviews

We used these identified locations as 'go-to spots' for recruiting people for the go-along interviews at all research sites, which we recorded on video and tracked using GPS. We conducted these semi-structured go-along interviews as we accompanied the interviewees on their outings in their neighbourhood or in other familiar locations (Carpiano 2009; Kusenbach 2003), typically as they were doing their errands, walking

168

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to view a high resolution map.
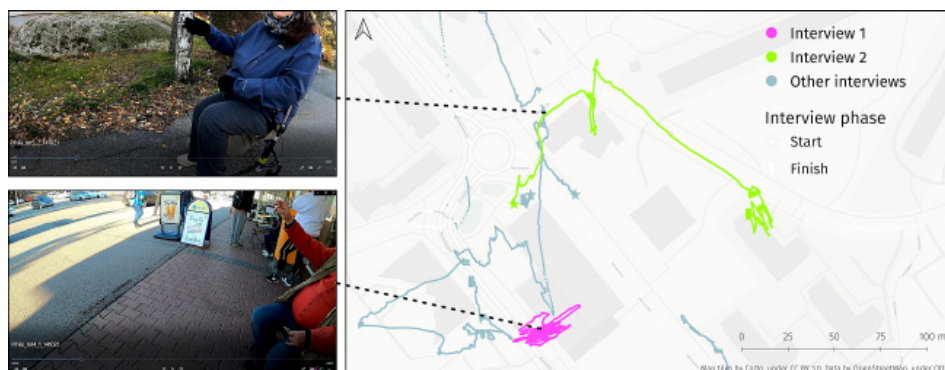
Figure 4: Tracking the go-along interviews in Pihlajamäki: the map on the right highlights the paths of two interviews and illustrates the video recordings using screenshots. Picture: Hanna-Mari Pienimäki & Tuomas Väisänen. Map tiles by Carto, under CC By 3.0. Data by OpenStreetMap, under ODbL.

home from their children's day-care centre or the supermarket. The interviews revealed individual place narratives that enabled us to understand how individuals perceived the LL in the location (Stroud & Jegels 2014). Figure 4 illustrates the routes of several go-along interviews in Pihlajamäki.

We informed the participants about the purpose of the research and asked for their oral consent on record. To comply with GDPR, we minimised the collection of personal data by positioning the camera angle downwards to avoid capturing the faces of interviewees and passers-by. The video recordings captured personal data from passers-by at times (video image and voice), whom we were not able to inform of the research purposes, nor could we ask for their consent. Before commencing the data collection we carried out an impact assessment in collaboration with university lawyers, who concluded that the collection of unknowing participants' personal data is unavoidable, but does not pose major risks to passers-by as the documentation occurs in a public place.

We informed the knowingly participating informants about the processing of personal data by providing a business card with the address of the project website as well as information about the project and how we would process their data. The duration of the interviews ranged from five to 54 minutes. We asked the participants about the purpose of their walk: where they came from and where they were going, as well as their general perceptions of the place. Some were locals, whereas others were visiting the place or passing through. We did not restrict participation to locals, and if the interviewees lived elsewhere, we asked them about their experiences as visitors. We also asked them to talk about the languages they saw and heard in the place, as well as the languages they used themselves.

169

We asked the participants if there were places within the neighbourhood or certain activities or practices whereby people of different backgrounds could congregate and where they had encountered (seen or heard) different languages. The purpose of the go-along is to gain a sense of the participants' everyday understanding of multilingualism, as well as to document their perceptions of where and how linguistic diversity is manifested in the area. Developing such an understanding requires the researcher to participate in the mundane everyday experiences of others, as exemplified in the following entry from a research diary after the first day of go-along interviews in Pihlajamäki.

> Today I was in Pihlajamäki. At first it was difficult to get anyone to agree to participate in an interview, probably because people were on their morning errands, so I headed to the local kiosk outside of which I had an informal conversation with one elderly man on one of my earlier visits. I did not find the same man, but another older man agreed to take part in the study instead. The man described Pihlajamäki as multicultural place; he had neighbours from Estonia and Russia, he suspected that the construction workers renovating his apartment were from Poland or Ukraine, and one of his barber's employees was from Bosnia. Interestingly, despite the multicultural backgrounds, according to the man most people in Pihlajamäki were able to speak Finnish, be they employees in the local shops or passers-by on the streets asking for directions. At one point he pointed to the local healthcare centre, which was just across the street, and noted that it was the only place in which he had had difficulties handling his affairs in his first language because some of 'the nurses and doctors' could 'just barely' communicate in Finnish.

This entry shows how go-along interviews provide information on participants' personal encounters with local multilingualism, and could be used to elicit local place narratives, in other words stories of how space, people and practices are combined to create a place (Stroud & Jegels 2014). In addition, they capture how people position themselves in relation to linguistic and cultural diversity, and how they react to questions related to these themes or happenings that take place as the interview unfolds. Although one could study such place narratives by analysing social media content, for example, eliciting these nuanced, dynamic and materially and socially contextualised accounts requires ethnomethodological and phenomenological perspectives (Carpiano 2009). Thus, the go-along interviews allow the gathering of information about transient communicative situations that cannot be accessed by means of non-participatory and observation-based methods.

Go-along interviews further facilitate participation in 'patterns of movement', allowing the ethnographer to record the constant flow of people, things and places (Sheller & Urry 2006: 217). Furthermore, as Carpiano (2009) notes, complemented with location information such as that provided by a GPS tracker, the interviews can be used to combine qualitative descriptions of spaces with quantitative spatial data. This combination of quantitative spatial data with qualitative perceptions of place produces new information concerning what multilingualism means in different locations, how languages are enacted, represented and valued, and how these qualia manifest spatially. This also allows exploration of how the social and the physical interact and interweave to affect one another (Steinberg & Steinberg 2006).

The previous entry from the research diary also demonstrates how people construe their own personal perceptions of place, but could also invoke discourses of place that

are prompted by the material environment, and which might not be brought up in a sit-down interview away from the research site (Pink 2007; Carpiano 2009; El Ayadi 2021). Conducting the interview 'out there' on the streets brought the phenomena under discussion to life as others joined in the conversation. The interviewees pointed to things or groups of people whose presence steered the conversation in a particular direction and talked of events that had taken place in the vicinity. As Pink (2007: 243) observes, 'walking with' people allows the ethnographer to 'join in' another person's experience of a place or activity, and to understand their 'sense of place' through their own embodiment.

Some participants were also asked to participate in longer go-along interviews, in which they took the researcher on a tour of personally meaningful places, in other words they visited, spent time in and talked about personally significant places. The following extract from the research diary describes how informative the ad hoc go-along interviews were in terms of the kind of participants to be recruited for the longer go-along interviews.

> I found my next interviewee on the north side of the shopping centre where a woman sat on her rollator, holding her phone in her hand. She was on her way to a community service organised on the ground floor of one of the apartment buildings about a 100 metres away, so I asked her if I could join her as she walked to the house. She actively volunteered in various activities in the area and met local people through these activities. She lives in Pukinmäki, a city area located nearby, but she had previously lived in Pihlajamäki and still frequently visited the place to spend time there. She said herself that she was 'always here'. I asked her to partake in the later-phase interviews and inquired whether I could join her on one of her visits to the community service centre and try to recruit informants from there. It might be easier to get people to participate if they see me with someone they know.

Spending longer periods of time with selected participants in their chosen locales allows for a more personal exploration of meaningful places. This, in turn, gives some indication of how these places have come to be of significance to the participants, how they engage with the environment during the go-along and what aspects of the place draw them to it repeatedly. They are prompted to talk about the activities that go on in these places, the people one typically encounters there, as well as the ways in which languages become part of the place and the activities. Pink (2007: 245) refers to places as well as the routes that lead to them as 'events' bringing together 'things, persons, social encounters, experiences, discourses, reflections and more' in a personally meaningful way. The longer go-along interviews enabled us to document how people engaged with linguistic diversity, where they met others and how they interacted with them, and how the materiality of the physical space, as well as the technologies available for participants in these encounters, interacted.

Our preliminary findings indicate that people are highly aware of linguistic diversity, but the discourses around diversity and the role of languages vary among the locations. On Aleksanterinkatu, for example, English is highly prevalent in visual media and its usage in interaction is considered a 'natural' part of the LL. Finnish is used for most interactions between speakers who do not share a first language in the other locations, and the role of Finnish as the local lingua franca is also reflected in the LL. Languages also play a part in accessibility, but not necessarily in ways that

171

are documentable by photographing visible media. The interviews revealed, for example, that some of the housing cooperatives distribute information in more than one language to ease participation, and that shopping centres use announcements in Russian to attract Russian customers. For the most part, the participants were aware of linguistic diversity through other people who shared the same spaces. These encounters with others, which could be characterised as strongly affective, shape the ways in which languages are experienced, valorised and talked about (Pienimäki, Väisänen & Hiippala 2023).

9.4 Discussion and Challenges

We have illustrated how data from population registers may be combined with large volumes of social media data to select research sites for ethnographic fieldwork to describe the LL of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area at multiple spatial scales. As Extra & Barni (2008: 4) note, the study of multilingualism in multicultural contexts requires multidisciplinarity and the application of complementary methods to the data collection. Making the most of this complementarity, however, requires a common foundation that allows the combining of data produced by different means: in our case, this foundation was provided by locational information. By enriching the data produced during our ethnographic fieldwork with such information we were able to establish, for example, whether the themes raised by informants during go-along interviews (e.g., affective responses to certain languages) also emerged during discussions in social media geotagged at the same physical space. If this was indeed the case, we could investigate whether similar themes emerged on social media in other areas with similar demolinguistic characteristics.

It would also be useful to contrast the features of social media content and the population register as sources of data (Väisänen et al. 2022). In essence, social media content is generated in communicative situations that arise on the platforms. These situations range from reporting subjective experiences to participating in multi-party dialogue, which also affects the roles the users take on (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017: 359–361). However, communicative situations and participant roles cannot be detected automatically, which prevents the extraction of such detailed information from high volumes of social media data. Languages may be detected automatically, however, which is also where register data is useful for the purpose of contextualisation. Although the register itself does not include any information on communicative situations, it provides valuable information on individuals who may potentially participate in communicative situations at given locations, regardless of whether these situations take place in physical or virtual space.

Nevertheless, descriptions of the breadth of communicative situations and media that realise the LL across the double space may benefit from the application of theories of multimodality (Bateman, Wildfeuer & Hiippala 2017). Although we do not present full-blown multimodal analyses of the data described above, we suggest that the concept of materiality introduced above could be used to describe and categorise the physical media observed in the physical LL, and to analyse the semiotic modes deployed in them. Such analyses could potentially reveal variation in communicative practices among communities that may draw on similar media (cf. e.g. the activist

stickers studied in Henricson 2020). Multimodality theory can also help to pull apart the communicative situations and media that are frequently embedded within each other. This can enhance our understanding of communicative situations across the double space (cf. Kellerman 2010), as well as of the nature of the 'semiotic landscape' more generally (cf. Jaworski & Thurlow 2010). Such an improved understanding can also support sociolinguistic research, which is increasingly moving towards a multimodal perspective to studying language in society (Wang, Jin & Li 2023).

In terms of methodology, the use of complementary methods facilitates the collection of information on communicative situations and media that remains beyond the reach of individual methods. In particular, the go-along interviews provide information on how multilingualism is perceived in different communicative situations such as face-to-face interactions, which might not be directly available for observation due to their transient nature. They also allow the collecting of subjective experiences of the LL and of multilingualism. For example, the informant in the first extract from the fieldwork diary in the section *Go-along interviews* states that most residents of Pihlajamäki can communicate in Finnish in casual everyday conversations, but reports on different experiences in patient–healthcare provider interactions at the local healthcare centre. This illustrates how the role of multilingualism may vary from one communicative situation to another, depending on the roles taken on by the participants (cf. the section *Communicative situations and media*).

As noted above, the application of multiple methods requires a common foundation, which in our case comprises location information. However, the production of spatial metadata for the results of ethnographic fieldwork – both photography and go-along interviews – is not always seamless. The GoPro Hero 8 camera tracks its location via satellite connection: GPS signal quality, which determines the accuracy of spatial information, can be affected by material objects positioned between the device and the satellite, such as clouds or tall buildings. Establishing a connection with a satellite may take several minutes, and the connection may be lost when participants enter indoor spaces or tunnels during go-along interviews. A bad satellite connection may result in the incorrect coordination of photographs, or sudden jumps when tracking movements in space.

Another challenge, which relates more directly to go-along interviews, involves difficulties in recruiting informants on streets. Individuals on the move are not always keen to participate in interviews. However, as noted in the *Go-along interviews* section, identifying locations in which individuals remain relatively still has proven a more successful method for recruiting informants. It is also notably easier to recruit informants with a similar ethnic background and language resources as the researcher, namely white, female and able to speak Finnish or English. Recruiting older informants with a migrant background has proven particularly difficult. To address this issue, we conducted fieldwork at different times of the day and during weekends. People who spent time at these locations outside working hours proved more likely to participate in the interviews.

Go-along interviews are time-consuming and require interviewing skills. Then again, documenting experiences and people's interaction in and with space requires participatory methods. Carpiano (2009) points out that go-along interviews, similarly to more extensive ethnographic engagement with locations and people, could combine phenomenological perspectives with ethnomethodological understanding to create a holistic account of the phenomenon under study. As Kusenbach (2003) remarks, the

value of go-along interviewing is to get people talking while engaging in 'natural' activities, thus opening opportunities for both studying their interaction with space as well as the meanings they assign to it. She further argues that go-alongs are a hybrid of participant observation and interviewing, a modest version of more extensive ethnographical 'hanging out' with participants in various kinds of social situations. As such, they facilitate the documentation of aspects of the LL that cannot be captured using only non-participatory methods, and in a manner that requires fewer resources and less time than traditional ethnography.

9.5 Conclusion

We have outlined a method for studying LLs across various spatial scales. Focusing on the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, we showed how the combination of quantitative data from population registers and social media platforms could be used to select research sites for ethnographic fieldwork. We also illustrated how such a method affords access to the languages used in diverse communicative situations, while also showing how data collected by different means may be connected using location information. Our initial results indicate a need for combining multiple methods and data to enhance understanding of the LL across both physical and virtual spaces: observations made across both spaces contextualise each other.

174

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176

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Abstract

Sociolinguistic Variation in Urban Linguistic Landscapes

Edited by Sofie Henricson, Väinö Syrjälä, Carla Bagna and Martina Bellinzona

This book is about how urban linguistic landscapes reflect and create sociolinguistic, societal and urban dynamics, and how these relations can be scientifically explored. Focusing on the linguistic landscapes of selected cities in northern and southern Europe, it sheds light on how urban areas with diverse profiles differ, and how the linguistic landscapes change through tourism and migration, or in times of crisis. The chapters put forward sophisticated and novel ways of approaching urban sociolinguistics and they enhance understanding of the challenges and opportunities included in the study of sociolinguistic variation in these linguistic landscapes.

The book is targeted at scholars in the field of urban sociolinguistics and those wishing to approach the subject through the lens of linguistic landscapes. It also gives interesting suggestions to people involved in language planning and policy reflection, as well as those engaged in urban redevelopment planning. Last but not least, it offers theoretical and methodological guidance to students and researchers in a variety of disciplines.

Index

Studia Fennica Historica

Fibula, Fabula, Fact
The Viking Age in Finland
Edited by Joonas Ahola and Frog
with Clive Tolley
Studia Fennica Historica 18
2014

**Novels, Histories,
Novel Nations**
Edited by Linda Kaljundi,
Eneken Laanes & Ilona Pikkanen
Studia Fennica Historica 19
2015

Jukka Gronow & Sergey
Zhuravlev
Fashion Meets Socialism
*Fashion Industry in the Soviet
Union after the Second World
War*
Studia Fennica Historica 20
2015

Sofia Kotilainen
**Literacy Skills as
Local Intangible Capital**
*The History of a Rural Lending
Library c 1860–1920*
Studia Fennica Historica 21
2016

**Continued Violence and
Troublesome Pasts**
*Post-war Europe between
the Victors after the Second
World War*
Edited by Ville Kivimäki and
Petri Karonen
Studia Fennica Historica 22
2017

**Personal Agency at the Swedish
Age of Greatness 1560-1720**
Edited by Petri Karonen &
Marko Hakanen
Studia Fennica Historica 23
2017

Pasi Ihalainen
The Springs of Democracy
*National and Transnational
Debates on Constitutional
Reform in the British, German,
Swedish and Finnish Parliaments,
1917–19*
Studia Fennica Historica 24
2017

**On the Legacy of Lutheranism
in Finland**
Societal Perspectives
Edited by Kaius Sinnemäki,
Anneli Portman, Jouni Tilli
and Robert H. Nelson
Studia Fennica Historica 25
2019

Handwritten Newspapers
*An Alternative Medium during
the Early Modern and Modern
Periods*
Edited by Heiko Droste and
Kirsti Salmi-Niklander
Studia Fennica Historica 26
2019

Lake Ladoga
*The Coastal History of the
Greatest Lake in Europe*
Edited by Maria Lähteenmäki
and Isaac Land
Studia Fennica Historica 27
2023

Studia Fennica Linguistica

**Planning a new standard
language**
*Finnic minority languages meet
the new millennium*
Edited by Helena Sulkala &
Harri Mantila
Studia Fennica Linguistica 15
2010

Lotta Weckström
**Representations of Finnishness
in Sweden**
Studia Fennica Linguistica 16
2011

Terhi Ainiala, Minna
Saarelma & Paula Sjöblom
Names in Focus
*An Introduction to Finnish
Onomastics*
Studia Fennica Linguistica 17
2012

Registers of Communication
Edited by Asif Agha & Frog
Studia Fennica Linguistica 18
2015

Kaisa Häkkinen
Spreading the Written Word
*Mikael Agricola and
the Birth of Literary Finnish*
Studia Fennica Linguistica 19
2015

**Linking Clauses and Actions in
Social Interaction**
Edited by Ritva Laury,
Marja Etelämäki & Elizabeth
Couper-Kuhlen
Studia Fennica Linquistica 20
2017