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English in the Linguistic Landscape of Hong Kong:

A Case Study of Shop Signs and Linguistic Competence

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Zusammenfassung in deutscher Sprache

Das Forschungsfeld der *Linguistic Landscape* hat sich vor allem in den letzten zwanzig Jahren als autonome Disziplin im Bereich der Sprachwissenschaft emanzipiert. Die Linguistic Landscape eines meist geografisch eingegrenzten Gebietes – die beispielsweise aus Reklametafeln, Plakaten, Ladenschildern, Wahlkampfpropaganda, etc. besteht – erlaubt tiefe Einblicke in die An- oder Abwesenheit von Sprachen auf dem jeweiligen Gebiet. Die Linguistic Landscape lässt dadurch nicht nur Rückschlüsse auf die Dominanz einer Sprache aufgrund ihrer Anwesenheit zu, sondern auch auf die Unterdrückung einer Minderheit durch die Abwesenheit ihrer Sprache an Orten, an denen die Minderheitensprache demografisch gesehen eigentlich sichtbar sein müsste. Wegen des Überflusses an linguistischen Daten in den Linguistic Landscapes großer Städte sind diese ergiebige Tätigkeitsfelder für die Disziplin.

Diese Arbeit beschäftigt sich im ersten Teil mit der theoretischen und praktischen Forschung, die es bislang zu diesem Thema gab. Sie prüft den Stand der Theoriebildung, fasst Methodiken zusammen und gibt einen Überblick über verschiedene Ansätze.

Im zweiten Teil wird die theoretische Basis auf eine eigene Fallstudie angewendet. Für diese wurden 2010 die Linguistic Landscapes zweier Einkaufsstraßen in unterschiedlichen Gegenden Hong Kongs untersucht. Durch den dort lange währenden Einfluss der englischen Kultur und Mentalität und den offiziellen Status der Sprache liegt der Schluss nahe, dass die Sprachkompetenz des Englischen in Hong Kong eher hoch sein muss. Die Ergebnisse der Fallstudie basieren sowohl auf der Erhebung von statistischen Daten, die die objektive Anwesenheit des Englischen in der Linguistic Landscape beider untersuchten Gegenden zeigt, als auch auf zwei daraus resultierenden Befragungen. Diese wurden zum einen offen, zum anderen anonym durchgeführt.

Die Befragungen stellen eine Rückversicherung dar, die den Grad der Sprachkompetenz des Englischen in Hong Kong misst, welcher zuvor anhand der Linguistic Landscape festgestellt wurde. Damit bietet die Fallstudie einen neuen Ansatz der Untersuchung einer Linguistic Landscape, der im Gegensatz zu vorangegangenen Studien nicht bei der Präsentation ihrer materiellen Beschaffenheit endet, sondern auch ihre Schöpfenden miteinbezieht und sich fragt, inwiefern die Linguistic Landscape von Hong Kong die tatsächliche Sprachkompetenz der Menschen widerspiegelt.

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Abbreviations

bilE/CH	bilingual English/Chinese
BU	Bottom-up
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
HK	Hong Kong
HKD	Hong Kong Dollar
HKE	Hong Kong English
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LL	Linguistic Landscape
monoCH	monolingual Chinese
monoE	monolingual English
MTR	Mass Transit Railway
PRC	People's Republic of China
RA	Research area
TD	Top-down
WE	World Englishes

1. Introduction

When we walk through a city we encounter linguistic tokens in many places. Huge advertising billboards which cover the sides of houses, an uncountable flood of shop signs, and even tiny price tags in a supermarket contain linguistic data. There is hardly any situation in which the passer-by is not confronted by language. It is therefore not inappropriate to depict the city as reading whose meaning must be decoded.

In the case of Germany, the English language seems to be omnipresent in the public space: hairdressers name their salons *Aloha Hair* and *Vorhair/Nachhair* (*Before/After*), bakeries sell *coffee to go* and in fashion stores one can purchase *bodybags.* In the hairdressers' example English is used as a creative tool. The names contain punch lines as they replace a phonetically similar token in German by its English equivalent *hair.* The comic meaning is hence only decipherable by speakers of German *and* English. It might be suggested then that there is a considerable number of people with proficient language skills in English. The latter two examples however prove that the general linguistic competence of English in Germany is low – although English is visible in all places. The minority of people know that the correct translations would be *coffee to take away* and *shoulder bag.* Obviously, English is fashionable.

A survey about advertising slogans conducted in Germany in 2004 gives evidence for this assumption. Although there is a huge amount of English slogans in German advertising, the majority is misinterpreted (Leffers, 2004). Hence, English is used to sell and is therefore visible everywhere, a sign of its high prestige. As a corollary one could assume that its visibility in German streets has nothing to do with the linguistic competence of the intended readers.

In the case of Hong Kong (HK), another – subjective – impression was perceived. Regarding the official language status and the long colonial history in HK, I expected

a very good command of the English language from the majority of HK people. However, I found that few people spoke it well – surprisingly including most taxi drivers of whom proficient language skills in English are most likely to be expected due to their profession. This discrepancy was further enlarged by the visibility of English on shop signs, street signs and even official announcements, giving the impression that there must be collective bilingualism in HK. I assumed that the visibility of English in HK's public is not related to the actual linguistic competence of its inhabitants. In order to pursue this assumption, I conducted a case study in two socially different yet comparable HK districts. The results are given in Part B of this paper.

Before analysing the outcome, the concept of *Linguistic Landscape* (LL) will be explained and elaborated on, laying out the foundation for my case study. I will give an overview of current theories, models and other important research that has so far been conducted with respect to LL. Furthermore, instructions on the analysis of a LL are given in Part A.

Part B first gives some background information on HK, with a special focus on language issues. This allows for the better understanding of the linguistic situation in HK. After the presentation of the basic concepts and findings of my case study, the discussion rounds up LL and linguistic competence, showing how they are interrelated in HK. Through the novel approach of LL analysis presented in this paper, I hope to contribute to current research by offering new views on written and spoken language in an urban surrounding.

1.1. Narrowing down the subject

Landscape is on the one hand the entity of a piece of real land, whilst on the other hand the representation of this piece of land in a picture. Analogously, a *Linguistic Landscape* is on the one hand the entity of all languages spoken in a particular territory, whilst on the other hand their representations in public space (Gorter, 2006). Of relevance for LL studies is the signage of a particular territory in question, which means that all the written-down linguistic evidence constitutes the central subject of a synchronic LL analysis.

Such an analysis mostly illuminates three aspects of LLs. First, the range of the material and the in- or exclusion of language material or, in other words, the object of investigation. The most frequently quoted list of potential language material is given by Landry and Bourhis (1997: 25):

> The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings combines to form the linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration.

However it can also include graffiti, official and non-official announcements or public notes, although extensive studies on graffiti are still rarely conducted. In this context, Pennycook (2009) claims in his insightful study that graffiti is – semiotically seen – as highly relevant, especially for LL analyses, since in principle it exclusively addresses the (sub-)cultures that generate it. In a wider sense, the concept of LL has also been applied to product packaging and print material (De Klerk & Wiley, 2010). Shohamy and Waksman (2009: 314) expand the definition of the object by saying that "the most unique feature of LL is that it refers to text presented and displayed in the public space". This is also supported by Pavlenko (2010: 133) who states that LL research investigates "public uses of written languages". The latter two definitions are insofar more inclusive as they do not restrict the analysis to clearly extractable linguistic units, but that they allow the consideration of any word, any linguistic snippet that can be found in any public place. As Ben-Rafael (2009) calls it – *social facts*: the constituents of the LL, or linguistic tokens, with regard to its surrounding.

Secondly, LLs may serve to examine language contact. In many cases the LL of a certain area displays minority languages which again point to the existence of minorities. In others it is a mirror of the increasing impact of English, due to globalisation.

The third aspect is the urban surrounding. Most LL research has focused on cities, and for this reason a number of scholars prefer to call the object of investigation *Linguistic Cityscape* (see for example Gorter, 2006; Spolsky, 2009). Especially through the seminal work of Landry and Bourhis (1997) who coined the term, *Linguistic Landscape* is used more frequently and is plainly more established, although some hold the opinion that *cityscape* might be more suitable than *landscape*.

Having defined the object of LL research, the question of how to classify it within other fields of research arises. LL studies are a multi-hub connection between various disciplines, first of all linguistics of course. When going into further detail, other intersecting fields can be detected: sociology, semiotics, politics, philosophy and geography intermingle with linguistics and may bring fruitful insights. The findings are not only relevant for each discipline *per se*, but the scientific branches also work together trans-disciplinarily by extracting the most useful techniques and approaches from each other. And even within linguistics themselves, there are various intra-disciplinary perspectives. These I will explore in Chapter 2.1.

Hence, it is demanding to draw clear borders that separate LL research from related research outside of LL studies. Semiotics for example are frequently consulted as the fundamental theory underlying LL research. This is only reasonable because the analysis of the given signage requires the contemplation of more than just the linguistic material with its spatial organisation, for example font type and size: non-linguistic material such as symbols and other semiotic elements also constitute the meaning and effect of a sign. But if this *be* the case as for example Shohamy and Waksman (2009) argue, then either LL should be reclassified as a subcategory of semiotics, or a more autonomous theory of LL must be found. A case study of painted utility boxes conducted in Israel by Guilat (2010) demonstrates the unstable boundaries between semiotics and LL studies. Although the paintings do not contain linguistic information, but rather symbolic images of religious and secular origin, the images can be read as texts according to Guilat and his visual culture-approach. It is however not possible to draw conclusions regarding the linguistic situation or language changes in a certain area, and it is therefore questionable if an item without any text may count as a part of a *Linguistic* Landscape. Jaworski and Yeung (2010) point out that various academics have used the differentiation between *Linguistic Landscapes* and *Semiotic Landscapes*. In accordance with the criteria mentioned above, their claim of a differentiation is tenable because they are both not identical fields of research.

Nevertheless, LL is a linguistic discipline closely intertwined with cultural issues and as such it would make no sense at all to examine a LL without a close look at its surrounding. It is therefore of great importance to establish a uniform LL theory in order to prevent LL research from having its edges blurred. Although this cannot

be achieved through this paper, I suggest that future research should focus on this issue in more detail. An account of the hitherto accomplished theory development is given in Chapter 2.1.

In order to provoke a rather manifold than a one-sided view of the subject, I would like to emphasise that the term *Linguistic Landscape* and the fact that the main focus of research is often put in modern, multilingual, multi-million metropolises should not hide the existence of other approaches. Coulmas for example introduces the idea of a "historical LL" (Coulmas, 2009: 15). He examined three important and nowadays still preserved milestones of LL: the *Codex Hammurabi*, the *Rosetta Stone* and the *Behistun Inscription*. What was of importance to him was the great significance that these items had obtained in former times, since they contain for example laws and regulations. He defines their validity as part of a historical LL. Here, a closer look has to be taken at the actual definition of a LL which was indicated in the before-mentioned: a LL is language on display in a multilingual urban setting. Of Coulmas' three examples for a historical LL, the whole definition is only met by the Rosetta Stone. Neither does the feature *urban setting* apply to the Behistun Inscription, nor the feature *multilingual* to the Codex Hammurabi. Although Coulmas is inconsistent with the basic definition of a LL, the proposal of a historical LL still offers a new access to the subject.

As a logical consequence of the existence of a historical LL, the application is thus the diachronic analysis of a particular LL. This was for example done by Pavlenko (2010) who looked for evidence of language change in Kyiv (i.e. Kiev) from a diachronic perspective. For this purpose she searched photographs, books and tombstones on cemeteries from different decades in order to gather sufficient data.

We have so far defined that a LL consists of language on display in a multilingual urban setting. As was already shown in Coulmas' example, not all factors are always necessary. It is thus possible to examine multilingual *rural* settings too. Northern Germany, where in rural areas few people still speak the nearly extinct Low German (although there have been efforts to keep it alive), or Occitania in Southern France offer ideal fields of research. But since they are rural rather than urban multilingual settings, they have been neglected so far. Especially in Europe some few studies outside of the big metropolises were conducted, as can be seen in Cenoz and Gorter's (2006) case study in Friesland and the Basque Country, although they also limit their

research to a quasi urban surrounding. A possible extension for future approaches might therefore be the inclusion of rural areas, even if the linguistic evidence is not as obviously visible there.

1.2. Why Linguistic Landscape research?

There is a considerable danger in academia of doing science for science's sake. This chapter will highlight that LL studies do indeed have very practical applications. Garvin (2010: 254) quite rightfully points out that a LL is "a snapshot of one moment in time" because it "presents a concrete text of actual language use in a particular time and space". Through its dynamisms and sensitivity for changes, it mirrors and gives a detailed insight into society and therefore serves as an orientation for improvements and changes.

A study of language awareness and power relations conducted by Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre and Armand (2009) proves that particularly educational sectors may benefit if children's identity is considered to be developed through contact with various LLs. Keeping in mind that children notice the presence and respectively absence of their own language every day, their social representations and language awareness can be explained via the examination of the LL surrounding them. As Dagenais et al. (2009: 257) argue it is also useful "to draw children's attention to the non-neutral nature of written communication" and to raise their language awareness in order to make them more attentive towards different languages. This idea is also supported by Shohamy and Waksman (2009), further developed through their claim to make LLs part of the educational setting since they convey cultural meaning. Authorities concerned with education are enabled to pay special attention to areas of immigration and social tensions due to language variety. They can then make use of the data provided by researchers to take informed and adequate measures (Barni & Bagna, 2009: 126-7).

Another case demonstrates the power of the linguistic material surrounding us. Sloboda (2009: 176; original emphasis) remarks that sometimes ideologies are implemented by a government via the LL. In his view "landscape signs can not only *index* ideology, but also *perform* it, so interaction with them can lead to the

acquisition of particular ideological social practices by individuals". This cannot only be applied to state ideologies, but also to marketing strategies. A giant Coca-Cola billboard may serve the same function of implementing a certain ideology as the naming of the city of Chemnitz in the former German Democratic Republic into *Karl-Marx-Stadt.* In this respect, LL research is a helpful tool for the observation of growing marketing efforts, hidden political propaganda or other ideological tendencies.

An issue which is naturally linked to LLs and yet which has so far been seldom discussed, is the meaning of a LL for the sector of tourism. Kallen (2009) defines the subject's importance as being a crucial factor for the communication between tourists and their travel destination. He states that the confrontation with a foreign language, and thus the impression that one is indeed on holiday and far away from home, can lead to a feeling of insecurity and even danger. As a consequence he demands a more thorough planning of signs where commercial services for tourists are concerned. I would like to stress here that this has to be handled carefully since science should not be misused to serve commercial purposes by developing better marketing strategies.

Blackwood (2010) mentions the role of LL methodologies for the recognition and rescue of minority languages. He describes the case of France where languages other than French are often subject to oppression. LLs help to detect these oppressed languages – especially because through the French government's efforts, there are no official speaker numbers – and to give them priority.

One last field of research which can benefit from LL studies is the observation of creolisation processes, for example in areas with high migration influx. To the best of my knowledge this sector has not been explicitly considered by researchers yet.

The scope of utility of the study of LL has proven to be expansive. So in the light of all the possibilities that LLs offer, we must not ask *Why LL research?* but rather *Why not?.*

Part A: Reading a city - Linguistic Landscape

2. Linguistic Landscape

I have already mentioned in the Introduction that urban space can be interpreted via the metaphor of the city as a reading: hence, the city is a text which must be decoded. As a tool for decoding, LLs offer new ways of reading. In Part A, current research is summarised and instructions for the analysis of LLs are given.

2.1. Theories and models

The number of attempts to find theories and models in current LL research on the one side demonstrates how scholars disagree when it comes to finding a uniform theory. On the other side, it also points to the various disciplines that would benefit from a LL theory. In the anthology *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery* by Shohamy and Gorter (2009) there are a number of suggestions which each taken for itself presents a different approach, but which taken together support a diverse but uniform LL theory.

As was already mentioned, Coulmas supports a historical approach; Spolsky, one of the founders of LL studies, attempts a sociolinguistic approach which goes hand-in-hand with Ben-Rafael's sociological approach; Cenoz and Gorter whom I have also already mentioned in the Introduction present their (language) economy approach; Huebner draws on Hymes' concept of an *Ethnography of Communication* and dependent works; Hult had the idea of a language ecology approach; the language ideology approach found supporters in Backhaus, Dal Negro, Lanza and Woldemariam and Sloboda.

Although there is a great topical variety in the approaches, most of them do not go into much theoretical detail and merely see the necessity of a thorough theory formation. Unfortunately, this also applies to the present paper. The variety of suggestions of which each does not exceed more than a few pages, makes clear that

there is great insecurity of how to deal with the study of LL. Which disciplines should be considered, which theoretical framework used? Three main structuring principles are mentioned surpassingly often. They are quoted in Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara and Trumper-Hecht (2006) and Ben-Rafael, Shohamy and Barni (2010: xvii-xix):

(1) The power relations perspective suggested by Bourdieu.

(2) The good reasons perspective suggested by Boudon.

(3) The subjectivist perspective suggested by Goffman (e.g. Lou, 2010).

These three approaches that frequently underlie LL studies are central theories deriving from philosophy and sociology. Malinowski (2009: 110) however criticises the restriction to the above listed perspectives as the main principles by saying that although the three notions might play a certain role in the capturing of a LL, "the precise mechanisms by which these three theories of social action work together – and potentially militate against one another – remain to be addressed".

Additionally there is a fourth view which is supported by a number of scholars:

(4) The collective identity perspective suggested by Hall (e.g. Ben-Rafael & Ben-Rafael, 2010).

Other quoted works that underlie problem solving processes are:

(5) The ethnography of communication by Hymes.

(6) Lefebvre for the question about space (e.g. Jaworski & Yeung, 2010; Trumper-Hecht, 2010).

Trumper-Hecht (2010) goes so far to suggest that Lefevbre's theory of the conceptualisation of space should be the overall valid LL theory. She opts for the investigation of Lefebvre's three levels of spatial perception in LL research and the analysis of their relations. By this, she draws nearer to building a basis for an academically grounded theory of LL.

It is obvious that next to the above described approaches there are other perspectives from quite a different direction, but which shall not be listed for the sake of the length of the paper. They can be found in recent literature about LLs of which (next to the already quoted book by Shohamy and Gorter) *Linguistic Landscape:*

A New Approach to Multilingualism, a small anthology from 2006 by Gorter, and *Linguistic Landscape in the City*, a complex compendium published recently in 2010 by Shohamy, Ben-Rafael and Barni, shall be mentioned here. One of the few monographs which explicitly deals with LLs is *Multilingualism in Tokyo: A Look into the Linguistic Landscape* by Backhaus (2007). The latest issue (March 2012) of the journal *World Englishes* has a special focus, with five articles on the relation between English and LLs. A compact handbook has not yet been published.

According to Garvin (2010), who agrees with my appeal for a more stable theoretical framework, there was a notable amount of research conducted from the 1960s onwards. Despite this large number of antecedent studies on which most of explicit LL research is based, I omit recapitulating them and instead stay *in medias res* of current LL research. For a recitation of the studies see Backhaus (2010: 12-53, 56).

Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) *The Languages of Jerusalem* was the first approach in which signs were the central object of investigation. The first part is a linguistic panorama of the languages spoken in Jerusalem, on the one hand historically seen with a portrait of the languages spoken in the late 19th century, on the other one by providing a picture of the then (in 1991) actual linguistic situation with regard to Jewish and non-Jewish languages. After an analysis of the signage that they had encountered, they established the (nowadays still valid) three conditions of sign-making with regard to language choice. It is obvious that they resemble Grice's Conversational Maxims (this was also noticed by Kallen, 2009):

(1) Sign-writer's skill condition: "write a sign in a language you know"

(2) Presumed reader condition: "prefer to write a sign in a language which can be read by the people you expect to read it"

(3) Symbolic value condition: "prefer to write a sign in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified"
    (all quoted in Spolsky, 2009: 34)

They also point to the two functions which languages on signs have: the indexical function which is a reference to the languages that are actually spoken in a particular territory (conditions (1) and (2)), and the symbolical function which contains hints to power relations (condition (3)). Through analysis of the signage, it can be chosen

upon which condition is fulfilled and thus which motivation made the author create a sign. The dichotomy between the indexical and the symbolic function was first clearly defined by Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) and will be explored further later in Part A.

What follows in *The Languages of Jerusalem* is a reflection on language choice and language planning. The material lets Spolsky and Cooper conclude that public signs contribute vastly to trans-ethnic communication, whether in a positive or in a negative sense, and that in Jerusalem the ethnic diversity is mirrored in the multilingual signage. Their overall optimistic final statement is that "the Old City is a place where that diversity is recognized and respected" (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991: 151). Even if the authors do not yet mention the term *Linguistic Landscape* explicitly, it is obvious to them that this new discipline will gain further popularity in the future. Looking back twenty years later it can be admitted that – and not least due to their ground-breaking work – Spolsky and Cooper have paved the way for LL studies.

Nevertheless, it was not until the seminal work of Landry and Bourhis in 1997, that the discipline of LLs gained enough authority to receive its own name in order to be treated autonomously. Their paper *Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study* marks the beginning of LL studies because they were the first ever to mention the term *Linguistic Landscape*, as the central focus of their study being the influence of the LL on the language behaviour of speakers in a multilingual setting. After some first theoretical considerations they demonstrated the impact of language visibility on signs and other public items on the language attitudes of high school students in Canada. It is their achievement that LLs have nowadays received so much attention from various scholars. They also further elaborated the view of the two functions that signs serve, although they refer to them as *informational* and *symbolic*. Again, I have put the discussion of this issue off until Chapter 3.1.3.

We have now seen how far theory formation in LL studies has come. Spolsky (2009) criticises three points of the actual state of LL research. First of all he complains that its range is limited. He suggests semiotics – that is non-verbal signs – and literacy – which are books and signs like tickets and so forth that are not accessible to everybody – as extensional fields. Secondly, he criticises that in case studies conducted so far, researchers rarely address the question of agency: Who made the

sign and why? Finally, it is often difficult to define boundaries; on the level of signage the boundary of the sign itself, on the level of the research area the in- or exclusion of certain signage: Which signs should be included, which should not? What about graffiti or notes? I would like to add a fourth point which has hitherto not been considered to a satisfying degree: most investigations end with the evaluation of the collected material. Although the empirical data is interpreted, a verification of the results with real people – and that is what sociolinguistics should stand for – does not often take place. This fourth issue will be tackled in my case study in which I do not only take a look at the signage, but also make further enquiries into which way the assumed linguistic situation corresponds to reality.

2.2. Case studies

As shown by the definition given in Chapter 1.1, a LL is language on display in a multilingual urban setting. It is thus only sensible that a large amount of research was done in the world's metropolises since they are ever changing places of vivid language contact. If contact situations are visible anywhere, it must be in the LLs of big cities. Hence, it is not surprising that a number of current research was conducted in Asian metropolises, for example in Tokyo by Backhaus (2007), in Bangkok by Huebner (2006) or in Taipei by Curtin (2009). Case studies which had a special focus on Hong Kong were made by Lock (2003), Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) and Jaworski and Yeung (2010), who focus on private residential signage.

However, not only the Far East is a hotspot. The Middle East with its importance in the three world religions and the resulting political tensions also serves as the subject of fruitful LL research. It is especially in Israel, where a very active scene of LL researchers has developed, a country in which the proximity of Judaism, Christianity and Islam causes frictions and where one of the first LL works by Spolsky and Cooper (1991) was written. Notably Ben-Rafael (2006; 2009; 2010; partly co-authored) and Shohamy (2006; 2009; 2010; partly co-authored) analysed the LL of Jerusalem, a city under the influence of three languages: Hebrew, Arabic and English. Trumper-Hecht (2009; 2010) also focuses on Israel, that is to say Upper Nazareth. Waksman and Shohamy (2010) recently examined the city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa in the course of its centennial. Both cities were founded relatively recently so that other aspects than

historically grown ethnic mixing must be considered to explain the presence of Hebrew and Arabic.

In Europe it is less the question of globalisation that occupies researchers – that is the increasing influence of English on local languages – rather than the relations between a country's standard language and minority languages, as for example between Basque and Spanish in the Basque Country and Frisian and Dutch in Friesland (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; they do however examine the increasing usage of English), or between Italian and German in South Tyrol (Dal Negro, 2009). Altogether, European research appears rather provincial. Dialectological preferences such as the indication of minority languages in France's dominantly French LL (Blackwood, 2010) can be observed, albeit understandably due to the lack of booming multi-million cities compared to Asia. Furthermore, it could be interesting to analyse LLs of Eastern Europe as was already done by Pavlenko (2010) in the Ukraine and Marten (2010) in Latvia. There is great potential of research options with regard to the issue of globalisation. Especially the possible increase of signage in English, and the decrease of material in Russian should be of high interest.

Characteristic for North American research are investigations of the relations between English and another language, mostly the language of an immigrant majority dominating that area. This is not surprising since English is the dominant language, and in the US the only *de facto* official language. Landry and Bourhis' (1997) seminal work for LL research also derived there: they examined the LL in the educational setting of a Canadian school. Another popular target of LL analysis is the variety of Chinatowns that can be found in most major cities, as well as the various Little Italys and other segregated urban communities which permit productive investigations of their LLs (e.g. De Klerk & Wiley, 2010; Lou, 2010).

Still under-represented are studies from Africa, though in the last years an increasing research work can be observed. Particularly with regard to Africa as a potentially rising economic power, cities like Kinshasa or Kampala might be adequate places for research because they offer a multilingual urban surrounding in which growing globalisation and rising consumerism fulfill the preconditions for fruitful LL research. A few studies exist, for example from Ethiopia (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2009), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kasanga, 2012) and of course South Africa (Du Plessis, 2010), where an inclusive language policy has always prevailed.

Central and South America have not yet been discovered as productive research areas, although multi-million cities like Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Lima or Santiago de Chile provide material for research. Not only the increasing influence of English could be observed, but above all the contact between a dominant Indo-European language (in most cases Spanish) and an indigenous language. In many places, languages like Quechua or Nahuatl are alive and gaining influence, as can be seen in a range of language classes at universities, for example well-established Quechua classes at several universities (e.g. at the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán) and other Argentinian institutions.

3. How to read a Linguistic Landscape

In the Introduction I established the metaphor of the city as a reading. That does not imply an easy reading, but more a thoughtful analysis with various aspects to be taken into consideration, as will be shown in this chapter. In order to receive as much information as possible from a given LL and to make the right interpretations, the flood of collected data must first be classified into certain categories. Barni and Bagna (2009, 132-3) suggested six classifications to decide upon for each sign (or "text" as they call it): (1) *textual genre*, namely what kind of sign it is; (2) *position*: where is the sign located and is it accessible to anyone; this is very important because

> the semiotic function of the text differs if it is situated in an outdoor, open area, and thus potentially visible to and usable by a broad range of people, compared with an indoor, closed place, where it is intended to be read only by a limited and clearly defined group of people

(3) *location*: where in a city was the sign found; (4) *domain*: for example public or work-related; (5) *context*: as a subcategory of a particular domain, for example catering or health as subcategories of the public domain; and finally (6) *places*: Barni and Bagna define them as yet again very concrete subcategories of contexts like bakeries, practices, restaurants, and so forth.

The suggested method has until now been one of the most thorough attempts of defining mandatory guidelines for the classification of LL signage. Having thus provided a mode for preparing the material, Barni and Bagna offer three levels of analysis:

(1) *Semiotic analysis*; the semiotic function of a sign is examined through its relation to time and space, applying the six classifications mentioned above.

(2) *Macro-linguistic analysis*; this level of analysis sheds light upon a sign's internal functions such as spatial organisation or the dichotomy between authorship and readership.

(3) *Micro-linguistic analysis*; the level, on which so-called "occurrences" are in the focus, that is a qualitative evaluation of the text displayed on a particular sign.

I am of the opinion that more attention should be paid to the elaboration of this three-dimensional division since it may serve the purposes of a range of future case studies. In the following chapters I selected some analytical tools and explained them in more detail. I refer to these tools as *variables* and divided them into *internal variables*, which correspond to the macro-linguistic analysis according to Barni and Bagna and by which I mean factors that are involved in the meaning-making process of a sign, and *external variables*, that is the factors that concern the outside world of a sign, corresponding to the semiotic analysis.

3.1. Internal variables of signs

It appears to be one of the most demanding tasks in LL studies to set limits for the seemingly simple term *sign*. Many studies are inconsistent in setting boundaries to the analysed units and a range of scholars disagree with each other on which signs should be included in surveys of LLs, and which should not. Is a snippet of paper a sign? A graffiti? A whole wall? Is an image part of a sign? Where does one sign end and the other one begin? Is any item to be included? Do I have to differentiate between for example commercial advertising and political advertising? Some answers to these questions are given below. To some others there is no clear-cut response; instead, their answering lies within the responsibility of each researcher.

3.1.1. Authorship and readership

The issue of authorship deals with the question of who has created a sign, who determined what design, which material and – most importantly for us – which language to use? A fundamental concept which might have been an inspiration for later LL research is presented in *Forms of Talk* (Goffman, 1992: 167). Goffman

attributes three different roles to a speaker, that is the producer of a text. First of all the role of an *animator*, who produces a text verbally. Secondly, the role of an *author* who writes down the verbal text. And thirdly the role of a *principal*, of "someone who believes personally in what is being said and takes the position that is implied in the remarks". As was noticed by Sloboda (2009), the analysis of the role of the principal can serve to discover ideological implications. With regard to LL research, attention should be especially drawn to the animator and the author, who according to Goffman are the same person in most cases. Applying it to the analysis of signs in a LL, we again have to consult Spolsky and Cooper (1991) who asked: (a) who initiated the sign, (b) who made it and (c) whom does it address? It it obvious that the answer to (a) is *animator* and to (b) *author*.

Malinowksi (2009: 108) opposes the theories of Butler and Halliday and describes the author "as a complex, dispersed entity who is only somewhat in control of the meanings that are read from his or her written "utterances" ". He distances himself from the notion that signs are a random product over which the authors have lost control; it is clear that the creator of a shop sign sets the look of it. But in their unity, the signs of a joint territory launch a new *gestalt* with new meaning, which we then refer to as the *Linguistic Landscape*.

The interrupted relationship between author and reader is what Backhaus (2007) describes as essential for the difference between language on signs and spoken language. The utterance in a personal conversation is transmitted directly from speaker to listener. This is not the case with LL signs which interrupt the transmission of the message between speaker and listener, and are therefore characterised through the absence of either. Hence, a sign can only be understood in its spatial context.

Despite all these auspicious considerations, there is still a lack of a clear nomenclature in LL research. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006: 8) call the creators of signs "actors". Other suggestions such as the already mentioned *speaker* and *author* have been made.

A special focus in the issue of agency lies in the internal dynamics of signs. In many studies the distinction between *top-down* (TD) – hence signage created by official organs – and *bottom-up* (BU) – namely signs created by "the people" – is made. This twofold view of TD and BU was suggested by Gorter (2006: 4) and defended by various researchers. Other scholars however tend to criticise this two-dimensional

view as being something absolute that does not admit other dimensions. Thus, for example Malinowski (2009) claims that it is often simply assumed (Gorter, 2006; Ben-Rafael et al., 2006) that TD signs prefer the officially dominant language, whereas all BU signs prefer the non-dominant language. Kallen (2009), too, criticises that the term *bottom-up* implies that citizens intend to communicate with the government via BU signs, and not with other citizens. He argues that together with the definition of *top-down*, namely the transmission of information from governmental institutions to citizens, this interconnection suggests his assumption. Instead, he proposes a rather horizontal and more dynamic perspective in circumstances of shifting power relations.

Where used, the terms TD and BU may however be intended differently. Barni and Bagna (2010: 12; original emphasis) examined Romanian minority groups in Italy and describe a "majority of texts in which Romanian is visible" as "of a *top-down* type, produced by the Romanian community or other immigrant communities". It becomes clear that there is a need for a more narrow description of TD and BU. This is also visible in Ben-Rafael et al.'s (2006: 8) usage of the terms *public* for TD and *private* for BU signs and in Calvet's (1990; 1994; quoted in Backhaus, 2007) earlier terminology of *in vitro* (corresponding to TD) and *in vivo* (corresponding to BU).

A threefold and hence more exact categorisation is suggested by Franco Rodríguez (2009: 3). He makes the distinction between (1) *private texts* which are created by single persons and local businesses (e.g. graffiti, notes, signs of non-chain shops); (2) *public texts* by official and governmental institutions (e.g. public announcements, street signs); and (3) *corporate texts* by international non-local companies (e.g. logos of international chains). I am of the opinion that this three-dimensional categorisation is very useful and should be applied as the overall valid terminology. It offers the advantage that the above mentioned two-dimensionality and its inaccuracy is avoided, and replaced through a more dynamic mapping. Both, Gorter's concept of TD/BU and Franco Rodriguez' definition can be seen as a further, yet differently aimed, development of Leclerc's (1989; quoted in Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 26) twofold subdivision into *private* and *government signs*.

After these explanations of notions of authorship, it has to be admitted that the addressee of a sign – the passer-by or reader – has been neglected to a far more striking extent (also see Garvin, 2010). Few studies are concerned with the question

of how the LL is perceived. This is all the more astonishing seeing the unity of the LL as a link between author and reader. Recently, several analyses try to compensate this lack by making inquiries of passers-by about their perception of the LL in question (see for example Marten, 2010; Trumper-Hecht, 2010; Aiestaran, Cenoz & Gorter, 2010; Garvin, 2010).

3.1.2. Spatial organisation

When there is more than one code used on a sign, there must naturally be a spatial order. This is what is called *spatial organisation* (used e.g. by Huebner, 2009). The arrangement of codes on a multilingual sign tells us much about the given power relations between languages: languages on signs might or might not have official status; minority languages not protected by law could resist oblivion by their presence in the LL. Still it has to be regarded how the prevailing languages are represented on signs: is one language more visible than the other; is it written in bigger letters; do the different languages give a translation of each other or give different contents? Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) present an exact key for the decoding of the spatial order: the emphasised language is either on top (when vertically arranged), on the left (when horizontally arranged) or in the centre.

A first approach to this issue was given by Spolsky and Cooper (1991) whose major aim was to examine the appearance and order of languages on signs, and to give an explanation of the choices made. Although this early narrowing down of the subject could naturally not solve all problems that LLs cause, their three conditions formulated in order to define motivations for sign creators have long become an established variable in the question of the distribution of languages on signs (also see Chapter 3.1.1).

As a further response to the question about the connection between the languages present and their meaning, Kallen and Ní Dhonnacha (2010: 21; quoting Reh, 2004) use four categories: (1) *duplicating multilingual writing* (same information in both languages); (2) *fragmentary multilingualism* (all information given in one language, only some parts are translated into another language); (3) *overlapping multilingual writing* (only some information is given in two languages, other is given in one language only); and (4) *complementary multilingual writing* (different information in
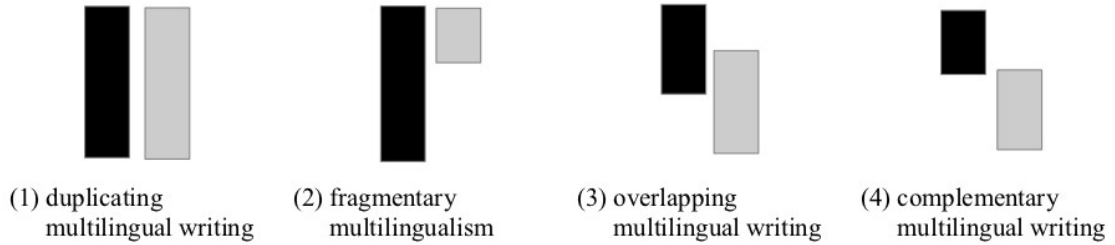
Figure 3.1.: *Model – Four categories of language representation on signs*

each language). This model, which has been visualised for a better understanding in Figure 3.1, is highly useful for the development of a theory, and the application of constant tools on LL research.

Additionally, the nature of the displayed languages must be taken into consideration: are both written from left to right; do both use Roman script; if so, is it only a transcription, as for example Chinese characters can be transcribed in Pinyin.

Another factor that contributes to the design of a sign are legal prescriptions. In Quebec for example, *Bill 101* which was introduced in 1977 is quoted by many researchers as the standard example of political intervention into language use (see for example Backhaus, 2009; Malinowski, 2009). It prescribes the use of French on public signs by deciding that the following rules apply (Canadian Legal Information Institute, 2011; Charter of the French Language, Title I):

> Chapter IV, 22. The civil administration shall use only French in signs and posters.

> Chapter IV, 24. The bodies and institutions recognized under of section 29.1 [those include English language school boards and the Commission scolaire du Littoral; furthermore certain municipalities and health or social services institutions, but only if the majority of their clientele does not have French as their mother tongue] may erect signs and posters in both French and another language, the French text predominating.

> Chapter VII, 58. Public signs and posters and commercial advertising
> must be in French. They may also be both in French and in another
> language provided that French is markedly predominant.

Not only are both official (see Articles 22 and 24) and commercial organs (Article 58) affected, but it is clearly stated that even if French is not the only language on a sign, the French share must be widely visible. Although these regulations seem to be quite strict already, it was only in 1993 that the amendment which permitted another language at all was made, that is Article 58 had not been part of the original charter (Backhaus, 2009: 160).

For a more thorough explanation of the influence of legal prescriptions and language policy see Chapter 3.2.3.

3.1.3. Symbolic versus indexical meaning

Signs can on the one hand be a hint to the languages spoken in a particular territory. For example when in Chinatown in New York the information on signs is given in Chinese, it can be claimed that people do speak Chinese in the given area. When however a casino in Argentina has its English name attached on a widely visible sign, it is probable that English is used to give it "a touch of Las Vegas" or as Backhaus (2006: 64) notes more generally:

> The use of foreign languages on nonofficial signs is mainly motivated by
> a desire to create an overseas atmosphere, even if there is no direct link
> to the world outside. Rather than power, solidarity is the underlying
> motivation here.

Malinowski (2009: 110) notes that this assumption becomes problematic where several interpretations are made. This had already been stated earlier by Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003: 205) who attach a *double indexicality* to signs. That means that signs do not exclusively create meaning through their placement, but also through how they work together with other signs in a particular surrounding. Their establishment of the dichotomy of the symbolic and the indexical meaning of signs derives from Landry and Bourhis' (1997) notion of informational and symbolic function, which was the first concept to categorise signage into classes of meaning-

making. Landry and Bourhis identified an informational purpose when the signs mark the territories of the languages spoken and a symbolic function which defines if a language is present at all, or if it is oppressed.

Developing this relation further, Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003: 3) argue referring to semiotics that four more questions have to be posed when analysing indexicality:

(1) Who has "uttered" this?

(2) Who is the viewer?

(3) What is the social situation?

(4) Is that part of the material world relevant to such as sign?

If one answer contains a hint to someone or something which is not present in the given territory, the sign must be classified as having symbolic value. On the other hand, if it gives evidence of the actual presence of something which is represented on the sign – in our case a language – then it obtains indexical value. Scollon and Wong Scollon explain this in much detail in their insightful study, proving that the claim that was made at the beginning of this chapter cannot be confirmed as simply as that. The fact that signs in New York City's Chinatown bear Chinese characters does not *necessarily* point to the existence of Chinese speakers; nevertheless it is *possible*. Obviously, the distinction between indexical and symbolic function is of great importance for a LL analysis.

Backhaus (2007: 8), taking up Scollon and Wong Scollon, remarks that the function of signs is not only dichotomous on one level but that "on a higher level, each message to be conveyed is context-dependent and directly related to the spatial circumstances of its use. In this sense, indexicality is a property of all signs.". This means that any sign can hold an indexical function, but only if it is set in the adequate context.

To explain it further, Leeman and Modan's (2010) description of the difference between symbolic and indexical function can be of use here. Comparing two branches of the international chain *Starbucks*, their signs seem alike at first sight. Both shops display the words *Starbucks Coffee* and a translation in Chinese. However, one shop is situated in Shanghai, thus the English words merely have symbolic value since they are the container of the corporate design; it is the Chinese translation that makes sense in this context and informs passers-by of the shop's purpose. The other shop is

located in Washington DC's Chinatown. Vice versa, the English information bears the indexical function, whilst the Chinese characters obtain only symbolic function. This example underlines the importance of the difference between *markedness* and *unmarkedness* of the languages on display.

Summing it up in the words of Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003: 119; original emphasis), "we can see that the actual language used can either *index* the community within which it is being used or it can *symbolize* something about the product or business which has nothing to do with the place in which it is located".

3.1.4. Non-linguistic elements

The term *sign* is of central interest in semiotics, not only because it is contained in the name of the discipline (for a detailed account of semiotic signs see Backhaus, 2007). In contrast with the basic notion of signs in LL studies, which are *physical* signs displaying *actual* language, semiotics see any item that refers to something else as a sign. Next to other scholars, Shohamy and Waksman (2009: 316; original emphasis) state that the deciphering of a sign assumes the inclusion of all linguistic and non-linguistic factors since they all take part in the meaning-making process:

> Even when we do refer to the linguistic aspect *per se*, there is a need to pay attention not only to the meanings conveyed by the language but also to the meaning provided by the visual aspects of language like typography, placement in the semiotic layouts, color, spatial and kinetic arrangements etc. as part of meaning construction template.

So do we have to include non-linguistic elements into a LL analysis, or are they rather an issue of semiotics? Although Goddard (2001: 13; quoted in Huebner, 2009) states that "readers do not simply read images in isolation from the verbal text that accompanies them; nor do they read the verbal text without reference to accompanying images", I hold the opinion that – even if they contribute to the interpretation and understanding of a message – they are linguistically not relevant and therefore do not have to be considered. I do not neglect the fact however that in some circumstances they can be included for a more thorough interpretation. But even if the semiotic function of language is of central relevance for LL research, the

semiotic function of signs which do not contain any linguistic token at all shall not be considered here.

3.2. External variables of Linguistic Landscapes

3.2.1. Urban space

The territorial focus of LL interest lies in the urban space as it becomes visible in the amount of research conducted in larger cities (compare Chapter 2.2). This is not surprising seen that "it is possible to draw correlations between the linguistic landscape and the city as a geographical and social entity" (Kallen & Ní Dhonnacha, 2010: 19) and that since the last decade, the majority of the world's population lives in urban areas. Hence, the city as a hotspot of immigration and the resulting ethnic and linguistic mixing offers various possibilities to examine linguistic processes such as language shift, language acceptance and the rise of new varieties. The city is thus a heterogeneous place, almost autonomous from the state in which it is situated. This is reflected in sayings such as "Berlin is not Germany" or "New York is not the US" (Waksman & Shohamy, 2010: 57).

But not only the composition of a city marks its value, it is also its dynamics that constitute a salient factor in the shape of its LL. The city's population seems to be in constant flow: new people arrive, others move away. Rental flats are in high demand in metropolises because they allow to remain flexible and thus to move in and out whenever desired, and so the city obtains its dynamics.

Drawing again to my definition from the beginning of this paper, a LL is language on display in multilingual urban settings. However, of the few unique features ascribed to LL, the feature of *urbanity* is probably the most challenged. There are studies with few emphasis on the urban surrounding and more focus on the multilingual component. Especially case studies conducted in classroom settings – albeit educational institutions located in major cities – neglect metropolitan considerations to a great extent and define students' perceived LL in the wider sense of any piece of language that surrounds them (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Dagenais et al., 2009; Hanauer, 2009). Furthermore, specialised studies like for example Hanauer's (2009)

study of the LL in a microbiology laboratory question the precondition of an urban setting, as well as cyberspace which opens up a new space for LL interests remote from conventional research.

3.2.2. Proper names and glocalisation

A very interesting and hitherto not sufficiently discussed problem had implicitly already been addressed by Spolsky and Cooper (1991: 75). They asked if there is English to be found on a sign reading "Ha-Malakh Rd.". The syntactic arrangement and the existence of the abbreviation of the word *road* imply that this be the case. Subliminally, this raises a question which later Edelman (2009) posed explicitly: Should proper names be included into the analysis of LL or not? On the one hand, the overall impression that we get when looking at a LL is generated by *any* piece of it, be it a huge billboard of 20 sqm, a graffiti covering a wall or even only a tiny note pinned on a door. They all influence our cognition in either a conscious or an unnoticed manner. Edelman also argues that proper names are often ascribed to a certain language. When we read the name *Yves Rocher* on an Amsterdam street (Edelman, 2009: 149) we think of it as a French word and thus value it more, at least if our mother tongue is not French. Furthermore, names can be translated, another proof that they belong to a particular language. *Charlemagne* is the national hero of the French, whereas Germans regard *Karl den Großen* as the founder of their nation. In fact, Charlemagne and Karl der Große are the same person, even though in two different languages. It might thus be only fair to include proper names into the analysis of a LL.

However, this view can also be problematic. Some names might belong to more than one language. Taking Edelman's example, the French name *Yves Rocher* could also be a Dutch name with Dutch pronunciation. That would hinder Amsterdam passers-by from ascribing a foreign touch to it, all the more if they do not speak French. Additionally, the perception of proper names and the assignment to a particular language strongly depends on the linguistic competence of the reader and is therefore subjective.

In order to show how widely the results can differ when either including or excluding proper names into the analysis, Edelman provides two evaluations of her case study

in Amsterdam. In the first evaluation she did not take proper names into account, in the second one she did. The consequence was that in Analysis A 65 % of the signs contained Dutch and only 30 % English, whereas in Analysis B the number of Dutch signs had decreased to only 43 %, compared to an increased number of English signs of 37 %.

Edelman concludes that whether or not a researcher considers proper names, the outcome might be very different. She states that in many cases the connotation of a sign – that is how it is perceived – matters more than the denotation – that is its actual meaning. Although the exclusion suggests a more realistic image of the actually spoken languages, their integration depends on the aim of the study.

What Edelman does not mention explicitly – but what becomes implicitly clear from her focus on advertising – is the fact that the conclusion she draws can only be justified for an analysis of BU signs. To my knowledge there has not been a comparable study with regard to TD signs so far. Where they are concerned, proper names could be analysed in a manner corresponding to Edelman's method.

The belonging of a name to a particular language is not an easy question to answer, which is also shown by Curtin (2009: 227). She refrains from the classification of signage of international corporations into a context of globalisation and suspects a rather local feeling for these companies, a phenomenon which is also known as glocalisation. Hints to that on Chinese-speaking territory are the phonetic transcription of *McDonald's* into Chinese characters (麥當勞 *mài dāng láo*) or the literal translation of *Burger King* into *hanbao wang.* The glocal effect, which has been discussed vividly in recent academic research, suggests that a formerly English name has ceased to be part of the English language as it was adopted into one's own language. Similar cases are known from Asian contexts, as for example in Japan *McDonald's* becomes *Macudonaludu,* an epenthesis which is not exclusively caused by the adaptation to Japanese phonology, but also by the glocal effect.

Bogatto and Hélot (2010) also raise this question, even though they focus on a different aspect. Their proposal of proper names being signs of identity display and territory-marking can serve as a useful tool for future research.

I will take up this question again in Part B in which I present my own methodology and argue whether the exclusion or inclusion of proper names turned out to be more fruitful for my case study.

3.2.3. Language policy, legal prescriptions and regulations

LLs always depend on political systems. Capitalism results in huge amounts of advertising, whereas communist regimes would abandon these contents and rather attach value to ideological messages. In this respect, HK is an enormously fascinating place for the examination of political motivations of a LL. Through its colonial past during the British Empire, it had seen times of capitalism and orientation to the West, whereas from 1997 onwards when it was handed over to China, many feared the increasing intervention of the communist regime into their personal freedom. *Google Inc.*'s retreat from China and its decision to redirect users to Google's HK website (Helft & Barboza, 2010) show that HK has maintained its extraordinary status as a Special Administrative Region. Nonetheless, HK people recounted in several personal conversations that they sensed an increasing Chinese influence. This circumstance, although already slightly touched upon by Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003), offers a field of deeper analysis.

A product of the governmental intervention into the LL is the divergence, in some cases also the convergence, of official and minority languages: Which languages are present? Are official languages more visible? Are minority languages oppressed? Or is the LL a tool to enhance the usage of minority languages? I have already pointed out in Chapter 3.1.2 that legal issues bear great responsibility for the shaping of a LL since "it is through its language policy for government signs that the state can exert its most systematic impact on the linguistic landscape of the territory under its jurisdiction" (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 26-7). Like it was shown in the example of Quebec, the absence of a language in a LL does not indicate that there are no speakers of the language in that society. The examination of perhaps existing legislation rather proves that a language – possibly spoken by many – only dominates through legal prescriptions and thus does not necessarily reflect the actual linguistic panorama.

In Quebec English was first strongly oppressed, albeit less strongly with the addition of further amendments later. However, the situation in Tokyo is the other way round: In the 1980s people found themselves exposed to great "pressure of internationalization" (Backhaus, 2009: 162) so therefore in 1991 the Tokyo Metropolitan Government gave a number of suggestions on how to make public signs accessible for a wider range of possible readers in the *Tokyo Manual about Official Signs*. As a result they begun to display public governmental signs (TD signs) with latinised writing and transliterated names (e.g. transliterated proper name plus "street"). Further similar official regulations followed in 1994, 2002 and 2003 (Backhaus, 2009). Although both cities experienced governmental manipulations, the situations in Quebec and Tokyo widely differ from each other, in the former case by fearing an increasing influence of English and in the latter by enhancing it.

Another case of governmental intervention into the LL is reported from Israel where the Supreme Court decided on the inclusion of Arabic on public signs next to Hebrew and English. Since 1999 it is obligatory to display these three languages on all road signs, and in 2002 the Supreme Court expanded its decision to all public signs of five Arab-Hebrew major cities (Trumper-Hecht, 2009). These decisions were thoroughly discussed in the public since the Jewish population perceived it as another attack on their newly gained autonomy with Arabic only spoken by a minority in Israel.

Barni and Bagna (2010) report a regulation passed in Prato, Italy in 2009 which forbade shop owners to display shop signs in a foreign language only and obliged them to give the Italian translation. If they refused, their signs would be covered and the owners fined. Barni and Bagna mention a number of 140 cases of governmental interference, not surprisingly most of them Chinese since the regulation objected pre-eminently languages not using the Roman script.

South Africa, in which a considerable number of languages obtain official or administrative status, also seeks to control the design of its public signs. This is only sensible seen that by inclusion of all the official languages, the sign would reach an unacceptably big size. With several manuals and policies on national and regional level a decent regulation was desired, among these the *South African Roads Traffic Signs Manual*, causing a majority of road signs to be in English, and the *South African Manual for Outdoor Advertising Control* which – in spite of what its name

suggests – misses to give concrete instructions on what language(s) to use (Du Plessis, 2010).

However, not only the presence or absence of a language is an aspect of language policy in LL studies. Sloboda (2009) brings to mind another factor that shapes a LL, namely the influence of governments on the naming of places. The ideological processes that Europe underwent in the 20th century are especially revealed in street names, as for example *Adolf-Hitler-Straße* in Leipzig was named *Karl-Liebknecht-Straße* after the downfall of Nazi Germany and the rise of the socialist government. Other topological renamings were undertaken, sometimes even including renamings of whole cities (e.g. *Leningrad*'s renaming to *Saint Petersburg*). As a corollary "researchers can also view LL as an index: a 'window' to the character of society" (Huebner, 2006).

In order to conclude I want to indicate again that language policy must always be taken into consideration because "a change in regime can bring about a change in the linguistic landscape (LL)" so that "the LL then becomes one of the most 'vocal' and concrete indicators of consequential language regime change" (Du Plessis, 2010: 74). Hence, before the actual research begins, the investigator has to ask what kind of government controls the LL and what kind of political system prevails. An interesting study with this regard could be comparative LL analyses of countries with different systems, for example the comparison of the LL of Cuba with the one in the USA.

3.3. Methodologies

According to Backhaus (2007) and further confirmed in various studies, there are three major delineations of a survey which must be made in advance. First, the territorial delineation; places should neither be randomly selected, nor should they – in case of a comparative study – lack comparability. It is therefore important to justify the choice by giving reasons for the relevance of the area. Then there is the definition of the spatial limits of the signage. Not only the boundaries of a particular sign matter, but also the exclusion and inclusion of units into the analysis. Decisions regarding the amalgamation of items into a semantic or physical unit are

highly relevant and can turn out varying results. The third delineation concerns the languages on display. Occasionally it might be impossible to distinguish between languages because the lexeme exists in both. This often happens in areas where two typologically related languages prevail, for example French versus English *solution*, or *formidiesel* as an indistinguishable blend of French *formidable* or Dutch *formidabel* and *diesel* (Backhaus, 2007: 14). In addition, the decision on proper names must be addressed: Whether including or excluding them might be important for the results of the analysis. For a more thorough account of this problem see Chapter 3.2.2.

Another aspect of data collection is the relevance of quantitative versus qualitative methodology. If in some studies it is useful to apply qualitative methods in order to get very detailed material, for other purposes it might be more relevant to collect as much empirical data as possible to prove initial assumptions. An example for a qualitative method is Garvin's (2010) *walking tour*. In a first step, pictures of the LL of a defined tour were taken, followed by actual individual walks including interviews with the previously selected participants. The oral interviews were afterwards transcribed and handed over to the participants for revision and additions. The advantage of this method is that the researcher can establish a very personal relation to the participant. Qualitative analyses of the interview material can be judged rather reliably. Unfortunately, the attention of the interviewed is strongly drawn into a certain direction through implicative enquiring of the interviewer, so that the answers' objectiveness is questionable.

Technologically, a great advancement of modern LL research was the digital camera. It has made it possible to gather a huge amount of data without high costs, which can be evaluated afterwards and of course digitally processed without much effort. Before, LL investigations were quite expensive as well as extensive through analogue technology.

Another benefit of modern technology is the utilisation of progressive software and computer-based methodologies. Barni and Bagna (2009: 131) for example worked with the programme *MapGeoLing 1.0.1* and a camera. Whilst one researcher was taking the photos, the other one could immediately tag it on a map, adding all the information that could be drawn from the sample. Although Barni and Bagna (2009) criticise open-source software due to incompatibility with their method, which is why they had to buy licences for the programme mentioned above, it should be an aim of

academic computational research to constantly improve open programmes for these purposes in order to grant free and democratic access to sustainably usable software.

I also expect that through the development of new and better soft- and hardware, handicapped persons will be able to play a part in LL research, since for example visually impaired could perceive a LL with the help of reading aids.

Last but not least, internet services like *OpenStreetMap* or *Google Maps* could in the future make it obsolete to travel to a LL because they might enable us to stay at home and comfortably view the LL online.

Part B: Reading Hong Kong - A case study

4. Hong Kong

In Part A I not only pleaded for the studies of LLs as an autonomous discipline, but also summarised current research, its theory and its practical applications. I have explained the semiotic, the macro-linguistic and the micro-linguistic levels of analysis and pointed to important internal and external variables. I will apply this theoretical framework to my own case study which follows now in Part B.

Although this second part mainly focuses on a case study that I conducted in HK in 2010, I first give a brief overview of HK's history and its linguistic situation. This proceeding is necessary as the context of the case study would otherwise not be clearly defined for the reader. The case study is given after the following important explanations on HK.

For travellers to Asia, a journey to HK is probably the best way for a soft start to their explorations. Through its history that is strongly connected to the Western world, HK offers a kind of cultural continuum in which the cultural shock that a European might experience when entering for example China, can be avoided or at least delayed. However one must to be careful to think that HK has no culture of its own, that it is a hybrid without its own profile in between the West and the East. On the contrary, the city's past has rather shaped its face, resulting in the formation of a unique place, which is hard to find anywhere else. It is for this reason that HK has always been a magnet for researchers from all over the world, whichever discipline may have led them there.

4.1. History

The territory where nowadays HK is situated had not yet been named as such during the 18th century. Trading, especially with tea, was restricted to the Cantonese region,

and the area therefore became relevant to British interests. With the First and the Second Opium War between China and Britain, which was eventually won by the latter, Britain gained control over the territory of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories and Lantau Island. HK was established as a colony through the *Treaty of Nanjing* in 1842 (Wong, 1991; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010).

As a compromise, China and Britain signed the Sino-British *Joint Declaration*, a document that controlled British sovereignty as it obliged them to see HK only as a lease and to hand it back over to China in 1997.

With the Handover in that year, HK was no longer a British Crown Colony and became a Special Administrative Region of China. However, compared to the internal policy of the PRC, HK is granted more freedom under the slogan "One country, two systems" (Webster, 2009).

4.2. Modern Hong Kong

From the 1960s onwards until the Handover, it was shaped what Bolton (2000: 268) calls "modern Hong Kong": through the opening of the economy towards eastern *and* western influx and the resulting settlement of the financial industry, HK fostered its reputation as a junction between two worlds. Simultaneously, its own popular culture emerged which produced a range of films and music in Cantonese, the latter known as *Cantopop.* By this, a distinct HK identity was shaped. The still valid policy of HK being biliterate and trilingual was passed in 1995 and also included Cantonese as one of the three languages spoken in the territory.

Not only the raising number of Chinese tourists to HK contributed vastly to its economic independence after 1997 (Webster, 2009), but also the growing number of Philippine domestic helpers ("Filipinas") accounted for HK's changing economy since they allowed both parents to have a full-time job. Their number increased from 72,000 in 1991 to 170,000 only eight years later (Bolton, 2000: 276).

Today the Philippine migrant group constitutes a number of 1.6 %, that is approximately 114,000 people. Other minorities are composed by 1.3 % Indonesians and 0.5 % Caucasians. Ninety-five per cent of the population have Chinese roots. Among the

latter, the rate of literacy and of advancement to higher education is relatively high in HK. Fifty-two per cent of the ethnic Chinese population advance to secondary education and even 24 % to tertiary education (Setter et al., 2010).

4.3. The linguistic situation in Hong Kong

4.3.1. English in Hong Kong

From the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing onwards, the only official language in HK was English (Wong, 1991). This only changed in 1974 when Chinese received the same rights alongside English through the *Official Language Ordinance*, even though it was not further defined whether "Chinese" meant Mandarin or Cantonese – both are Chinese dialects (Webster, 2009).

As Setter et al. (2010) note, better access to education during the 1970s and 80s turned the education system into a mass education system. Nonetheless, this did not turn HK into a collective bilingualism where most speakers were fluent in both languages, but rather into a diglossia with part of the population speaking the one, whilst the other part speaking the other language, and few middle-men mediating between them.

By 1997 both codes – English and Chinese – were used prevalently in the public. However, only 2 % dominantly used English and a majority of 98 % made use of Chinese. Nevertheless, the prestige of English was higher in a number of public domains, for example street signs, business, commerce, and so forth (Scollon & Wong Scollon, 2003: 158).

With the Handover of HK to China in 1997, the roles of English and Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) shifted because English was no longer seen as the language of the colonisers, but rather as a vehicle for better access to education and a higher standard of living. This becomes evident as there is a tendency of increasing proficiency, from 38 % ascribing themselves a good command of English in 1996 to 43 % in 2001 (Webster, 2009). What is even more striking has been shown in a range of language attitude studies which prove that not only do HK people perceive

themselves as having their own distinct identity, but that they also consider English as being a vital part of this identity (see e.g. Setter et al., 2010).

Very recent numbers mentioned in Setter et al. (2010) show that the amount of English speakers has slightly increased since the handover. Today, a percentage of 95.6 % of the population are presumed to be able to speak a Chinese language and 3.1 % English, compared to 2 % in 1997. The remaining 1.3 % are speakers of other languages. Unfortunately, these numbers do not allow for any conclusions about multilingualism.

A domain that obtains special status in this regard is economy. Serving as a gateway to Asia, HK has gained indispensability for international trade. It is in this domain that the usage of English accounts for 66 % of business communication, which causes its prestige to rise since the language is connected with wealth and education.

It is nowadays common to use English and Chinese characters in writing and English, Cantonese and Mandarin in communication, a circumstance – as was already mentioned above – called biliteracy and trilingualism. Correspondingly, the diglossia has changed to a "polyglossia with increasing bilingualism" (Setter et al., 2010: 110).

4.3.2. Hong Kong English as a World English?

In order to understand the distribution of English in the world and the increasing number of speakers and learners today, we have to trace it back to its roots. Having had its origins in the British Isles, it spread from there to today's countries such as the United States of America, Canada, and Australia - first as a diaspora, going on to replace the native languages in those areas. In a second wave, English arrived via colonisation in the territories of for example HK, India or Nigeria, where it became a co-official language, even if mainly restricted to certain domains. What can be seen as a third diaspora is caused through globalisation and thus through international economy and popular culture (see Omoniyi & Saxena, 2010), so that a variety of non-colonised countries have joined the list. The success story of English is unique, today resulting in approximately 1 billion speakers worldwide. The proficiency of speakers varies widely, however its grade notably corresponds to the diaspora through which it arrived in the respective country. This means, that in areas settled in the

first wave, English is nowadays the mother tongue of most inhabitants. Countries affected by the second diaspora often prove a high collective proficiency, although in many cases they maintain their original first language. Those nations that promote the use of English for competitive reasons caused by globalisation frequently struggle to collectively improve language skills since English often has to be a match for a historically very strong first and official language.

The fact that there is no clear distinction between native speakers and language learners anymore has led to the establishment of the field of *World Englishes* (WE), also known as *New Englishes.* The name suggests that there is more than one English, and thus that there is more than just the standard. WE studies frequently distinguish between speakers of (1) *English as a native language* (ENL); (2) *English as a second language* (ESL); and (3) *English as a foreign language* (EFL). Other concepts which focus on the international communicative use of English are *English as a lingua franca* (ELF) and *English as an international language* (EIL). The most important model for WE was introduced by Braj Kachru in 1982. He suggests three concentric circles through which ENL, ESL and EFL varieties are classified into *inner circle*, *outer circle* and *expanding circle* respectively. The main criterion for the classification is the usage of English for mainly intranational (inner and outer circle) versus mainly international purposes (expanding circle). There have been suggestions for improvement of Kachru's model and revised models, but Kachru's approach is still the most basic and commonly used (Jenkins, 2003; Setter et al., 2010).

In the scope of this paper, the question arises whether Hong Kong English (HKE) is a variety in its own right, or whether it does not count as such. If the answer is affirmative, we can assume that linguistic competence is rather high, seen that it allows speakers to apply their linguistic skills to form an own variety. That this question is highly debatable was shown in a range of studies. Kirkpatrick (2007) mentions Luke and Richards, Johnson and Li as the main opponents against the existence of HKE as an own variety because it does not serve intranational purposes. By contrast, Bolton (2000) assumes that a HKE variety is *possible.* Setter et al. (2010) are much more determined that such a variety exists. In their compendium *Hong Kong English*, they prove that a fully developed inventory of phonology, morphosyntax and lexicon is available and that code-switching, a sign of nativisation, is carried out.

They go on to argue that even if HKE is still emerging, it is expected that in the 21st century it will gain full status as a New English. Other evidence comes from Hung (2009) who found that L2 speakers from HK show certain innovative creativity where phonology is concerned. He discovered several phonological features which are neither part of their L1 nor of their L2. This also supports the thesis of the existence of an autonomous HKE. For now however, it still holds an intermediate position between a norm-developing and a norm-dependent variety, meaning that it is somewhere in between the continuum of expanding and outer circle.

4.3.3. English for educational purposes

The first schools in HK were bilingual missionary schools, established shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing (Bolton, 2000). Until 1974 English was the only medium of instruction and even remained so in 80 % of secondary education throughout the 1970s (Wong, 1991). However, two admissions have to be made here. First, it must be taken into consideration that for example in the New Territories only few people proceeded to secondary education. Second, that due to a relatively free language policy in educational settings the predicate "English as a medium of instruction" did not grant highly standardised education in English, but instead a mix of English and Chinese with the frequent switching from one code into the other.

In 1997, the hitherto dominant *laissez-faire* policy was ended and it was decided that Cantonese be the medium of instruction so that over two thirds of schools a little later switched to Chinese and only 114 stuck to English, mainly due to the strict application criteria for English-medium schools (Webster, 2009). Still, English is nowadays the main language in secondary and tertiary education and at a number of universities it is a requirement to participate in academia. The result described by Setter et al. (2010) is a *trilingualisation* with many HK people gaining proficiency in Cantonese, English and Putonghua.

4.3.4. Regulations on the language on signs in Hong Kong

Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003: 191; original emphasis) have pointed to several regulations that the government of HK carried out with regard to postings not only in the public, but also on private land:

> The *Laws of Hong Kong* also defines where signs, bills, and posters may be erected and how they are to be treated differently on public and private land. It also outlines the duty to maintain signs in a 'clean and tidy condition'.

Until 1997 there was a legislation under British rule that on any official sign, English as opposed to Chinese must be dominating (Backhaus, 2007: 38). This policy nowadays still prevails as English still has to be dominant on TD signs such as street and government-related signs. The regulation however does not apply to BU signs which can be authored freely. As was also quoted in Webster (2009: 144-5), two articles of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region* regulate HK's self-determined usage of English:

> Article 9: In addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Article 136 grants HK the right to determine its own educational policy, including the right to decide upon which language of instruction to use.

Astonishingly, Scollon and Wong Scollon (2003) found the prevalence of English as the preferred language in many places in HK, a circumstance which in some cases they assigned to the long reign of British colonialism. In others, for example in a newly opened shopping mall, they ascribed the use of English to the role of English-speaking nations as global players and the dominance of English all over the world as a *lingua franca*.

From these considerations about the linguistic situation in HK, we can draw several assumptions for the next chapter. Because of the possible existence of a HKE, it can be expected that the overall linguistic competence in English should be rather high in HK. Although the number of proficient speakers of English consists of an estimated percentage of only 3.1 %, the everyday visibility of English in the cityscape

of HK is deeply rooted due to its colonial history. However even though this visibility is partly caused by legal prescriptions, English is not seen as a language forced-upon the population, but rather as a gateway to wealth and success. Through regular exposure to English in educational surroundings, which has as well a long tradition in HK, people are used to hearing and seeing English from an early age. As a corollary enhanced through these facts, my initial assumption underlying the motivation for my case study was that I would get along well in HK with English as the only medium of communication. I will explain in the following chapters in what way my assumption was proven right or wrong, and what role the LL of HK plays in the solution of this case.

5. Case study

It was shown that in HK the preconditions for a high proficiency of English in a large majority of the population are given. Not only its history, but also HK's policy and economy approve of a good command and support the claim, that HKE is a variety in its own right seen the linguistic competence of the speakers.

However, this assumption could subjectively seen not be verified by the experiences made during the excursion to HK. Few people seemed to be conversational in English, let alone fluent, and even taxi-drivers not always understood where one wanted to be taken to. Nevertheless, English was visually very present in the LL of HK. A study by Malinowski (2009), in which he is concerned about authorship, might give a hint to a solution. He found out that in a district of Oakland English-Korean signs are aimed at various readerships: English at English-dominant passers-by, Korean at Korean-dominant ones, and even English signs at Korean-dominant ones. If this is also the case in HK, it would suggest that a fair amount of speakers of both languages are present and may possibly read the signs, since both languages are also displayed on signage in HK.

Drawing to another explanation, it could be hypothesised that English is used because it is fashionable. In Curtin's (2009) Taipei study she adds a crucial fact to this argument: in Asian contexts it is not only the foreignness of English *per se* that lends it an exotic and more valuable air, but it is also the Roman script that implies the desired exoticism. Many Taiwanese obviously do not perceive the message written in English denotatively but rather connotatively. Such cases are also reported from Japan where English is "in", no matter if spelled incorrectly or bearing a vulgar message (as seen on Japanese T-shirts). Another example is the survey among Germans about advertising slogans in English, which was already mentioned in the Introduction.

This is also supported by Jaworski and Yeung (2010) who refrain from stating that HK consists of a majority of bilingual speakers merely because the majority of signs analysed by them is bilingual. Instead they suggest that the prestige of English accounts for its frequent usage. I will take up these considerations again in the Discussion.

Lou (2012) has pointed out that in places shaped by imperialism, English is nowadays not necessarily used due to this influence anymore. She goes on to state that where such glocal effects can be observed "only careful empirical research can determine how English language functions in particular geographical settings" (Lou, 2012: 38). This claim is appealed by the present case study. Since its main issue is the connection between shop signs and linguistic competence, I want to consider some basic notions of the concept of *linguistic competence* before I proceed.

Linguistic competence denotes not only the collective ability of a group of speakers, but also "the competence of an individual in a language" and is thus "the capacity or set of capacities underlying the linguistic activity of the individual" (Lehmann, 2007: 223, 234). This notion corresponds only partly to what Chomsky (1972: 4) defined as *competence*, namely the "speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language", in contrast to "the actual use of language in concrete situations", or as he calls it *performance*. As Lehmann points out, the Chomskyan concept of linguistic competence is an idealised notion underlying a language system rather than an individual. He argues that only with the theoretical supplements contributed by Hymes and Coseriu, the concept of linguistic competence that is nowadays used for empirical research was shaped.

This contemporary concept involves a productive and a reflective side of linguistic competence. If the productive competence ranges on a high level, it implies that the reflective competence must be elevated either, since the former is based on the latter. Both together constitute linguistic competence, which is always language-specific. That means that a speaker may have great competence in one language, but few in another. This variability allows to conclude that linguistic competence (for example in English) can vary between single speakers and also between speech communities. For this reason, the surveys that were conducted for my study as described in Chapter 5.2.3 grant interpretations about the reflective side by analysing the productive one, therefore about the overall linguistic competence of the informants in English. By summarising the speaker samples, general conclusions with regard to the linguistic

competence in English of people from two HK districts can be drawn. The general notion of linguistic competence in this paper hence neglects the various definitional nuances of the concept made in linguistics and is thus orientated towards a rather basic notion of its actual meaning, as is also supported by Lehmann: linguistic competence as the ability of one speaker or a group of speakers to speak and understand a language.

5.1. Purpose of research

It was stated by Barni and Bagna (2010: 4) that "simply identifying the languages present within a country or area in quantitative terms does not provide us with any information about the relations between the languages observed and their uses in a given place". I support this critique by mentioning that most LL analyses stick to a subjective interpretation of the collected data material. Rarely are the interpretations verified through interviews or surveys. So apparently, merely looking at signs is not enough. I therefore developed a method which combines statistical LL data gathering with personal surveys, both open and anonymous.

Other researchers have applied similar ways of personal reassurance of the data collected. Aiestaran et al. (2010) for example asked passers-by about how they perceive the LL of a Basque city. Informants had to fill in a survey on which the results are grounded. Although this resembles my own methodology, the following case study is to the best of my knowledge novel as it is the first to apply the method explained below.

Furthermore, my case study is concerned about linguistic competence rather than language attitudes, although conclusions with respect to the latter can be drawn. It shows a way of how a LL might serve as a tool to broaden the view of culture and language intertwined.

Cenoz and Gorter (2003; quoted in Aiestaran et al., 2010) found that in the city of Donostia-San Sebastián, which is situated in the Spanish part of the Basque Country, there were three languages present: Spanish, Basque and English. The languages' representation on public signs was a reflection of the actual linguistic situation with

Spanish prevailing, Basque to a lower degree seen its status as a minority language and English used in the context of internationalisation. Is this the case in HK, too?

I have already mentioned the discrepancy between expected and observed linguistic competence of English in HK. This made me investigate if there is also a discrepancy between the overall linguistic competence and the presence of English in the LL of HK. I considered the authors of signs representatives of a larger amount of people inhabiting the examined surroundings. That means that the language of a sign allows conclusions with regard to the linguistic competence of the shop owners, and the stochastic evaluation of the complete signage allows conclusions with regard to the linguistic competence of a particular territory. My thesis is that if English is present on a shop sign, and if the English conversational skills of the shop assistants are sufficient, then the LL corresponds to linguistic competence. If it does not correspond, the choice of English as the sign language must have been made due to other reasons. With regard to Part A I pose the question whether the signage of HK has indexical or symbolic value.

This question intermingles with Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) conditions of sign-making (see Chapter 2.1). They suspect not only actual linguistic competence to be a factor in the creation of a sign, but also the intention of addressing certain customers. This is further confirmed by Edelman (2009: 142-3; italics added) who claims that "the languages used *may* or *may not* reflect the languages spoken by the speech community for which an advertisement or shop sign is meant" and "the fact that advertisers use languages that are hardly understood by the audience may show that, in order to persuade customers, they sometimes attach more importance to the connotation than to the denotation of their advertising". Thus, there is possibly more to the usage of English on bilingual shop signs in HK than simply displaying linguistic competence, as was also assumed by Lanza and Woldemariam (2009: 201):

> In the interviews conducted with some shop owners, it was asserted repeatedly that the use of the English language and English names in signs was considered a sign of modernity. Many of the shop owners considered this use to be functional for attracting customers, albeit local customers. Competence solely in English would not be sufficient to understand the communicative intent of the shop name. Hence English has an important symbolic value.

Another aspect is quoted in Dal Negro (2009: 206; original emphasis) who proposes the possibility of a LL "not necessarily representing the *entire* or the *real* local linguistic repertoire but its language policy".

With regard to the above listed perspectives on LLs, my own research focused on the following questions:

(1) Is English **present** in the LL of HK? If yes, to what extent?

(2) What kind of shops pre-eminently **use** English on their signage? Are there sectors that prefer signs in Chinese?

(3) Does the LL mirror the speakers' actual **linguistic competence** of English?

(4) If no, **what** does it mirror?

I will return to these questions in the course of the following discussion in order to give satisfactory answers on the basis of my findings.

5.2. Methodology and benchmarks

It was stated in Chapter 3 that territorial delineations, spatialal definition of the signage and separational decisions about the languages on display must be made in a LL analysis. This is accomplished in the following chapter where my methodology is presented and the benchmarks of research are explained.

5.2.1. Research areas

It has already been noticed before in this paper that HK is an excellent place for LL research. It fulfills all the criteria of *language on display in a multilingual urban setting.* However, it was of course not possible to analyse its whole LL seen the fact that HK covers a huge territory. For a more extended investigation, more time, money and workforce would have to be invested. Since I wanted to collect data from several socially and ethnically diverse regions, comparable areas had to be found. A first trial of a LL analysis in Sai Kung, whose ethnic composition seemed to fit the requirements, turned out to be unfruitful, since it had the look of a fishing
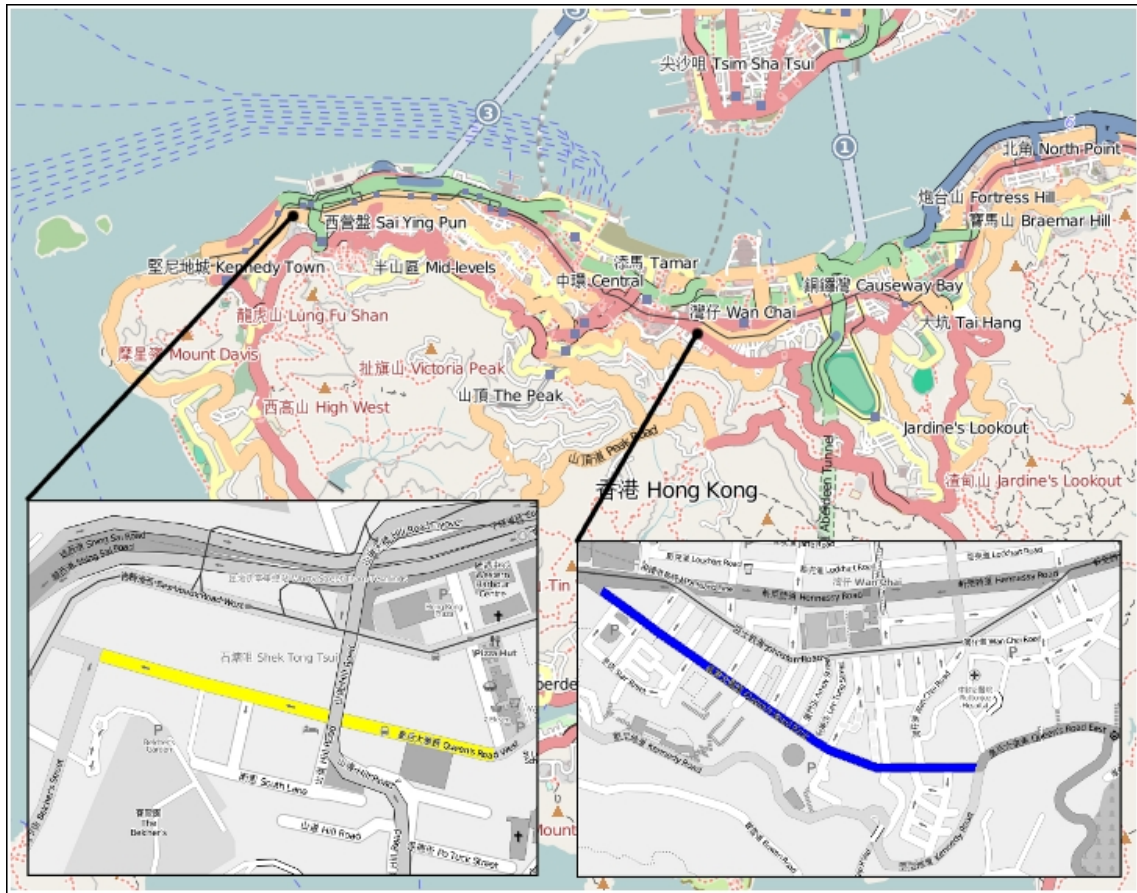
Figure 5.1.: *Map of research areas*

Map data ©OpenStreetMap contributors, CC BY-SA

village rather than a vibrant metropolis. Furthermore, there was no comparable "streetscape" to be found elsewhere.

Instead I decided on two quarters which are connected through one long road. *Queen's Road* is one of the oldest streets on Hong Kong Island and it meanders in the north of the island from west to east. It links Research Area 1 (RA1), Shek Tong Tsui in the west, with Research Area 2 (RA2), Wan Chai in the east (see Figure 5.1). Queen's Road West as well as Queen's Road East are both shopping streets with small shops and restaurants. This circumstance and the fact that "the number of linguistic tokens is especially high in shopping areas in cities" (Gorter, 2006: 2) accounted for the suitability for a LL analysis and the consistent appearance of the RAs. In both locations, 500 m were investigated bidirectionally, adding up the total LL length to 2 km (for the exact area see Figure 5.1).

Table 5.1.: *Average size and price of rental flats in Research Area 1 and Research Area 2*

	RA1	*RA2*
Average size of rental flats	71 m^2	66 m^2
Average rental price per square metre	HKD 366	HKD 463

A rent index should shed light upon the economic and thus social composition of RA1 and RA2. Table 5.1 compares average size and rent per square metre for each RA. For this comparison, the offers of three major HK property agencies were searched for rental objects in RA1 and RA2 so that average numbers could be calculated.[1]

We can see in Table 5.1 that the price per square metre in RA1 for a rental flat amounts to HKD 366, which is somewhat lower compared to RA2, where the average price is HKD 463. That means that the inhabitants of RA2 are more affluent than those of RA1 who remain economically behind. Furthermore, the average flat is a few square metres bigger in RA1, a fact that might give us a clue of how many people live in it. I conclude that the bigger and cheaper the flats, the more families inhabit that particular area which makes Shek Tong Tsui more attractive for families and Wan Chai for business people. This estimation is strengthened by the fact that RA2 is one of the main business areas of HK. Another proof is the frequent recurrence of certain domains in the shopping landscapes of the RAs. A full explanation of the landscape's consistence is given in Chapter 5.3.1. As was already shown (Chapter 4.3.1), the usage of English in business communication is especially high. The corollary is therefore that in RA2 English competence is more fostered and that this might be reflected in the LL of RA2. This issue will still be addressed.

The *Census and Statistics Department* of HK carries out a regular population census. The latest was made in 2011, but unfortunately the results per district are not yet available at the current date. It will be interesting to look closer on district profiles which will be downloadable for free from supposedly April 2012 onwards, online on `http://www.census2011.gov.hk/en/district-profiles.html`. At the moment, relevant statistical data is only available for the districts of "Wan Chai"

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[1] The search was conducted on 29 February and 1 March 2012 on the websites of Midland Realty (`http://www.midland.com.hk/eng`), HKC Property (`http://www.hkcityproperty.com`) and Qi Homes (`http://www.qi-homes.com`), all having a fair amount of offers and providing a search by district and by rent versus sale.

and "Central and Western". Although RA1 administratively belongs to the latter, the aggregation of Central and Western District distorts the results since Central is far more prosperous than Western including Shek Tong Tsui.

A further indicator for this is the lack of an MTR connection of Shek Tong Tsui to the central business areas. The construction works for the new West Island Line, that will connect the now still terminal of Sheung Wan with Hong Kong University and Kennedy Town, had just begun at the time of my investigations. The estimated completion of works is in 2014 (Mass Transit Railway, 2010). It is probable that with the ending of construction works, rents in Shek Tong Tsui, which is located nearby the new line's route, will skyrocket and population demographics will change immensely. What is also likely to change is composition of the shopping landscape, which until now consists of small, mostly family-run businesses.

5.2.2. The signs

As was shown, Shek Tong Tsui and Wan Chai are socially and economically diverse and hence offer different and yet comparable LLs. The question that arises is why only shop signs were included in the case study, and why other signs were not considered.

Shop signs can be categorised as *bottom-up signs* (Gorter, 2006), *private signs* (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006), *in vivo signs* (Calvet, 1990; 1994; quoted in Backhaus, 2007) or *private texts* (Franco Rodríguez, 2009). As Landry and Bourhis (1997: 27) have already stated in their seminal work, these signs reflect most saliently the linguistic reality of a particular territory. In their study about the LL of Ethiopia, Lanza and Woldemariam (2009) also examined shop signs in two streets of Mekele. They were both located in a major shopping area, however the streets were situated in the same district as is not the case in my own study. The usability of shop signs for a LL analysis made it therefore sensible to focus on them, especially since at some point limits had to be drawn. Thus, there had to be clear guidelines in order not to get lost in the colourful LL of HK.

Shop signs also serve as an interface between the people inhabiting a territory and random passers-by who are intended to be addressed; those can be tourists as well

Figure 5.2.: *Research units*

as inhabitants of the area. The decision in favour of BU signs rather than TD signs was also influenced by the fact that the latter would not reflect the actual linguistic situation as realistically as the former, since the creators – official authorities – do not necessarily have to be settled in the particular territory of interest. Instead, authorities are subject to function from outside and are additionally biased by language policies. This does of course not mean that BU signs, and shop signs respectively, are always a neutral indicator for the actual linguistic situation, but the probability by contrast with TD material is comparatively higher.

In both RAs I encountered relatively similar LLs where the appearance of the research objects is concerned. Most shops were made up of a clearly definable unit. As can be seen in Figure 5.2, it was not in the least problematic to distinguish between units due to single items visibly belonging to one or the other. Each unit in both RAs consisted of (1) one main sign extending over the complete width of the unit; (2) the entrance area beneath the main sign including entrance door and shopping window; and (3) a side sign which is not visible from the front view but which affects the passers-by nevertheless, because they perceive them as vital parts of the LL whilst walking by shops and streets. Figure 5.3 exemplifies pedestrians' perspective and the interaction of several side signs.

Figure 5.3.: *Side sign – Part of research unit not visible from front view*

Some scholars have considered the meaning of the language on signs in their studies. My analysis is nevertheless restricted to the question *if* English is present on signs, and not expanded to *what* the signs actually mean. This was on the one hand caused through the lack of research capacities; there was simply no time and staff for a closer look at the content's interpretation. On the other hand it was not necessary whatsoever for my purposes; I was interested if the linguistic competence of the shop assistants corresponded to their outward-oriented self-portrayal (i.e. the mono- or multilingualism of their signage), and not if the message of their signs was conveyed in all languages equally.

Even if this pushes the results slightly into a certain direction with regard to the relative assignment of importance to the English language, profound analyses of the presence of Chinese had to be neglected. Again, this was due to temporal and personnel facilities and to my quite insufficient Chinese skills. That is why the focus

according to the title of this paper was put on English and not on English and Chinese. As mentioned before, the meaning was after all rather irrelevant.

The issue of proper names that I already discussed in Chapter 3.2.2 was solved inasmuch as I decided to include them into my analysis. This was also a result of my incapacity to judge from Chinese characters whether they contained proper names or not. Therefore I had to be inclusive for all languages. I will get back to this in the Discussion.

5.2.3. The survey

In a preliminary step, the two streets' composition was statistically evaluated. Every shop was listed according to its type and it was noted if each shop's signage at large contained only English (monoE), only Chinese (monoCH) or if it was bilingual (bilE/CH). The results of this statistical investigation are given in Chapter 5.3.1.

After having gathered these data, the original idea was to enter all property agencies and all premises that had monolingual signs (English and Chinese) in order to ask them to fill in a survey which had already been prepared.

The survey contained a header for details on first name, age, sex, hometown and district. This was followed by twelve questions in English and Chinese. The latter had been translated by an academic staff member of Hong Kong University who was born in HK and spoke fluent Chinese, Cantonese and English in order to guarantee the correctness of the Chinese translation. Most questions offered several options so that the boxes had only to be ticked. The questions were as follows:[2]

(1) What is your highest educational degree?

(2) In which institution did you achieve the degree?

(3) At what age did you start to learn English?

(4) Did you learn English at home with your parents or in an institution?

(5) How good is your parents' English compared to yours?

(6) Please give yourself a realistic mark for your competence in English.

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[2] For a complete copy of the survey see Appendix B.

(7) How often do you use English in daily life?

(8) Please remember the interview or your CV which rewarded you with this job. Was it important for your employers that you speak English?

(9) How many of your colleagues here speak English (approximate number in %)?

(10) How do you estimate the status of English among the people of Hong Kong?

(11) How do you experience English in Hong Kong?

(12) Please note here if you have got any other remarks to make.

The questions very obviously aimed at exploring the linguistic background of the surveyed persons and at gathering empirical data with regard to language acquisition. Since I had already identified the distribution of the languages on the signs, I wanted to make further enquiries about the actual linguistic situation. The reason why both monoCH and monoE shops were checked was the assumption of obtaining the most unequivocal results from the two extremes. Additionally, property agencies were cross-checked since there was not only a considerable number of them in both RAs so that they served as dependable random samples for bilE/CH signage, but also because a complete check of all shops could not be conducted.

Furthermore, some questions aimed at employment conditions in order to find out if English had been a requirement to receive the job. This should give hints to the extrinsic motivation of employers.

The procedure was to introduce myself as a student of the University of Potsdam in Germany after entering. I explained that I was writing my final assignment, that for this reason I was researching about English in HK and that I would be grateful if the person in question helped me by filling in the questionnaire. Obviously, this procedure was culturally not thoroughly thought through because the simplistic method I had planned to examine linguistic competence was not successful at all. People were very suspicious, some even refused to assist me with my request. Apparently, they either found the questions too personal, were afraid to get into trouble with their employers or did not understand what I expected from them. It is probable that my demand was too bold and straightforward for the mentality of HK people. Another possibility is that they plainly did not want to waste their time with me, seen that sometimes the initial friendliness changed once they recognised I was not a potential

customer. However, I succeeded in gathering six questionnaires of property agency employees in Wan Chai which will be evaluated in the further course of this paper. It can be concluded with complete justification that my first approach had failed dismally due to cultural differences.

Hence, I had to develop another approach. My idea was to conduct an anonymous survey in which cultural differences were less intersecting. The new method was based on William Labov's *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (Labov, 1982) in which he eradicated the so-called *Observer's Paradox*, a term coined by himself. The paradox says that a researcher cannot gather natural data as long as people know they are being monitored and that "our goal is to observe the way people use language when they are not being observed" (Labov, 1991: 61). Labov eliminated the Observer's Paradox in the *Social Stratification* by anonymously eliciting a certain answer ("fourth floor") from shop assistants in New York City department stores and by making the assistants reformulate the answer more carefully through explicit re-asking. In this manner he obtained relatively reliable authentic material.

I thus developed a three-steps examination scale. It contains three consecutive questions which I posed in all above mentioned target shops. After leaving the premises, it was noted which step the shop assistant had reached. Step 1 enclosed the question *Do you speak English?*. It is a closed question (Schuman & Presser, 1979) where the answer is either *yes* or *no* (or no answer is given at all) and thus leaves little scope for misinterpretations. Moreover, the four tokens occur together frequently and are likely to be learned at school in exact this combination. So even people with very few knowledge in English were capable of giving an answer. People with no knowledge at all correspondingly would reliably not be able to respond. Step 2 implied another closed question: *Do you accept credit cards?*. This question was somewhat more difficult to understand, so the addressed persons had to possess more linguistic competence in order to answer it. However, the keyword *credit card* enabled people to at least understand the core of my request and gave them a chance to react. Since the question would have made no sense in property agencies, there the surrogate *Can I have your business card?* was asked respectively. In Step 3, the open question (Schuman & Presser, 1979) *How long are you open today?* was posed. In this step the shop assistants had to prove that they were not only able to understand

complex phrases but also that they could give adequate not pre-formulated answers, since the opening hours were of course individual.

The pronunciation of the questions was adapted to international standards, so that as far as possible a neutral variety of English would not cause misunderstandings. The phonetic transcriptions

(1) *Do you speak English?* [duː ju spiːk ˈʕɪŋlɪʃ];

(2) *Do you accept credit cards?* [duː ju əkˈsept ˈkɹedɪt kɑːɻdz] or *Can I have your business card?* [kən aɪ həv jɔɻ ˈbɪznɪs kɑːɻd];

(3) *How long are you open today?* [haʊ lɔŋ ɑːɻ juː ˈʕoʊpən təˈdeɪ]

show that – with the usage of the retroflex /r/ and the avoidance of explicit British English as well as American English (as e.g. realised through the American-British hybrid form [jɔɻ]) – an unmarked pronunciation was applied. Additionally, the phonetic separation from the rest of the sentence allowed to put emphasis on the keywords *English*, *credit cards*, *business card* and *open*.

Through the anonymous survey's three-step structure with increasing level of difficulty I could reliably test the linguistic competence of the shop assistants. The questions built up on each other inasmuch as they could be used in a natural conversation in this exact order. The allowance was given that each step could be repeated once if required in order to grant the informants' better understanding. If they however were still not able to react after the first repetition, the survey was ended and the highest step reached was noted down.

In most cases, after entering the shop I browsed the offers pretending to be a potential customer and then asked the three questions. If the informants contributed own linguistic material, the three steps were conducted nonetheless: what was important was the completion of all steps. The only exception made was the skipping of Step 1 if the person addressed me in English; in this case Step 1 was ticked as successfully passed in order to avoid arousing suspicion. If the informants were not interrupting the procedure with conversational contributions I opened with Step 1 which was immediately followed by Step 2. After another look around I closed with Step 3 and left the premise. The annotation of the completed steps was made outside out of eyeshot.

For the shops that I had already consulted openly in the first approach, two fellow participants of the excursion took the role of the interviewers. Especially in Wan Chai it was vital not to attract attention because the informants there were most suspicious. Therefore, the style of clothes was adapted to the target clientele so that no suspicion would be aroused.

This anonymous survey turned out to be more effective compared to the open survey. Apart from a few shops which were closed at every consultation, I could gather data from all informants. Pretending to be a potential customer was rewarded with more success than speaking openly about my function as a researcher. Again, cultural issues should have been taken more into consideration.

As was already mentioned elsewhere in this paper, the linking of statistical LL data and an anonymous survey is to the best of my knowledge novel. The evaluation of the data gathered is given in Chapter 5.3.

5.2.4. The informants

The choice of the informants was made both consciously and at random. Consciously because for the first non-anonymous approach only property agencies were selected to fill out the questionnaire, and for the second anonymous approach the incognito questioning was done with property agencies, shops with monolingual English and shops with monolingual Chinese signs. So the selection on that level was not at all arbitrary. Furthermore, the non-sector-related choice extinguished the possibility that a certain sector in which the requirement for an employment was a university degree was given priority. The focus on medical practices for example might have raised the probability to survey academics who would have had a broad education in English.

After entering the premises I randomly addressed the first person that I encountered. This proceeding is justifiable as first of all, most shops were small businesses and thus a homogeneous staff composition was given. Additionally, when the appealed person could not answer me in English, in some cases an English-speaking colleague was sent for. Hence, there was a chance for the shop assistants to respond to me.

Although I am aware that shop assistants are not always identical with the sign creators, compromises had to be made since the limitation of the analysis was more than difficult and to survey ownership relations would have gone beyond the scope of my investigation. But again, the homogeneous constitution of each shop's personnel guaranteed the reliability of the results.

5.3. Findings

The data of the case study were collected during a period of approximately three weeks in autumn of 2010 (October 11 to November 2, 2010), albeit not incessantly and with interruptions. The RAs in both streets extended over 500 m bidirectionally (see Figure 5.1).

5.3.1. Linguistic Landscape data

According to Barni and Bagna (2009) and as was already explained in theory in Chapter 3, the shop signs that were part of the LL analysis in RA1 and RA2 can be classified as follows:

(1) *textual genre*: shop signs;

(2) *position*: external/outdoors and therefore addressed to any passer-by;

(3) *location*: two shopping streets, comparable in analysed length and appearance; the difference lies in its distinct clientele;

(4) *domain*: public;

(5) *contexts*: see (a) to (h) below;

(6) *places*: several, for example bakeries, banks, property agencies, restaurants, medical practices, supermarkets, and so forth (for a complete list, see table with research data on the CD-ROM).

It is important to point out that the external position of shop signs means that the signs are not restricted because in this respect "the semiotic function of the text differs" (Barni & Bagna, 2009: 132).

From this follows that shop signs constitute a major part of the impression a LL leaves in the perception of passers-by, and that they are a major factor in the visual absence and presence of languages.

The LL data can be categorised into the contexts

(a) medical-social institutions,

(b) finances,

(c) gastronomy businesses,

(d) housing,

(e) living,

(f) furnishing,

(g) appearance refinement and

(h) luxury goods.

As is apparent from Figure 5.4, no special weighting or difference between RA1 and RA2 can be seen in contexts (b), (d), (g), and (h). The financial sector (banks, pawnshops) as well as institutions of appearance refinement (i.e. hairdressers, beauticians, etc.) are present in both, Shek Tong Tsui and Wan Chai. The claim that RA1 is an attractive residential area for families is further strengthened by RA1 outweighing RA2 in medical-social institutions (e.g. medical practices, opticians, retirement homes, etc.) and shops affiliated with the context "living". Although surprisingly more numerous in RA1, gastronomy businesses in RA2 tend to be higher priced. By comparison of the restaurant types it becomes clear that the elevated number in RA1 comprises mostly small diners, where the average dish is under HKD 20, whereas in RA2 prices add up to over HKD 100 and the location normally accommodates several dozen people. The international flair of restaurants in RA2 is enhanced by the choice of a name in a language other than English or Chinese, which is also displayed in the choice of languages on their signs (see Table 5.3). What is especially striking is summarised under context (f). "Furnishing" refers to all shops selling household-related goods that are not essential to survive, for example furniture shops, interior designers and framing shops. There is a particularly dense settling in Wan Chai, which might hint to RA2 being a residential area either. Instead, I
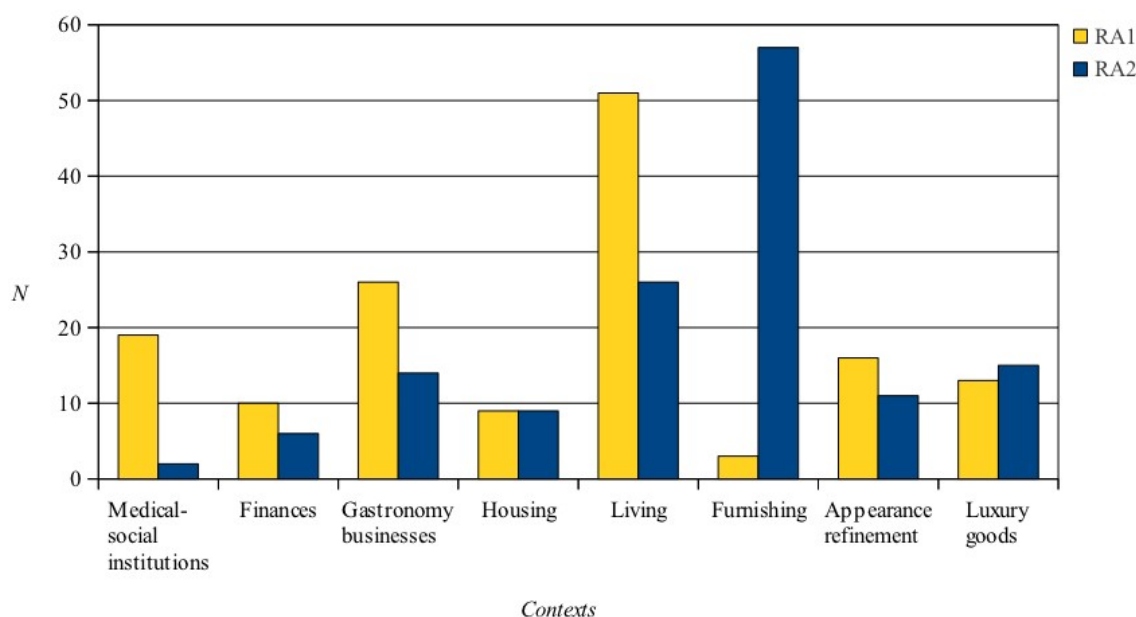
Figure 5.4.: *Distribution of shop domains in Research Area 1 and Research Area 2*

suggest them being associated with wealth and luxury, which connects them closely to context (h) and gives evidence of the comparably high living standards in RA2.

Table 5.2 displays how English and Chinese are distributed on shop signs. In both RAs there is an amount of approximately 62 % of the signage that contains English as well as Chinese. All parts of the shop – main sign, entrance area and side sign as explained in Chapter 5.2.2 – were seen as one unit consisting of all signage included in the unit. That means that as soon as there was one sign in a language other than the rest, the unit could not be categorised as monolingual any more. If in contrast there was only one language displayed, the unit counted as monolingual. This probably explains why the amount of bilingual signage is that high, since for example in some units their monoCH character was corrupted by one "enter" or "push" sign. These are however exceptions, the majority can rightly be classified as bilE/CH.

Apart from bilingualism, it is interesting to observe one monolingual tendency in both RAs. Of 146 signs in Shek Tong Tsui, over one third is monoCH, whereas there is only one single sign monoE. In Wan Chai, where a considerate number of 22.9 % of the signage is of monoE nature and where there is only a minority of 11 units with monoCH signage, it is the other way round. Although it has to be stated that

Table 5.2.: *Distribution of English and Chinese on signs*

	RA1		**RA2**	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
monoCH	53	36.3	11	7.8
monoE	1	0.7	32	22.9
bilE/CH	90	61.6	88	62.9
Units with other languages	2	1.4	9	6.4
Total	**146**	**100.0**	**140**	**100.0**

the overall linguistic character of both LLs is of bilingual nature seen their high percentage of bilE/CH signs, it is justified to conclude that the LL of RA1 had a rather monoCH character, and the LL of RA2 a rather monoE one.

Considering other languages present in the LLs there are vast differences (see Table 5.3). Whilst in Shek Tong Tsui two additional languages are found, which is an index of few multilingualism, these two languages are of East Asian descent, a sign of the inhabitants' regional orientation. By comparison, Wan Chai displays five more languages, nearly all of Western European descent. Two assumptions are self-evident: not only must the inhabitants of RA2 be more educated, but also through using foreign languages, an exotic touch is added to the shop's image – or expressed by the symbolic value condition: prefer to write a sign in a language with which you wish to be identified (see Chapter 2.1). Of the nine signs containing a western language, four belong to restaurants, two are connected to the furnishing-context and two designate clothing shops. This suggests that the contexts in which foreign languages are used for prestige reasons are not arbitrarily chosen.

Based on these LL data it is hypothesised that the inhabitants of RA1 show less linguistic competence in English than people in RA2. This is not only denoted by the predominantly monoCH character of RA1 and monoE character of RA2 – not considering bilE/CH signs – but also by the choice of languages other than English and Chinese. Only few multilingualism is observed in RA1 with a total amount of four languages present, three spoken in East Asian countries, the fourth one being English, whereas in RA2 the languages add up to a total of seven, with Chinese

Table 5.3.: *Appearance of other languages*

	RA1		RA2	
	N	%	N	%
Italian	0	0.0	3	33.3
German	0	0.0	2	22.2
Spanish	0	0.0	2	22.2
Arabic	0	0.0	1	11.1
French	0	0.0	1	11.1
Japanese	1	50.0	0	0.0
Thai	1	50.0	0	0.0
Total	**2**	**100.0**	**9**	**∼ 100.0**

and Arabic as eastern languages and the rest spoken in western countries. These observations account for the rather multilingual character of RA2 as well as they demonstrate its affiliation with the Western World and its supposedly prestigious languages.

5.3.2. Open survey

The sample gathered through the open survey is comprised by six informants, three of them female, three male. All are of Asian descent and employees of property agencies in Wan Chai. One half has a Chinese first name and the other half an English one. HK people may choose English first names if they wish, but since it was not required in the survey to give further details, it can only be guessed that the high amount of English names in the sample is triggered by reasons of prestige. Only one of the six originates from China. The rest is either from HK or did not give details about their origin. The average age of the employees is 35.5 years – the youngest being 27, the oldest 49 years old – which means that statistically seen they have all been subject to education under British rule.

This is also mirrored in their educational data. Two reached Form 5, that implies senior secondary education. The other four proceeded to tertiary education gaining

Table 5.4.: *General findings of the open survey conducted with 6 property agency employees in Wan Chai*

Level	Questions	Overall observation
Education	1-2	Highly educated staff, the majority having reached tertiary education.
Native speaker intuition	3-4	English not learned as ENL. Only ESL or EFL.
Linguistic competence	5-6	Self-estimated as average, but better than parents.
Usage of English	7, 9	English regularly and frequently used; high percentage of English speakers in agencies.
General language attitude	8, 10-11	English is assessed to be of great importance in HK, even if the overall linguistic competence may not be that high.
Personal remarks	12	No personal remarks were made.

a degree of a university, college or a higher diploma (Government Secretariat Hong Kong Government, 1981). All learned English at an institution rather than at home with their parents, with the result that the majority had only begun between 3-6 years, one even at the age of 12 years.

Although all informants state to speak English better than their parents, they are quite modest in their self-estimation. On a scale from 1 to 5 with the 5 marking little to no linguistic skills, five informants classify themselves as a 3, and one as a 4. The latter can be confirmed through conversational verification, but the others inclined to understate their skills.

For some, their knowledge of English was decisive for the superiors to hire them, which makes sense inasmuch as five in six state to speak English more than several

times a week. The percentage of people with English skills among each agency's staff is at least 50 %, in one agency it is even 100 %.

All informants rate the significance of English in HK as important or very important. From the answers of Question 11 ("How do you experience English in Hong Kong?") it becomes clear that although knowing English makes life in HK easier, it appears to be used rarely and incorrectly. However, having to speak it at the office seems to practise. The general findings are summarised in Table 5.4.

5.3.3. Anonymous survey

The anonymous survey, which was conducted as explained in Chapter 5.2.3, turned out to be more fruitful with regard to the estimation of linguistic competence, albeit not as detailed.

A total number of 110 shops was anonymously surveyed in both RAs. The survey included all shops with monoCH and monoE signage and all property agencies. Recalling Table 5.2, which demonstrates that the amount of monoCH signs is at 36.3 % in RA1 and 7.8 in RA2, a rather wide distribution of Chinese can be expected in RA1, especially compared to RA2. Vice versa, the percentage of 0.7 of monoE signage in RA1 and 22.9 in RA2 indicates a higher competence of English in the latter compared to the former.

It can be anticipated that the assumptions implied by the LL data were confirmed by the anonymous survey. There was an overall low command of English in Shek Tong Tsui. Figure 5.5 shows that almost half of the informants – the vast majority – could not respond to Step 1, which means that they did not answer when asked if they spoke English and thus were marked as Step 0. At least nine reacted positively to Step 1, but were not capable of understanding the second question about whether they accepted credit cards (or, if it was a property agency, whether they would give me their business card). Another five informants who had advanced so far could not manage Step 3 inasmuch as they did not gather to give me information as to how long they were open. Only slightly more than a quarter successfully completed Step 3 and thus comprised the proficient minority.
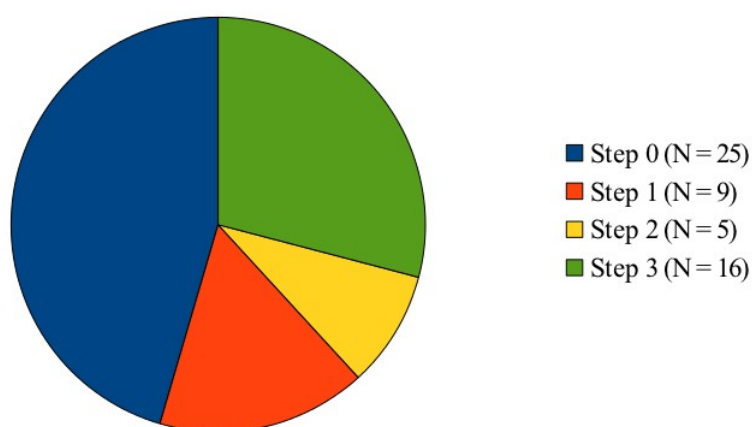
Figure 5.5.: *Steps reached in the anonymous survey by informants in Shek Tong Tsui (N = 55)*

Quite the contrary was observed in Wan Chai. Hence, the LL data from Table 5.2 was an indicator of what was to be expected conversationally, too. Clearly obvious in Figure 5.6, there were only six informants who could not answer the initial question. Five more succeeded in answering, but did not advance any further. Surprisingly, Step 2 did not signify a stumbling block. This might indicate that the keywords *credit card* and *business card* are well-known among shop assistants in Wan Chai. But the vast majority of 80 % passed all three steps and were mainly fluent in English beyond that. This was the overall impression from additional conversational situations.

At this point it is sensible to take a look at the dispersion of competence in English, and thus the question if there were contexts from which a high fluency was rather to be expected than from other contexts. In Shek Tong Tsui, one of those contexts was "living", although there was no preference as to which places were concerned. Paradoxically, the context "living" was also the context, in which comparably low fluency was probable. Food shops and butcheries frequently did not have staff with English skills.

Seen that in Wan Chai the general fluency was very high, Step 1 was no trigger for failure. In return there was a stark tendency that the shop assistants of the furnishing context would be capable of communicating very proficiently in English. Out of a
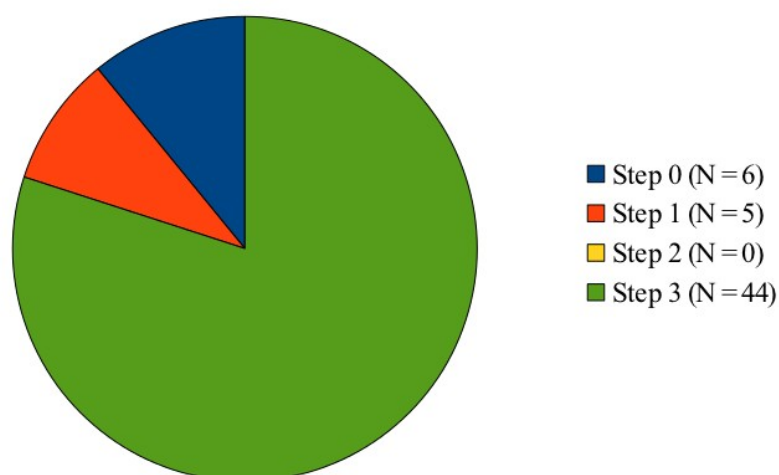
Figure 5.6.: *Steps reached in the anonymous survey by informants in Wan Chai (N = 55)*

total amount of 19 surveyed places from this context, 17 completed all steps. What was also – albeit not unexpectedly – striking was that of nine property agencies, the employees of seven were fluent; the other two were closed at consultations.

But especially in the light of my research questions, it is important to take a look at whether the shops with English signage could prove sufficient linguistic competence in English, and if the ones with monoCH signage would show few to no conversational skills. Table 5.5 illustrates that a majority of 45.3 % of informants of monoCH shops in RA1 and of 45.5 % in RA2 could indeed not even reach Step 1. Another 15.1 % in RA1 and 27.3 % in RA2 did not advance to Step 2. Only 24.5 % (RA1) respectively 27.3 % (RA2) of the shops with monoCH signage, that is only a quarter, completed Step 3 and hence showed sufficient conversational skills in English. Vice versa, the overall percentage of informants of shops with monoE signs who actually reached Step 3 was 87.5 % in RA2. In RA1 there was only one shop which could be classified as monoE. The informant of that shop succeeded in responding to Step 2.

Table 5.5.: *Monolingual Chinese and monolingual English signage in Research Area 1 and 2 and steps reached correspondingly*

Steps reached with consideration of signage	*N*	*Step 0 in %*	*Step 1 in %*	*Step 2 in %*	*Step 3 in %*
RA1 monoCH	53	45.3	15.1	7.5	24.5
RA1 monoE	1	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
RA2 monoCH	11	45.5	27.3	0.0	27.3
RA2 monoE	32	3.1	6.3	0.0	87.5
Total monoCH	**64**				
Total monoE	**33**				

5.4. Discussion

The research questions formulated in Chapter 5.1. shall be taken up again in this discussion. My investigations were organised around a range of queries which are taken into consideration here. They read as follows:

(1) Is English **present** in the LL of HK? If yes, to what extent?

(2) What kind of shops pre-eminently **use** English on their signage? Are there sectors that prefer signs in Chinese?

(3) Does the LL mirror the speakers' actual **linguistic competence** of English?

(4) If no, **what** does it mirror?

The questions clearly target at drawing the line between LLs and linguistic competence. By answering them it should be obvious which conclusions can be made from linguistic representations in space to linguistic representations in mind, and furthermore if and how such an extension of the subject can be a fruitful application of LL studies. Although this study is to my knowledge the first of its kind, it claims in no way to be exhaustive. On the contrary, it could and should be broadened: personal reassurances of LL analyses, whether through anonymous surveys or open interviews, serve a good purpose and comparative studies in other regions of the world can be made.

5.4.1. Social and cultural issues

It was stated elsewhere in this paper that the field of LL is a discipline which is closely intertwined with cultural issues. A LL does neither generate itself, nor may it exist without anybody taking notice of it – otherwise there would be no purpose attached to it. Therefore it does not make sense to examine a LL without a closer look at its surrounding and without the involvement of its authors and readers. This notion is also reflected in Ben-Rafael's (2009) concept of the constituents of a LL – from election propaganda to small notices – as *social facts*. The term indicates that any LL is person-dependent and shaped by social and cultural factors.

The standard of education is at a very high level in Wan Chai. This is on the one hand a result of the open survey, where all persons questioned have underwent at least senior secondary education, or have even advanced to tertiary education which includes university. In HK it is obligatory in the majority of academic surroundings to have a reasonable degree of English language skills in order to gain access. Since the level of linguistic competence of English is rather high in Wan Chai, the presumption that a high amount of inhabitants are educated academically seems likely. A further argument is the settlement of economic businesses in Wan Chai, which requires not only English skills, but also a thorough education from job applicants.

The situation in Shek Tong Tsui is to the opposite. Rents are lower and the overall composition of the quarter suggests a more familial clientele. Shopping facilities are homogeneously aligned towards an inter-generational customer base, for example through household-related shops, retirement homes or medical institutions. The familial composition implies a lower percentage of the general public to be educated. This is reflected in the relative absence of English in the appearance of Shek Tong Tsui. The upcoming opening of the new MTR West Island Line, which connects the economic centre of Hong Kong Island with Shek Tong Tsui, will probably have drastic consequences for the social situation there because rents will rise and the organic whole of the district will radically be shifted. Precursors of this change are already visible in some occasions, as for example an employment agency for Indonesian maids had recently been opened at the date of research. Potential customers of the agency are wealthy families who are expected to discover Shek Tong Tsui as a residential area in the course of the next years.

Hence, the demographic and economic composition of the two research areas turns out to be a crucial factor in the interpretation of the results of the case study since they allow assumptions to be made with regard to not only social issues, but also to educational ones.

Another cultural issue is the correct assessment of the informants' mentality. The open survey could only be conducted reluctantly since most shop assistants refused to support me as soon as they figured out that I was not a potential customer. Although I tried to enhance their trust in me by explaining the purpose of my enquiry, I was obviously not being adequately culture-conform. In retrospect I should probably have at least provided business cards because they are highly relevant in Asian business contexts. Furthermore, an official letter of my home university could have supported the authenticity of the research activities. But all this would not have guaranteed stable research conditions either, as some shop assistants still might have refused to fill in the questionnaire. It was therefore the best solution to conduct an anonymous survey.

Of course the results of the anonymous approach cannot compete with the results of straightforward interviews because the range of investigative thrust is simply not as detailed. More than three questions in an incognito interrogation would not only have been more difficult to integrate into a natural conversation, but also might have caused problems of noting down the answers without either arousing suspicion or forgetting a good portion of what was said. Apart from moral questions that arise when unconsciously "forcing" people to take part in academic research, the anonymous survey was still a good manner of avoiding cultural misunderstandings on both sides.

5.4.2. Proper names

The problem of proper names, addressed by Edelman (2009) in great detail, leaves researchers the decision to include or exclude proper names into their analysis. In Edelman's case, the results of the two analyses varied greatly.

With regard to spelled-out proper names I chose to include them. This was mainly caused by a lack of sufficient Chinese skills which made it impossible to judge whether a Chinese sign bore a proper name or not.

Additionally, it was difficult to make decisions about shops where no name at all was displayed on the sign, but where there was only a symbol contained, for example the *M* of *McDonald's*. On the one hand, the famous letter with its distinct design cannot be regarded as a linguistic token because it is a logo rather than a letter and thus comes within the limits of semiotics, and not LL analysis. On the other hand, the logo does indeed derive from a letter in Roman script and can therefore definitely be classified as not belonging to Chinese script.

But the issue becomes even more complex. It might be argued that the company's logo has been so much internalised that we think "aha, McDonald's!" when we read it. We thus see the symbol and think of an English word. But then again a Japanese speaker would probably think "aha, Macudonaludu!" and would therefore adapt the English name to her or his own language by creating an epenthesis. Hence, the English word would be adapted to another variety of WE. In this way, no general assumptions can be made about the cognitive processing – that is the perception within the range of a LL – of symbols. Since these considerations led too far away from the original problem, I decided to categorise symbols as issues of semiotics and therefore not to include them into my evaluation.

5.4.3. Linguistic Landscape analysis

The three dimensions of analysis introduced by Barni and Bagna (2009), which were described in theory in Chapter 3, are *semiotic analysis*, *macro-linguistic analysis* and *micro-linguistic analysis*. By conducting all three analyses, a thorough understanding of the LL is supported.

I want to anticipate that a micro-linguistic analysis could not be made in the scope of my case study. Such an analysis involves the qualitative interpretation of all occurrences, that is font type, spatial organisation and meaning. It can furthermore enhance a quantitative analysis of the occurrences. Due to the lack of capacities this

could not be achieved, but would nevertheless be an important tool for future case studies.

The semiotic analysis of the LLs found in RA1 and RA2 was already touched before in this paper. The signs found in the RAs could be classified with regard to Barni and Bagna's variables as externally displayed shop signs in two publicly accessible shopping streets. For the various contexts and places involved see Chapter 5.3.1. The general allocation in time and space amounts to a mapping in HK of the year 2010. This implicates that at the time of research the city had seen thirteen years of Chinese rule after more than 150 years of British sovereignty. The deduction therefore suggests that a strong British impact was still being visible in 2010, though increasingly replaced by Chinese influence. This issue will be discussed in the macro-linguistic analysis.

Another significant factor of the semiotic analysis is the question of authorship. The shop signs in the RAs were all of a BU type, or in other terminologies private or in vivo signs (also see Chapter 5.2.2). All of these concepts suggest that the signs were authored by private persons who are not subject to political tendencies. According to Franco Rodríguez's (2009) proposal of a threefold and more exact distinction, the signs could be classified as private and corporate texts. This allows to hypothesise that although private texts may be authored relatively independent from politics, corporate texts are likely to be oriented towards prevailing policies. In this way, Franco Rodríguez's approach permits a more graded analysis.

I also include the issue of legal prescriptions and regulations on signs into the semiotic analysis. Authorship is to a high degree dependent of laws which forbid or allow a certain language to be used on signs. That some regulations exist in HK was shown in Chapter 4.3.4. However, those instructions only apply to TD signs such as street signs and government-related signage. Hence, it can be assumed that the material of this case study was not distorted by language policy and that the results are more reliable in terms of the LL being a reflection of the actual linguistic competence.

For this matter, readership is only secondarily relevant. Nothing can be said about their linguistic competence, even if we know what kind of readership is intended to be addressed. But what readership targets can explain is a potential discrepancy between the LL and linguistic competence. If there is a high amount of English in

the LL, but people nevertheless show few language skills, then a connection cannot be found; instead, English is used to create an aura of wealth and success since the language is cognitively linked to both, as was mentioned elsewhere in this paper. I will come back to this at the end of the Discussion.

The macro-linguistic analysis examines the languages that appear in a LL and its communicative functions. These are flexible since they depend on the surrounding in which they occur. Barni and Bagna (2009: 134) state:

> If the observation was made in an ethnic quarter, where the presence of a
> certain linguistic community is due to social factors such as immigration,
> a written text in a single language makes it immediately clear that this is
> a deliberate use of the public communication space by that community.

The main languages present in Shek Tong Tsui and Wan Chai were Chinese (Putonghua or Cantonese) and English. Like it was said, 150 years of British rule have left their traces in the LL. The British influence could be verified in many places during research. Official signs like street signs or political messages, which were not taken into consideration for the analysis, were bilE/CH. Furthermore, bilE/CH signage constituted a high amount of more than 60 % of the LL material in both RAs. The number of monoE signage vastly differed: in Shek Tong Tsui there was only one monoE sign found, whereas in Wan Chai almost a quarter of all material consisted of monoE signage.

The Chinese (as opposed to Cantonese) influence was somewhat more difficult to detect because both Chinese languages, Putonghua as the standard language of the PRC and Cantonese as the local dialect of HK, use Chinese characters in spelling. Due to a lack of linguistic competence in Chinese on my part, it cannot be distinguished between those two. However, general conclusions can still be drawn. The main language on RA1 signs was indeed Chinese with a percentage of 36.3 % of monoCH and 61.6 % of bilE/CH signage. The overall frequency of linguistic tokens in Chinese was thus very high. In RA2 only 7.8 % of the material was monoCH, even if the amount of bilE/CH material still ranked in the upper field.

Other languages found were Japanese and Thai in RA1 and Italian, German, Spanish, Arabic and French in RA2. I have already explained my hypothesis that the additional languages found in RA2 are used for reasons of prestige. This applies to the languages

in RA1 as well, although foreign languages are used only hesitatingly as stylistic devices, seen their local relatedness as Asian languages.

The supposition that all languages save Chinese were chosen for reasons of prestige is justified by the low number of non-Chinese inhabitants in HK (Chapter 4.2). Social factors such as immigration cannot be a reason for the occurrence of those languages, neither for English nor for the additional codes. Therefore, they must have been used for stylistic means because

> the author of the text knows that the language used not only conveys primary information content, but can also single-handedly evoke images of a different world and attract potential readers, and thus identifies potential audience of clients/buyers/interested people (Barni & Bagna, 2009: 135).

That would suggest that the communicative function of all languages apart from Chinese is rather symbolic than indexical. There is however a contradiction when we ask the four questions proposed by Scollon and Wong Scollon's (2003):

(1) Who has "uttered" this?

(2) Who is the viewer?

(3) What is the social situation?

(4) Is that part of the material world relevant to such a sign?

They state that a sign has a symbolic function if the answer to one of the four questions contains a hint to something else. Nevertheless, if we anticipate that the author of a sign has sufficient linguistic competence, it can be argued that there is no such a hint to something else. The answers to the questions would be as follows:

(1) A person who speaks English.

(2) A person who understands English.

(3) English is culturally rooted in society.

(4) Yes, because norms and legal prescriptions opt for the usage of English.

There is however marginal space for different interpretations. If we add "but is a mother tongue for only few" to the third answer, then the indexical function switches

in favour of a symbolic one. That is why Scollon and Wong Scollon have introduced the concept of *double indexicality.* If by asking the four questions the communicative function for all languages except English and Chinese still remains a symbolic one, the function of English can vary. Double indexicality says that meaning is not only created through placement, but also through the co-agency with other signs in a particular surrounding. The result is that the function of English still might be indexical or symbolic, depending on the function of English on a particular sign versus its function as an interplay between all the English signage in a given territory.

Since the majority of the signage in both RAs contained linguistic material in English, it is through the working together of the signs that English fosters its presence and that meaning and effect are created. This meaning and effect are different from the ones caused by a single sign in for example French with no further linguistic context.

Here I come back to the original question posed by this paper. Does the amount of English in the LL of HK correspond to linguistic competence of English? If it does, it can be concluded that English has indexical value. If it does not, the function of English remains symbolic and there must be other reasons for its usage. Those could be power relations or reasons of prestige, or in the words of Spolsky and Cooper (1991; quoted in Spolsky, 2009: 34): "Prefer to write a sign in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified". In this way, the methodology proposed by the present paper is a benefit for the studies of LL inasmuch as it can answer questions about communicative functions by the extension of conventional LL analyses.

5.4.4. Linguistic competence

The three-step system of the anonymous survey is the basis of the findings on linguistic competence. First of all in order to grant stable results, it has to be defined from what step on the informant can be said to have sufficient linguistic competence in English. Since the three questions were testing rather basic knowledge, the person was ascribed good language skills only by reaching Step 3.

The LL of RA1 consisted of 36.3 % monoCH and 0.7 % monoE signs (see Table 5.2). If the LL reflects linguistic competence, this suggests that the percentage of English

speaking persons must be low compared to the amount of Chinese speaking people. It can be seen from Figure 5.5 that this assumption turned out to be correct. Only one quarter of the informants were fluent in English. Almost half of the informants could not communicate at all in English. Since the testing of Chinese skills was not part of the investigation, it can only be hypothesised that people who could not respond to enquiries in English were fluent in Chinese[3], though this hypothesis gains credibility by the ethnic composition of HK's population.

In contrast, the LL of RA2 was composed of only 7.8 % monoCH and of a comparably high amount of 22.9 % monoE signage. A valid interdependency between LL and linguistic competence would therefore result in an overall good command of English. Over three quarters of the informants had no problems to reach Step 3 and beyond which proves the hypothesis.

By taking a closer look in order to verify if the individual linguistic competence of shop assistants corresponded to the absence or presence of English on the signage of their shop, it was found that two thirds of the shops in RA1 with monoCH signage indeed had no sufficient English skills (see Table 5.5). However, 24.5 % were capable of communicating fluently in English. The fact that the informant of the only monoE shop found in Shek Tong Tsui could be classified as not having much linguistic competence in English would influence the result inasmuch as the LL in this case does not reflect the actual linguistic competence. In this case, the rating scale would have to be adjusted by counting the completion of Step 2 as being linguistically competent. This circumstance is not relevant though because no reliable statistics can be drawn from one single sample. Instead, we must rely on Figure 5.5 which shows that the overall linguistic competence in RA1 was rather low. It can thus be stated that here as well the shop signs were indicators of the linguistic competence of the shop assistants.

In RA2 only 27.3 % of the informants of shops with monoCH signage spoke English to a sufficient degree, whereas in the majority of monoE shops, the implicit promise that there was a shop assistant who was fluent in English was kept. Hence, the LL of RA2 was a valid reflection of linguistic competence either.

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[3] *Chinese* regarded as a collective term for all Chinese varieties here, including Cantonese and Putonghua.

Unfortunately, due to the failure of the first approach of the open survey, no conclusions could be drawn about English as an L1 or L2. This would have been achieved by Questions 3 and 4, but since only six questionnaires were gathered, no general tendencies were discovered. The anonymous survey was not capable of delivering such data. Results with regard to linguistic competence are thus only valid insofar as English is not considered in its language-specific context in HK. That means that only general conclusions about linguistic competence may be drawn, albeit not differentiating between L1 and L2, which is still consistent with the purpose of the case study being interested in collective linguistic competence.

In order to tackle the question of readership again it can be asked whom the English shop signs address. There is not actually a discrepancy between the LL and linguistic competence. Nevertheless it has to be speculated that English was the L1 of none of the informants. Furthermore, over 60 % of the signage in both areas was bilE/CH or even complemented by another language. The suggestion is that in a considerable number of cases – that is the cases where English was displayed but not spoken, plus the cases of bilE/CH signage which were not cross-checked – English was used for reasons of prestige. Especially with bilingual signage it is likely that English is used to appeal customers, and Chinese to convey the actual meaning. It cannot be affirmed however that the mere amount of bilingual signage represents a collective bilingualism in HK.

We can assume that with regard to the reflected linguistic competence in a LL there is an interdependency: if English-speaking customers are intended to be addressed, English signs have to be installed and English has to be spoken. If this is not the case, English is used for reasons of prestige.

The latter could somehow be observed in Shek Tong Tsui. Even though there was only one monoE sign and the anonymous survey proved the hypothesis, the quantity of bilE/CH signage reveals that English was indeed visually very present. Since the overall linguistic competence of English was rather low, we can conclude that the LL does not correspond to language skills. Nevertheless, the amount of monoCH shops where no English was spoken proves the opposite.

The situation in Wan Chai was different because the visibility of English in the LL was justified by actual competence. As can be seen in Table 5.5, shops with

English signage provided shop assistants fluent in English. Now the question implied above can be posed again. Is the situation in Wan Chai the result of a historically grown bilingualism, or of an employment strategy in order to appeal customers? I would argue that the answer is a compromise of both. Since the level of education is relatively high, people are actually more proficient in English. This is interdependent with the notion that this is exactly the reason why those people are employed. Hence, the LL of Wan Chai reflects linguistic competence although reasons of prestige are nonetheless involved.

The conclusion drawn from the survey was thus that the LLs of Shek Tong Tsui and Wan Chai have indexical value if seen as a whole. Few monolingual English signage is found in the former and few English is spoken either. In the latter, there is a high amount of linguistic tokens in English and the general knowledge of English can be judged as proficient. Where bilingual signage is concerned the authors' motivations are likely to derive from reasons of prestige. In those individual cases, the communicative function of the signage is symbolic. This is supported by Lou (2012) who argues that in HK, the difference between English being indexical for the West or symbolic for globalisation is a continuum with blurry transitions.

Hence, the result of the LL analysis and its extensions through open and anonymous survey proved that the degree of presence or absence of English in the LL of Shek Tong Tsui and Wan Chai was a sign of their inhabitants' linguistic competence with regard to English. But why does the linguistic competence differ vastly between RA1 and RA2? It turns out that not only Labov's (1982: 38) method of avoiding the Observer's Paradox was a source of inspiration, but also his proposal that the usage of distinct phonetic features is class-bound. He claimed for his investigations on the use of /r/ in New York City:

> Given any groups of New York speakers who are ranked in a scale of social stratification, these groups will be ranked in the same order by their differential use of (r).

This statement can – justified by the findings – be applied to the present case study:

> Given two socially diverse areas within one coherent territory who differ in the amount of English signs in their LL, then the linguistic competence of English will differ between the two areas in the same proportion.

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A similar observation was made by Lawrence (2012) in Korea. Though his case study was published only recently and did not serve as a model to the present study, he also draws on Labov's notion of social stratification. The consequence for the studies of LL is the implication that in surroundings comparable to HK, to be selected from a long list of countries who have seen British rule and the influence of English, the results of such an analysis might be alike.

In the end one last issue has to be raised. The present approach offers an analytical view on the linguistic competence of English. But how positive is the dominance of English, seen that it suppresses and rules out other regional and non-regional languages? On the other hand, English has been imposed on HK for such a long time that the relative lack of linguistic competence in Shek Tong Tsui could almost be worrying. I came to the conclusion that the cultural and linguistic identity of HK people has not been abandoned in favour of English. This hints to a strong and stable HK identity which is self-conscious enough to defend itself against external influences, or to integrate those that serve as a benefit.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to summarise current LL theories and to present case studies and methodologies that have been published in a number of articles and essay collections. Furthermore, a self conducted case study in HK was presented. Its purpose was to examine relations between the LLs of two ethnically and socially diverse research areas and the linguistic competence of their inhabitants. For the LL analysis, shop signs which can be categorised as BU signs were taken into consideration. The novel methodology of the present case study however did not end with the analysis of the LL, but also included the verification of the collected LL data through a survey with informants in both research areas.

It was shown that English is visibly present in the LL of HK. Several contexts such as the living context in Shek Tong Tsui and the furnishing context in Wan Chai proved to be most proficient in English. More than that, employees of property agencies were in most cases fluent in English, whilst workers at traditional shops such as butcheries and grocery stores were found to most likely lack conversational skills. In Shek Tong Tsui as well as in Wan Chai, the LLs obtain both indexical and symbolic function. Indexical since their composition reflects actual linguistic competence, as could be proved through the surveys. Symbolic since in some individual cases, English on signage merely served as a medium to transmit meanings other than the plain message that English was spoken. It could thus be concluded that English was chosen for reasons of prestige.

According to Bolton (2012), English is nowadays not only of significance for regional discourses anymore, but has become a global issue. That is why with regard to World Englishes, the distinction between the outer and expanding circle has become more and more fluctuant and global contexts have to be taken into consideration. Particular attention should be paid to glocalisation here, that is the interplay between local and global conditions. As was indicated in the case study, LL and linguistic

competence can be examined as a means of identifying the stability of a local variety of English.

In the beginning of this paper, the metaphor of the city as a reading, as a text which must be decoded, was established. The present paper offers a novel approach for the decoding of its meaning in order to gain new insights into the field of *Linguistic Landscape.*

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Appendix

A. CD-ROM content

- PDF-file of this assignment

- Photographic data gathered in the course of the linguistic field trip to HK from October 11, 2010 to November 2, 2010

- Six questionnaires filled in by informants in Wan Chai (all property agency employees) in the course of the open survey

- Table listing the LL data of RA1 and RA2, including all shops and the language on their signage

B. Blank questionnaire

First name 名:	
Age 年齡:	
Sex 性別:	❑ female 女 ❑ male 男
Hometown and district 故乡和 区:	

1.) What is your highest educational degree? 你的最高學歷是什麼?
…..……..

2.) In which institution did you achieve the degree? 你在是哪裡獲得你的英語水平?
…..……..

3.) At what age did you start to learn English? 你什麼年齡開始學英語?
…........... years

4.) Did you learn English at home with your parents or in an institution? 你是在家裡
和你的父母一起或在學校學習英語?
❑ at home with parents 在家裡與父母
❑ institution 學校 (name of institution 學校名稱:...)

5.) How good is your parents' English compared to yours? 你的父母英語程度比你的有
多好?
❑ better 更好   ❑ equally good 同樣好   ❑ worse 差

6.) Please give yourself a realistic mark for your competence in English. 請給自己一
個現實的英語能力 等級
❑ 1 很好   ❑ 2   ❑ 3   ❑ 4   ❑ 5 劣

7.) How often do you use English in daily life? 你在日常生活中使用英語多少?
❑ exclusively 全英語
❑ several times a day 每天數次   ❑ once a day 每天一次
❑ several times a week 每週幾次   ❑ once a week 每週一次
❑ several times a month 每月幾次   ❑ once a month 每月一次
❑ rarely 很少

8.) Please remember the interview or your CV which rewarded you with this job.
Was it important for your employers that you speak English? 請回想獲得這份工
作您的簡歷或面試。你會說英語對你的雇主重要嗎?
…...
…...
…...

9.)   How many of your colleagues here speak English (approximate number in %)? 你
       有多少同事會說英語（約數％）？
       …..

10.)   How do you estimate the status of English among the people of Hong Kong? 你怎
       麼評估英語對香港人?
       ❏ very important 非常重要   ❏ important 重要
       ❏ slightly important 稍微重要   ❏ not important 不重要
       ❏ I don't know 我不知道

11.)   How do you experience English in Hong Kong? 你如何體驗在香港學習英語?
       …..
       ....
       ....
       ....
       ....
       ....

12.)   Please note here if you have got any other remarks to make:
       如果你有任何其他意見, 請在這裡表達:
       …..
       ....
       ....

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Magisterarbeit mit dem Thema

English in the Linguistic Landscape of Hong Kong:
A Case Study of Shop Signs and Linguistic Competence

ohne fremde Hilfe selbst verfasst habe. Auf verwendete Quellen, die ich direkt oder indirekt zitiere, verweise ich in den Quellenangaben und dem Literaturverzeichnis. Darüber hinaus habe ich weder weitere Werke als die angegebenen benutzt, noch zitiert ohne eine Quellenangabe zu machen.
Diese Arbeit oder Teile von ihr wurde nicht bereits einem anderen Prüfungsorgan vorgelegt.

Ort, Datum   Unterschrift