Linguistic landscapes in the Netherlands: a study of multilingualism in Amsterdam and Friesland

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4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

In linguistic landscape research, sociolinguistic situations are analysed on the basis of the languages used on signs. The linguistic landscape is a relatively new subject of research and, as noted in Chapter 2, academic interest in it has been growing. It is important to describe the methodology that was applied explicitly and in great detail in order to be able to conduct meaningful comparisons of results from different scholars and to replicate linguistic landscape research at another time or in another sociolinguistic context.

In many quantitative studies of the linguistic landscape, signs are coded according to the languages that appear on them in order to establish the distribution of languages (e.g. Backhaus 2006; Barni 2006; Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Cenoz & Gorter 2006; El-Yasin & Mahadin 1996; Huebner 2006; Lüdi 2007; Schlick 2003). This means that the researcher has to determine in which language(s) the linguistic elements occurring on the signs are written. In other words, the elements are classified by language. Signs often contain proper names, the coding of which is not always straightforward.

This chapter deals with methodological issues. First, methods applied in previous linguistic landscape research are discussed in section 4.2. Then section 4.3 describes the general methodology that was applied in the present study. Finally, section 4.4 focuses on one problematic aspect of this general methodology, namely the classification of proper names by language.

4.2 Methods Applied in Previous Research

While Landry & Bourhis (1997) investigated perceptions of the linguistic landscape, subsequent research focused mainly on its objective composition. Studies were carried out in different multilingual settings and took different perspectives. Some studies involved a minority language, whereas other research mainly looked at the role of English as international language. The studies took their perspective from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.
Apart from differences in the type of multilingual setting and the perspective chosen, previous research also differs as to the specific methodology used. In this section some methodological issues are discussed on the basis of examples of previous studies. One issue is the sampling of survey areas. Rosenbaum et al. (1977) and El-Yasin & Mahadin (1996) analysed the signs in one central shopping street (in Israel and Jordan, respectively) and Cenoz & Gorter (2006) compared two central shopping streets, one in Friesland and one in the Basque Country, Spain. Barni (2006) surveyed a whole neighbourhood: l’Esquilino, a multiethnic neighbourhood in the Italian capital Rome. Ben-Rafael et al. (2004; 2006) sampled in eight different geographical sites in which Jews, Arabs or both Jews and Arabs reside, constituting a sample of the socio-geographical diversity of Israel. Likewise, Huebner (2006) identified fifteen neighbourhoods in central and suburban Bangkok, Thailand, which reflect some of the linguistic diversity of the city. A given stretch of the main street in each neighbourhood served as the survey area. Lüdi (2007) investigated nine shopping streets that constitute a cross-section of Basel, Switzerland. In Backhaus’ (2005a; b; 2006; 2007) study in the Japanese capital Tokyo, 28 stations of a circular line around the centre served as survey areas, including business and shopping districts, less busy sites such as parks, and residential areas. At every station a part of a street between two traffic lights formed the survey area. The distances between the traffic lights varied widely from approximately 65 metres to 400 metres. In its study in Montreal (Quebec, Canada), Conseil de la langue française (2000) drew a geographically-representative sample of the linguistic landscape. The survey areas were determined using randomly chosen postal codes and addresses. Every survey area consisted of one side of a street on which a selected address was located, confined by two intersections.

Another point of difference between methods applied in previous linguistic landscape research concerns the decision as to which signs within a survey area were analysed. Cenoz & Gorter (2006) analysed a complete inventory of the signs in the two shopping streets. Backhaus (2005a; b; 2006; 2007) counted all signs, but only recorded and analysed the ones that contained at least one language other than Japanese. Ben-Rafael et al. (2004; 2006) sampled twenty to thirty government signs and seventy to hundred private signs at each site they investigated. The sampling was also determined according to specific domains such as religious institutions. Schlick (2003) analysed between 45 and 69 shop signs and shop-front advertisements in every city she included in her study. In many of the studies, pictures of signs were coded according to linguistic and semiotic features, such as the number of languages and the specific languages used, the order and font size of the texts in the different languages, and the amount of text in each language.
Most of the studies took a synchronic approach. In some of the studies the variable of old vs. new played a role, offering a diachronic perspective of the linguistic landscape. By closely examining three street signs in Jerusalem, Spolsky & Cooper (1991) show that these provide a record of the Old City’s recent history. In the British Mandate period (1919-1948) these signs were written in three languages: English first, Arabic second and Hebrew third. During the period of Jordanian occupation (1948-1967), only Arabic and English were used on street signs. After 1967, when the Old City came under Israeli rule, a Hebrew line was added on top of the signs. Similarly, Backhaus (2005a) compares coexisting older and newer versions of multilingual signs in Tokyo, and shows that since the early 1990s the linguistic heterogeneity has increased, especially on government signs. Huebner’s (2006) comparison of language use in older and newer neighbourhoods in Bangkok offers evidence of a shift over time from Chinese to English as the major language of wider communication.

Barni & Bagna (2009) developed a methodology for the coding of signs which is worth mentioning here. In data collection two researchers are involved: one with a digital camera, the other with a handheld computer containing a map and fields for classification. Once a sign has been photographed, it is linked to the location on the map where it was observed, and an initial classification of the sign is made on site using the handheld computer. In this way, a linguistic map allowing for a comparison of different portions of the territory surveyed is produced. The general methodology employed in the present study is discussed in section 4.3.

4.3 General Methodology

In order to answer the research questions formulated in Chapter 2, a detailed quantitative analysis of linguistic landscapes in the Netherlands was carried out, based on the approach developed by Ben-Rafael et al. (2004; 2006) and Cenoz & Gorter (2006). As the linguistic landscape is a relatively new research subject, this study is of an explorative nature. To test the methodology, the investigation was preceded by a pilot study in one of the survey areas, a section of Amsterdam’s main shopping street Kalverstraat. This pilot study was described in Edelman (2006). The results showed that Dutch and English played the most important role, and their occurrence was about equal. On the other hand, many immigrant languages were lacking in the survey area. The pilot study did not give rise to any methodological changes, and the data it produced were incorporated into the larger study. The collection and analysis of the data in this larger study are explained in the following
subsections. The survey areas, the survey items, and the coding are discussed, respectively.

4.3.1 Survey Areas

It was decided that the linguistic landscape of shopping centres would be studied because a high density of signs can usually be found there. Shopping streets probably constitute the most common type of survey area in previous linguistic landscape studies, as was illustrated in section 4.2. Eight shopping centres were selected: five in Amsterdam, the capital city where immigration and tourism have lead to a diverse population, and three in the province of Friesland, where both Dutch and Frisian are official languages. These shopping centres are collections of retail stores and service establishments in a street or on a square. Covered shopping centres were avoided, as it proved difficult to get permission to take pictures there, a problem that is connected to the intermediate status of these shopping centres, somewhere between public and private space.

The sampling method that was applied is called diversity or heterogeneity sampling. Cook & Campbell (1979: 75-77) call this ‘deliberate sampling for heterogeneity’. They note that this model does not require random sampling, as a result of which one cannot generalise from the achieved samples to any formally meaningful populations. However, as Cook & Campbell remark, deliberate sampling for heterogeneity is usually more feasible than random sampling for representativeness. The purpose of using this method in the present study was to get a broad spectrum of linguistic landscapes, including the unusual ones, rather than to represent all the linguistic landscapes proportionately. The particular shopping centres were chosen because the neighbourhoods in which they are situated differ greatly in their ethnolinguistic composition. This sampling method is similar to those applied by Ben-Rafael et al. (2004; 2006), Huebner (2006) and Lüdi (2007), who also sampled for diversity.

Sections of the shopping centres, including 15 to 23 connected establishments, served as survey areas. Within the shopping centres that were selected, the survey areas started at the establishment with the lowest house number and preferably ended at a natural boundary, such as a side street. At the same time, across the survey areas a comparable number of signs, around 300 to 400 signs each, were aimed for. The length of the survey areas thus also depended on the density of signs. The survey areas are meant to be illustrative rather than representative of the linguistic landscapes of Amsterdam and Friesland.
The shopping centres in Amsterdam comprise Rooswijck, Kalverstraat, Bos en Lommerplein, Javastraat and Ganzenpoort. They are represented in the map in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Location of selected shopping centres in Amsterdam

Neighbourhoods that are home to relatively large numbers of immigrants are included, as well as neighbourhoods where few immigrants reside. Rooswijck is a shopping centre in a neighbourhood where, based on the parental birth country criterion, mainly Dutch people live. It is situated in the south of Amsterdam, and was built in 1962. Kalverstraat is the main shopping street in the centre of Amsterdam. The street is more than 600 years old. With about 150 shops,
Kalverstraat is the largest and best-known shopping street in the Netherlands. Property prices in Kalverstraat are very high. Bos en Lommerplein, Javasraat and Ganzenpoort are shopping centres in different neighbourhoods where many immigrants live. Bos en Lommerplein is a shopping square in the west of Amsterdam. It was built in the 1940s and rebuilt from around the year 2000. Javasraat is a shopping street in the east of Amsterdam in a neighbourhood dating largely from the early 20th century. In Amsterdam, Javasraat is known as a multicultural street. Ganzenpoort is located in the southeast of Amsterdam. Before 2002 the name of the shopping centre was Ganzenhoef. It was degenerate and in 2002 it was replaced by the new Ganzenpoort.

Shopping centres may often attract customers from the whole neighbourhood or even the whole district in which they are situated. Inhabitants of Amsterdam buy most goods within their own district. On average, 78 percent of their budgets for daily goods is spent there. For the non-daily goods this percentage is only 42 percent. The inhabitants who buy daily goods outside their own district usually do their shopping in a neighbouring district. Non-daily goods are often bought in the districts with the largest selection of shops in the non-daily goods sector, in the centre and southeast of the city (O+S Amsterdam 2009). The composition of the population in the neighbourhoods and districts surrounding the survey areas is given in Table 4.1.

A considerable Jewish community lives in the surrounding area of Rooswijk, with its own shops, restaurants, synagogues, schools and other facilities. On top of that, there are a large number of Japanese residents who also have their own shops and restaurants. These Jewish and Japanese facilities are not part of the Rooswijk survey area.

The neighbourhood in which Ganzenpoort is situated, Bijlmer Oost, is characterised by a relatively large group of people with a Ghanese background. This is not clear in Table 4.1 because O+S Amsterdam considers Surinamese, Moroccans, Turks and Antilleans the most important minority groups in Amsterdam, and groups the others together into ‘other non-Western immigrants’ and ‘Western immigrants’. However, data on the nationalities of the neighbourhood’s population show that with 3 percent, people with Ghanese nationality form the largest group after those with the Dutch nationality (O+S Amsterdam 2007c: 33). People who left Suriname to settle in the Netherlands before Suriname’s independence in 1975 had Dutch nationality. This explains why people with Surinamese nationality form a smaller group than those with the Ghanese nationality.
Table 4.1  Population by parental birth country of the neighbourhoods and districts (in brackets) surrounding the survey areas and of Amsterdam as a whole (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rooswijck, Buitenveldert-West (Zuideramstel)</th>
<th>Kalverstraat, Burgwallen-Nieuwe-Zijde (Centrum)</th>
<th>Bos en Lommerplein, Erasmuspark (Bos en Lommer)</th>
<th>Javastraat, Indische Buurt West (Zeeburg)</th>
<th>Ganzepoort, Bijlmer Oost (Zuidoost)</th>
<th>Amsterdam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>64 (66)</td>
<td>58 (63)</td>
<td>50 (35)</td>
<td>32 (48)</td>
<td>22 (28)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western immigrants</td>
<td>20 (19)</td>
<td>28 (23)</td>
<td>13 (10)</td>
<td>12 (12)</td>
<td>8 (8)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>4 (6)</td>
<td>11 (10)</td>
<td>34 (34)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>13 (23)</td>
<td>21 (13)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>11 (15)</td>
<td>11 (7)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antilleans</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>7 (6)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-Western immigrants</td>
<td>8 (7)</td>
<td>9 (7)</td>
<td>8 (10)</td>
<td>12 (9)</td>
<td>26 (21)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 11,785 (46,784) 3,799 (80,819) 5,073 (30,294) 12,448 (46,700) 22,970 (77,917) 743,104

Source: O+S Amsterdam (2007c: 22-24)

Table 4.1 only reflects the resident population. For residential areas this may provide a good picture of the passers-by in a survey area as well. The composition of the resident population in the city centre surrounding the main shopping street of Kalverstraat may be of less relevance, however, since the centre attracts people from all over Amsterdam and far beyond (O+S Amsterdam 2009). It is difficult to map these visitors. The survey area in Kalverstraat is immediately adjacent to the popular tourist attraction of Dam Square. Table 3.7 in Chapter 3 already showed that the largest groups of tourists in Amsterdam are from the Netherlands itself, the United Kingdom and the United States (O+S Amsterdam 2008: 388). Of the 351 hotels in Amsterdam, 232 are situated in the centre. The number of hotels in the districts
surrounding the other survey areas ranges from one to five (O+S Amsterdam 2007a: 339). Tourists do not usually go to these other shopping centres in the sample, which are further away from the city centre.

The five shopping centres can be seen as different consumer markets with different groups of potential buyers and a different demand for commodities and services. This is reflected in what is sold. For example, in Ganzenpoort, where many Surinamese people do their shopping, Surinamese vegetables and meat can be bought. Also the languages used on signs may be tuned to specific consumer markets.

Apart from the five shopping centres in Amsterdam, the study also comprised three shopping centres in Friesland, namely Wirdumerdijk in Leeuwarden, Dijkstraat in Franeker, and Schoolstraat in Burgum. These places are represented on the map in Figure 4.2.

Leeuwarden, a town with almost 87,000 inhabitants, is the provincial capital of Friesland. Franeker is a smaller town west of Leeuwarden, with a population of nearly 13,000. Burgum is a rural village east of Leeuwarden housing some 10,000 people. Population numbers are for the year 2007, and were derived from Provincie Fryslân (2009). A section of the main shopping street served as a survey area in both Franeker and Burgum. In Leeuwarden, a section of a side street of Nieuwestad, the main shopping street, constituted the survey area, as the linguistic landscape of Nieuwestad had already been investigated by Cenoz & Gorter (2006).
Figure 4.2  Location of selected shopping centres in Friesland: Wirdumerdijk in Leeuwarden, Dijkstraat in Franeker and Schoolstraat in Burgum

Source: CSO Adviesbureau

Because of a lack of data about the mother tongues of the Amsterdam population, Table 4.1 above displayed figures on parental birth countries. For Friesland, survey data on the population’s first languages are available. The distribution of mother tongues in Leeuwarden, Franeker and Burgum varies. Table 4.2 shows the percentages of the adult population with Dutch, Frisian, a dialect or a foreign language as a first language in the municipalities surrounding the survey areas.
Table 4.2  Adult population of the municipalities surrounding the survey areas and of Friesland as a whole by first language (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Wirdumerdijk, Leeuwarden (Leeuwarden)</th>
<th>Dijkstraat, Franeker (Franekeradeel)</th>
<th>Schoolstraat, Burgum (Tytsjerksteradiel)</th>
<th>Friesland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frisian</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialect</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>68,902</td>
<td>14,939</td>
<td>23,829</td>
<td>459,293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Provincie Fryslân (2007b: 22)

As Table 4.2 makes clear, Leeuwarden has the highest share of native Dutch speakers, whereas Tytsjerksteradiel has the highest proportion of speakers of Frisian as a first language. The figures for Franekeradeel are in between. There are no specific districts in Leeuwarden, Franeker or Burgum which are inhabited by either Frisian or Dutch speakers. It would have been interesting to investigate the interplay of regional and immigrant minority languages, but in Leeuwarden, the municipality in Friesland with the largest share of immigrants, no shopping centre was found in a neighbourhood where a substantial percentage of immigrants live.\(^7\)

The three municipalities also vary in the language policy they have adopted with respect to Frisian. All of the municipalities have developed their own policy plans. The municipality of Tytsjerksteradiel, where Burgum is located, is relatively active in its policy to encourage the use of Frisian. Both Tytsjerksteradiel and Leeuwarden have laid down the Verordening Fries in het schriftelijk verkeer (‘Regulation Frisian in written communication’). Tytsjerksteradiel has, in addition, signed a declaration of intent between the municipality and the provincial government to use Frisian where possible in written interaction with each other. This

\(^7\) Bilgaard and Vrijheidswijk are districts in Leeuwarden that house relatively large groups of immigrants. However, these districts did not provide a survey area because the shopping centre in Bilgaard burned down in 2006, and the shopping centre in Vrijheidswijk was demolished around the same time.
agreement was signed by eight of the 31 municipalities in Friesland (Provincie Fryslân 2007a). The differences in official language policy between the municipalities may result in quantitative differences in the occurrence of Frisian in the linguistic landscape.

A part of the linguistic landscape consists of geographical names such as Franeker and Dijkstraat. Therefore, it is interesting to look briefly into naming policies in Friesland. All towns and villages in Friesland have one official name. In most cases this is the Dutch name. The official names of Leeuwarden (in Frisian: Ljouwert) and Franeker (Frjentsjer) are Dutch. In seven municipalities, including Tytsjerksteradiel, where Burgum is situated, the official place names are in Frisian. Burgum is actually strongly related to the struggle over Frisian forms as official place names. Gorter (1997) points out that during recent decades in the public debate about the use of Frisian, the issue of naming, with its symbolic value, got by far the most attention. In the Netherlands, local governments are responsible for deciding on geographical names. In many municipalities in Friesland there have been conflicts about the language of place names and street names. For many villages the Frisian and Dutch place names are the same (for example for Britsum and Drachten). For other villages, such as Balk and Stiens, the forms have the same spelling, but different pronunciations. Often there is a small difference in the spelling (Grouw/Grou, Holwerd/Holwert). Finally, there may be larger differences between the two forms (Leeuwarden/Ljouwert, Sneek/Snits). In 1989, two municipalities, Boarnsterhim and Tytsjerksteradiel, introduced official Frisian names, raising much protest. In nearly all municipalities there are streets with a Frisian name. Overall, the naming policy in Friesland is varied and not very consistent, according to Gorter (1997). Although the official place names are either Dutch or Frisian, municipalities have the possibility to put up bilingual place name signs, which nearly all municipalities in the Frisian-speaking regions of the province have done (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties 2007).

4.3.2 Survey Items

In order to obtain a systematic inventory, all the signs in the survey areas were photographed. This was done between March 2005 and April 2008. To ensure that most of the shops were open and displayed all of their signs, the pictures were taken on working days in the morning or afternoon.\(^5\)

\(^5\)The camera used was a Konica Minolta Dimage Z3. Hyke Bierma collected the data in Franeker, the other data were collected by the author.
In accordance with Backhaus (2006: 55), a sign was considered to be “any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame [...], including anything from handwritten stickers to huge commercial billboards”. As already noted in Chapter 2, graffiti is usually also seen as a ‘sign’, although in this case there often is no frame. Also in the present investigation this kind of text was counted as a sign. The graffiti that was encountered in the survey areas actually concerned small and simple scribblings, and it was not difficult to establish where the texts ended. In the survey only signs that were displayed outside or in a shop window were included, so texts that were in the interior of a shop were not taken into account. Small texts on higher floors that were illegible from the street were excluded. The texts had to be more or less stationary. A daily-changing menu, for example, would have been included but a ‘for sale’ sign on a parked car would not. Texts on merchandise (such as the text written on a bottle of perfume displayed in a shop window) were excluded from the survey. Texts on illuminated news trailers were not included either, because they do not display the entire text at once. When a billboard or a flag had texts on both sides, each side was considered a separate sign. On the other hand, different stickers close to each other with credit card information were taken together as one sign because these give the impression of a single unit. Sometimes, a sign within a sign was encountered, giving details about its maker. In that case, the smaller sign was taken to be part of the larger whole, rather than coded as a separate sign. When a sign occurred more than once, all instances were coded. In other words, all tokens of a type were considered. It was decided to use a single sign as the unit of analysis.

Nameplates of residents as displayed, for example, on a block of flats were left out of consideration. After all, the first research question is: To what extent does the linguistic landscape in the Netherlands reflect the languages spoken by the speech community? If in a neighbourhood where many Turkish immigrants live, their Turkish names were included in the research, then obviously a language spoken by the speech community would be reflected in the linguistic landscape. However, this is not a matter of choice because the language of the names is a given. The situation would be different if a Turkish entrepreneur had opted to lend his own name to his shop, as he could easily have chosen for an alternative shop name in another language. Therefore, signs with shop names derived from personal names were not excluded from the study.

In two cases a shop-assistant did not allow any (further) pictures to be taken. This is a common problem among photojournalists in the Netherlands, who are nowadays sent away or removed from (semi-)public places such as shopping centres more frequently than before (Baarda 2008). As became clear in a discussion at the Tel-Aviv Linguistic Landscape Workshop in January 2008, the problem is also
shared by linguistic landscape researchers in other countries. Although the Dutch law permits people to photograph in the public space, prohibitions were respected. Fortunately, most shop-assistants did not prevent the photographing.

Apart from nameplates, all the signs photographed in the survey areas were considered. Some signs were very old, for example a centuries-old memorial stone, while others were brand-new. The inventory included large signs and very small ones that may easily be overlooked. Most of the pictures contained only one sign. An overview of the data collection, comprising a total of 3,089 signs, is given in Table 4.3.

The table shows that about three years have elapsed between the first and the last site survey. The reason why all data were not collected at the same time was that it was considered wiser to adopt a modular approach: choosing a site, collecting data, analysing data, choosing another site, etc. It is not likely that the linguistic landscape significantly changed in the mean time as three years is a relatively short period.

Table 4.3 Overview of the data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Survey area</th>
<th>Number of establishments</th>
<th>Number of signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2005</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Kalverstraat</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2005</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Ganzenpoort</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Bos en Lommerplein</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Rooswijck</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2007</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Javastraat</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>Leeuwarden</td>
<td>Wirdumerdijk</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>Franeker</td>
<td>Dijkstra</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Burgum</td>
<td>Schoolstraat</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
<td>3,089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The names of the establishments in the survey areas are listed as part of the codebook in Appendix A. Some chains happened to have branches in more than one survey area. This explains why the total number of establishments in Table 4.3 is larger than in Appendix A.

9 The number of establishments includes a few ATMs.
4.3.3 Coding

To find out which languages are present in the linguistic landscape and how these languages are represented, linguistic and semiotic properties of the signs were investigated.\footnote{Jan-Willem van Leussen did much of the coding of the signs from Rooswijck, Kalverstraat, Bos en Lommerplein, Javastraat, Ganzenpoort and Wirdumerdijk, whereas Hyke Bierma coded the signs from Dijkstraat. The author made sure that the coding by the two researchers and herself was consistent.} Using the statistical package SPSS, the signs were coded according to the following variables:

1. Sign number
2. Date on which the sign was photographed
3. Survey area
4. Government or private sign
5. Type of establishment
6. Name of establishment
7. Sector of shop
8. Establishment part of chain or independent
9. Type of sign
10. Presence of proper name(s) and other text
11. Languages, in order of appearance
12. Number of languages
13. Font size of text in the languages
14. Languages, in order of font size
15. Type of text font per language
16. Amount of text in the languages
17. Presence of translation
18. Presence of language mixing
19. Scripts, in order of appearance

The coding of each of these variables is explained below. The complete codebook is given in Appendix A. Many of the variables according to which the signs were coded are based on variables in previous studies, notably those reported in Ben-Rafael et al. (2004; 2006) and Cenoz & Gorter (2006).

Sign number

Each sign was assigned a unique number.
Date
The date on which the sign was photographed was recorded.

Survey area
In all likelihood the language(s) used on a sign varies depending on the neighbourhood where the sign is found. Therefore, for every sign the survey area was coded.

Government or private sign
In Chapter 2, the often-made distinction between government and private signs was discussed. Among many others, Backhaus (2007) shows how these two categories differ in language use. In his Tokyo study, government signs include a limited number of languages: Japanese, English and, to a smaller extent, Chinese and Korean. In most cases texts in different languages constitute translations or transliterations of each other. Furthermore, the official language of Japanese appears prominently on the signs. Private signs, on the other hand, contain a greater variety of languages, used in a complementary way. On these signs, code preference is not necessarily given to Japanese. Also for every sign in the present study it was coded whether the sign was a government sign or a private one. A government sign may be a street sign or a sign from a public library, for instance. A shop sign is an example of a private sign. Private actors range from an individual who posted a notice about a lost cat to a large international corporation advertising a special offer.

Type of establishment
If the sign belonged to an establishment, the type of establishment was coded, for example a shop, a restaurant or a bank. The data collection also includes signs which do not belong to an establishment such as stickers and graffiti.

Name of establishment
In cases where the sign belonged to an establishment, the name of the establishment was also recorded.

Sector
If the sign belonged to a shop, the sector of that shop was coded, as different sectors may favour different languages on signs. In her qualitative study in Lira (Uganda), Reh (2004) shows that signs of establishments connected to administration, education, modern communicative technology, and commodities for the wealthier segment of customers are mainly monolingual English (the official language),
whereas establishments connected to the agricultural sector and simple everyday needs favour a multilingual approach, with the use of the local language Lwo in addition to that of English. Reh notes that this link between the languages and sectors reinforces a dichotomy between Lwo and English, in which Lwo becomes associated with daily routine and English with the modern economic sector and social and economic advancement. Similarly, in their study in Israel Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) show that the proportions of the languages used on shop signs differ according to the domain of commercial activity. They classify 798 signs into three sectors: 1) clothing and leisure, 2) food and housewares, and 3) private offices. The results show, for instance, that many signs in the food and housewares sector contain only Hebrew, whereas Hebrew is often combined with English or Arabic on signs in the clothing and leisure sector.

In the present study, the number of signs that belonged to shops was 2,108. Initially, 26 sectors were distinguished, as listed in Appendix A. Later, these were classified into seven larger sectors:

1. Pharmacy (cosmetics and chemist)
2. Housewares (household goods, decoration, art)
3. Food (food, drinks, supermarket, candies)
4. Books (books)
5. Electronics and music (phones, electronics, music, photography)
6. Clothing (clothes, shoes, accessories, optician, jewellery, sports)
7. Assorted goods (gifts, flowers, lottery, assorted goods, tobacco, fair trade)

**Part of chain or independent**

If the sign belonged to an establishment, it was coded whether the business was part of an international chain, a national chain, a regional chain, or was an independent establishment. Owners of independent businesses are usually much more autonomous in sign making than those of establishments that are part of a chain, as chains often design their signs centrally (cf. Bierma 2008).

**Type of sign**

For every sign, the type was coded. The categories include: name of establishment, security information, other shop sign, street sign, nameplate, sticker, poster, graffiti, and other. Stickers and posters displayed by an establishment were coded as ‘other shop sign’.
Presence of proper name(s) and other text
It was coded whether the sign contained one or more proper names, other text, or both. A rough-and-ready rule is that words written with a capital letter were regarded as proper names, but every case was considered individually, and many exceptions were made. Proper names include shop names, for example. Although days of the week and months are not written with a capital letter in Dutch, they were also regarded as proper names. Internet addresses (URLs) were considered proper names, too. Also the word PIN, an abbreviation of ‘Persoonlijk Identificatie Nummer’ (‘Personal Identification Number’) signifying a means of payment, was regarded as a proper name, because it can be seen as a brand of the banks in the Netherlands. Graffiti often consists of a so-called tag, with the artist’s name functioning as a signature. This was coded as a proper name as well.

Languages, in order of appearance
The languages on the sign were coded in order of appearance. The reading direction dominant in the Netherlands was followed: from left to right and from top to bottom. This method was based on Scollon & Scollon’s (2003) code preference system: if the languages are aligned vertically, the preferred code is located above the secondary code, and if they are aligned horizontally, the preferred code is located in the left position and the secondary code is placed in the right position (the third possibility they posit, namely that the preferred code is located in the centre and the secondary code is placed on the margins of the sign, was not taken into account in the coding). Admittedly, this method is less appropriate when scripts that are written from right to left such as the Arabic and Hebrew scripts are involved. Figure 5.2 in Chapter 5 illustrates the use of scripts with different reading directions on a sign, namely Latin and Arabic. However, scripts other than Latin only rarely occurred in the data collection.

Several times a sign displayed a language with which the coders were not familiar. The Internet and speakers of that language then served as sources of information. To determine whether a word was Dutch or came from another language, the most authoritative dictionary of contemporary Dutch was used, Van Dale Groot woordenboek van de Nederlandse taal (Den Boon & Geeraerts 2005). The criterion for Van Dale to include a loanword is that it has occurred quite frequently in the entire Dutch-speaking area for at least three years (Geerts & den Boon 1999). To decide whether a person’s name was Dutch or came from another language, two databases of the Meertens Institute were used, the Dutch first name database (Van der Schaar & Gerritzen 2000-2010) and the Corpus of family names in the Netherlands (Brouwer 2000-2010).
In cases where a word could be assigned to more than one language, the context played a decisive role in the coding. For example, a gift shop in Kalverstraat displayed the following text:

Blender
van €199.95
voor €99.95

The English loanword *blender* is included in *Van Dale* and is used on the sign in a Dutch context, formed by the words *van* (‘from’) and *voor* (‘to’). Therefore, the sign was labelled ‘Dutch’. In an English context, the word *blender* would have been considered English.

Apart from a list of natural languages, the categories include ‘fantasy’ and ‘ambiguous’. The label ‘fantasy’ was used for the brand name *Alecto*, for instance, which was displayed on a doorbell. Cenoz & Gorter (2006: 77) report that in the street in Leeuwarden they investigated, a number of signs were classified as ambiguous because it was not clear in which language the text was written because of the similarities between Dutch, Frisian and English. In the cases where similar problems were encountered in the present study, the context was the deciding factor. When the context did not help, the text was coded as ‘ambiguous’ as well.

Abbreviations were coded according to the language of their longer forms. For example, *CCTV* stands for ‘Closed Circuit Television’, so it was regarded as English. Similarly, the brand name *Rucanor* was considered Dutch as it is an abbreviation of the Dutch words ‘Rubber Canvas Organisatie’ (‘Rubber Canvas Organisation’). Single letters that could be traced back to words were also coded. An example is a red *B*, standing for ‘droge blusleiding’ (a device for extinguishing fire). Text discernible in logos was coded as well. Symbols such as €, & and % were considered the same language as the surrounding text on the sign. Signs containing only a house number or -10%, for example, were excluded from the data collection, as it was not possible to determine the language in which these texts were written.

When the language of a sign could not be determined, which was sometimes the case with graffiti, for example, a ‘missing data’ code was entered. This code was also used in a few cases where the quality of the picture was not good enough to decipher the details of the sign.
Number of languages
The number of languages present on the sign were counted. The appearance of a
language may consist of an entire text or of only one word. One sign in Dijkstraat
(Franeker) featured Bildts, a dialect which is mainly spoken in the bordering
municipality of Het Bildt. As this is a dialect of Dutch, it was subsumed under
Dutch.

Font size
For each multilingual sign it was coded whether the font size of the texts was the
same or different for all languages. When, on a sign with three or more languages,
some but not all of the languages had the same size, the font size was coded as being
the same.

Languages, in order of font size
The languages on the sign were coded in order of font size, so the first language was
the language in which the text was written largest.

Type of font
It was coded whether the type of font on multilingual signs was the same for all
languages, or different.

Amount of text
For multilingual signs it was also coded whether the amount of text was about the
same for all languages or different. Cenoz & Gorter (2006) used this variable before
and called it ‘amount of information’. As information is an abstract concept, in the
present study the variable is called ‘amount of text’ instead. The amount of text can
be measured by the number of characters. For example, for a sign that reads
KUNSTHANDEL-ART GALLERY the amount of text in Dutch (11 letters) and
English (10 letters) was judged the same as the number of characters is similar.

This method may not always be fair, because for linguistic or cultural reasons in
some languages more characters tend to be used than in others to convey the same
message. However, the differences in amount of text were often so large that this
problem does not seem to be significant to the outcome. Furthermore, the method is
less appropriate when comparing two languages written in different scripts, but the
collection of signs includes only a very small number featuring more than one script.
**Presence of translation**

On multilingual signs, pieces of text in different languages can be combined in several ways. One possibility is that they are ‘mutual translations’, a term that Backhaus (2006) uses when pieces of text constitute a translation of each other. Thus, the occurrence of translations on the signs was coded. The categories are word-for-word translation, free translation, partial translation, and no translation.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Reh (2004) distinguishes four types of arrangement in her typology of multilingual writing: duplicating, fragmentary, overlapping and complementary. Both word-for-word and free translation correspond to duplicating multilingualism. Partial translation may either be fragmentary or overlapping, and no translation means that the information given is complementary. In Sebba’s (2007) terminology, word-for-word and free translation occur in parallel mixed-language texts, and complementary texts have no translation. In the case of partial translation, parallel and complementary texts are combined as sub-texts.

**Presence of language mixing**

Apart from constituting mutual translations, pieces of text in different languages may also give complementary information, in which case the languages are mixed on some level. Therefore, the presence of language mixing was coded. The categories include mixing on text level, mixing on sentence level, mixing on word level, mixing on more than one level, and no mixing. It may be the case that more fluid forms of language mixing are related to more multilingual environments. Every sign was regarded as a single text.

**Scripts, in order of appearance**

The scripts on the sign were coded in order of appearance. The categories include Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese and Latin script.

### 4.4 Classification of Proper Names by Language

This section focuses on a problematic aspect of the general methodology described in section 4.3. First attention is paid to the classification of proper names in the linguistic landscape, like brand and shop names. This is accompanied by a case study that demonstrates the impact of proper names on the linguistic landscape. At the end of the section, conclusions are drawn from the issues raised in order to answer the question: How should proper names be classified by language? This
section has been published before as the major part of Edelman (2009), namely pages 144-154. The text has only been slightly adapted.

Since the 19th century, the brand name features in advertisements (Crystal 2004). In multilingual advertising the product name is the element most frequently in a foreign language (Piller 2003). Advertisers use particular languages in advertisements or shop signs to associate products or services with the corresponding social groups. As proper names such as shop names and brand names do not have the purpose of transmitting factual information, they can easily be written in a language that is not used or fully understood by the audience. Haarmann (1986) calls this phenomenon ‘impersonal multilingualism’.

As argued in Chapter 2, the brand name plays a central role in advertisements, and the language of proper names is often used to give a product or a shop a foreign flavour. At the same time, these elements are difficult to analyse in terms of the language in which they are written. After all, languages have no clear-cut borders: due to shared ancestry and language contact, many names ‘belong’ to more than one language. Proper names seem to be more readily borrowed or adopted from another language than common nouns.

The American sports brand Nike, for example, was named after the Greek goddess of victory. Does this imply that Nike is a Greek name or does this name become part of any language in which it is used? To put it more generally, how should proper names be classified by language? The answer to this question has important implications for the coding of signs. Since the scope of the issue goes beyond linguistic landscape research, the classification of proper names is considered in this section in a general way.

Evidence in favour of the view that names are part of specific languages rather than any language is the fact that names can be adapted to different contexts. In some countries, like China, Poland and Suriname, it is common for people to ‘translate’ their first names when they introduce themselves to foreigners. They replace their names either by a cognate in another language, for example Dutch Pieter for the Polish name Piotr, or even by an unrelated name in another language, for instance David for the Chinese name Yunyu.

The names of monarchs, popes, and non-contemporary authors as well as place-names are commonly translated. Foreign names for geographic proper names are called exonyms. Fourment-Berni Canani (1994) discusses the (im)possibility of translating proper names. He gives the examples of the place-names Venice and London. The Italian city Venezia has been renamed Venice in English and Venise in French. A city in the American state California is also called Venice, but this name is not changed into Venezia in Italian and Venise in French. Similarly, the English
city London has been renamed Londres in French and Londra in Italian. However, the Canadian city called London is not translated into French and Italian in this way. Thus, as Fourment-Berni Canani concludes, a place-name can be translated if the place has already been renamed in the target language.

That names can be context-specific is also illustrated by the fact that some international brands operate under different names in different countries. Unilever’s ice cream brand, the so-called Heartbrand, is an example of this. Heartbrand products are sold in more than 40 countries. The brand is known as Algida (Italy), Kibon (Brazil), Langnese (Germany), Ola (the Netherlands), Streets (Australia), Wall’s (United Kingdom and most parts of Asia), etc. This is a result of its creation from a large number of local businesses with established names. The logos of Heartbrand contain different names, but they share the same heart image (see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3  Different Heartbrand logos

![Algida](image1.png) ![Kibon](image2.png)

Although these examples show that names can be part of specific languages or cultures, there are also arguments in favour of the view that names are part of any language in which they are used. In an article on language identification for library catalogues, Bade (2006: 193) writes: “Proper names present special problems not only for theories of language but also for indexing and language identification, whether performed by human or mechanical agents”. He illustrates these problems with the book title Zheng He, which is the name of a famous Chinese naval officer, written in Latin script. The multilingual book contains four essays in German, three in French and one in English. Although the name Zheng He is originally Chinese, it appears as German, French and English in these essays. Bade (2006: 198) reasons:

When we write Zheng He in what language and script are we writing? [...] The answer can only be that it is not in ‘a language’ at all, but is in Chinese, English, French and German to be read and understood in whichever language(s) the reader understands. Yet the question, for most readers, is completely irrelevant. Zheng He is Zheng He in whatever language.
In other words, proper names can be part of any language, depending on the context in which they occur. In the book Bade discusses, the name Zheng He has been left unchanged, whether it occurs in a German, French or English context. Thus, Zheng He remains recognizable as an originally Chinese name and keeps its foreign flavour. Put differently, Zheng He is in any context a Chinese proper name, but not necessarily a proper name in Chinese, depending on the linguistic context.

Crystal (2003) poses a question similar to these raised here, namely whether proper names are part of the lexicon. Although proper names are usually not counted as true vocabulary, he argues, there is a sense in which they are part of the learning of a language. French speakers learning English have to learn to replace Londres by London. They also have to learn the pronunciation and grammar of proper names. Some names are part of the idiomatic history of a language community and some have taken on an additional meaning. Some proper names, often having a language-specific form, are felt to belong to a language (e.g., the English Christmas, January, the Moon) whereas others are felt to be independent of any language (e.g. Alpha Centauri, Diplodocus, Helen Keller). Crystal concludes that proper names are on the boundary of the lexicon.

So far, in much linguistic landscape research (e.g. Ben-Rafael et al. 2006; Cenoz & Gorter 2006; El-Yasin & Mahadin 1996; Huebner 2006; Schlick 2003) proper names have not been considered a problem for language classification. Implicitly, they seem to be treated in the same way as any other word appearing on the signs. Schlick (2003) lists the texts on the shop signs she investigated and the way they were coded. The fact that names such as MARKS & SPENCER were coded as English, ADOLFO DOMINGUEZ as Spanish and Parfümerie Douglas as German and English shows that Schlick chose to assign proper names to their original language.

When analysing linguistic landscapes in Tokyo, Backhaus (2007) did not identify a language other than Japanese in the case of names of companies or brands unless they contained information about the nature of the business, e.g. Resona Bank and Starbucks Coffee. Similarly, Lüdi (2007) excluded proper names (except ‘freely chosen company names’) from the counts in his linguistic landscape study in Basel, Switzerland. Thus, Vögele shoes, for example, was considered English, because the proper name Vögele was not taken into consideration.

Sjöblom (2009) investigated the language of a few thousand company names in Finland. She regarded some parts of the names as ‘neutral’, i.e., they could be any language or many languages. This applied to three different kinds of elements: 1) abbreviations and numbers, 2) proper names within company names, and 3)
international words such as *casino*, *design* and *kebab*. Sjöblom did characterise other parts as belonging to a particular language.

In their study on the use of English in job advertisements in a Dutch newspaper, Korzilius et al. (2006: 174) also make their classification of proper names explicit:

An English proper name was not analyzed as an English word (unless it was used in a completely English job ad), because in the case of names there is usually no choice between a Dutch and an English variant, since the name of a person or an organization is usually ‘a given’. However, if the name of an organization or a department contained meaningful English words, these were counted as English words, since in these cases the use of English is a matter of choice.

For example, ‘‘Johnson & Johnson’’ was not considered to contain any English words. ‘t for Telecom’ was considered to contain two English words: ‘for’ and ‘Telecom’’ (Korzilius et al. 2006: 174). To put it differently, Korzilius et al. (2006) did not classify a company name that derived from other English names (Johnson & Johnson) as English whereas they did classify a company name that was composed of English common nouns (t for Telecom) as English. Words that were not analysed as English, for example Johnson & Johnson, were considered by the authors to be Dutch.

In how far are names that derive from other names indeed a given? If the family name Johnson had had a negative connotation, the company might not have been named after its founders but could have been given another name. In that sense, the use of English in the company name Johnson & Johnson can actually be seen as a matter of choice for the founders. Moreover, the distinction between names that ‘do’ and ‘do not’ contain meaningful English words seems quite subjective. All in all, the methodology developed by Korzilius et al. (2006) does not seem to be a satisfactory solution to the problem of the classification of proper names.

Inevitably, the coding of texts is not completely objective as it depends, among other things, on the knowledge of the researcher. Bade (2006) gives an example of this. One of the subtitles of the above-mentioned book about Zheng He is *Images & Perceptions*. Due to the ampersand, this title may be interpreted either as English (‘Images and Perceptions’) or as French (‘Images et Perceptions’). The interpretation also depends on which language(s) the indexer knows.

Entrepreneurs sometimes play with these double interpretations. A Dutch boat company that organises canal cruises in Amsterdam and Utrecht is called Lovers, a Dutch family name, which probably means ‘messenger’ (Brouwer 2000-2010). Foreign tourists, who typically take these canal cruises, are likely to interpret this name as the English common noun ‘lovers’. The company reinforces this
interpretation, probably because of its romantic connotation, with a heart in its logo (see Figure 4.4). Actually, the ambiguity only exists in the written form of the word, as the Dutch and the English reading differ in pronunciation: Dutch /lo:vərs/ versus English /ləˈvərs/. When phoning the company, one is welcomed by the answering machine in Dutch and in English. In both languages, the name of the company is pronounced in the Dutch way.

Figure 4.4 Logo of canal cruise company Lovers

The examples given in this section show that it is difficult to answer the question of how proper names should be classified by language. In order to address this problem, a case study is discussed in subsection 4.4.1.

### 4.4.1 Case Study in Amsterdam

To show how the presence of proper names affects the diversity of the linguistic landscape, two different analyses of the first 203 signs from Amsterdam’s main shopping street Kalverstraat are presented. To be able to compare the results of different analyses, these signs were coded twice according to the language(s) used on the sign. In the first analysis (analysis A), proper names were left out of consideration under the assumption that they could not be ascribed to a specific language. After all, as Bade (2006) argues, names like Zheng He are not in a language at all; Zheng He is Zheng He in any language the reader understands. In the second analysis (analysis B), proper names were treated the same as other words.
Figure 4.5 displays a picture of a shop sign in Kalverstraat that reads *Yves Rocher*. According to analysis A, this sign was left out of consideration as it only contains a proper name. According to analysis B, it was considered a monolingual French sign. Figure 4.6 shows a picture of a shop sign displaying the names *Sunglass Hut* and *Watch Station*. These names do not stand on their own: the sign also contains the Dutch words *zonnebrillen* (‘sunglasses’) and *horloges* (a loan word from French meaning ‘watches’). In analysis A, the sign was regarded as monolingual Dutch as the proper names were left out of consideration. In analysis B, it was considered a bilingual English-Dutch sign.

Figure 4.5  Shop sign with a French name

![Figure 4.5 Shop sign with a French name](image)

Figure 4.6  Shop sign with English names

![Figure 4.6 Shop sign with English names](image)
The cosmetics brand *Yves Rocher* was named after the French entrepreneur who founded it. Thus, the brand and shop name *Yves Rocher* derives from another proper name, viz. the name of a person. The shop names *Sunglass Hut* and *Watch Station*, on the other hand, have been composed of common nouns. Therefore, labelling *Yves Rocher* French may be more controversial than labelling *Sunglass Hut* and *Watch Station* English. If these names occurred in mostly-Dutch job advertisements, Korzilius et al. (2006) would not count *Yves Rocher* as French, but as Dutch, since in their view this name is a given. They would classify *Sunglass* and *Watch* as English, since these are meaningful English words, and *Hut* and *Station* as Dutch, because these words also appear in the Dutch dictionary (Van Meurs, personal communication).

Figure 4.7 combines the results of analyses A and B into one diagram. Note that a sign containing both Dutch and English, like the sign in Figure 4.6, is represented in both bars. If a sign contains two other languages, these are both counted in the ‘other languages’ bar. Therefore, the numbers in the bars add up to more than 203, the total number of signs. The lower parts of the bars show the number of occurrences of particular languages on a sign if proper names are excluded from the analysis. The upper parts show the number of occurrences that are added to this if proper names are included in the analysis. The first bar, for instance, demonstrates that 87 monolingual or multilingual signs contain Dutch text, excluding proper names. 106 signs (87+19) contain Dutch text if proper names are included in the analysis. 19 signs contain one or more proper names in Dutch, but no other Dutch text.
In both analyses, Dutch and English play the most important roles in the linguistic landscape. However, if proper names are included, the proportion of English and other languages is much larger than if they are excluded. Thus, including and excluding proper names result in very different outcomes. The label ‘other languages’ comprises German, Chinese, French and Japanese in analysis A (5 occurrences) whereas in analysis B (50 occurrences) Spanish, Italian, Greek, Hawaiian, Maa and Polish are added. If proper names are excluded from the analysis, 80 of the signs (39 percent) are ignored as they contain no text aside from proper names. Examples of proper names in Kalverstraat are given below. The use of upper and lower case reflects the original typography.

*De Tuinen* (Dutch, shop name)
*IZZY BIZZY* (English, shop name)
*Orange* (English, brand name)
*PUR DÉSIR de MIMOSA* (French, product name)

The following are examples of other text in Kalverstraat:
4.4.2 Conclusion

The central question of this section is: How should proper names be classified by language? Above, arguments were presented in favour of and against the view that proper names should be assigned to their language of origin. First the classification of proper names by language was considered, and after that a case study of proper names in Amsterdam’s main shopping street was presented.

The classification of proper names is not always straightforward. A name can either be perceived as written in a particular language, or in any language. Whether a researcher decides to consider a name as belonging to a specific language or not has important implications for the coding of signs in linguistic landscape research. As the presented case study showed, both decisions lead to different results. In a sample of more than 200 signs from Amsterdam’s main shopping street, 80 consisted of one or more names. By comparing the results of different analyses, it was found that proper names contribute greatly to the multilingual character of the linguistic landscape. If proper names were included, the proportion of English and other languages in the sample was much larger than if they were excluded.

Proper names in the linguistic landscape are frequently displayed in a foreign language. Often the connotation of proper names seems to be more important than their denotation. The passer-by will not easily overlook these proper names because of the prominent place they have in the linguistic landscape. Ben-Rafael et al. (2006) observe that the linguistic landscape is perceived by passers-by as a gestalt of physical objects like shops, post-offices, and kiosks, which are marked by written words. The authors argue that although the linguistic landscape is shaped by a large
variety of actors such as public institutions, associations, firms, and individuals that do not necessarily act coherently, the chaotic picture that it comes to compose is perceived as one structured space. A researcher who does not code proper names as foreign languages gets an incomplete picture of the linguistic landscape. Moreover, the possibility of the translation of names, however limited, shows that names can sometimes be part of specific languages. Although they do not account for that choice, many other linguistic landscape researchers did assign proper names to their language of origin.

An argument against assigning proper names to their original language is the observation that proper names can be part of any language, depending on the context in which they occur. Korzilius et al. (2006) distinguish between names that ‘do’ or ‘do not’ contain meaningful words, under the assumption that the latter are usually a given rather than a matter of choice. Yet, it seems that both types of names can actually be matters of choice, and the distinction between names that ‘do’ and those that ‘do not’ contain meaningful words seems quite subjective.

Another, albeit provisional, solution to the problem of classification of proper names is to assign every name to its original language and code for every sign whether it consists of 1) proper name(s), 2) other text, or 3) both. This approach makes it possible to consider the different types of sign separately, and was applied in the present study. Note that this method differs from the method employed in the case study in subsection 4.4.1. In that case study all signs were coded twice. In the first analysis, proper names on a sign were left out of consideration but the remaining text (if any) was coded, whereas in the second analysis, proper names were treated the same as other words. The method of the larger study is less comprehensive because only the second analysis was carried out.