Multilingualism and linguistic landscapes across space and time in the public railway system in South Africa: A multisemiotic analysis

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor in the Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape.

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KEYWORDS

Apartheid

Dialogicality

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Identity

Intertextuality

Linguistic landscape

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Multimodality

Public space

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Semiotics

Township

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ABSTRACT

Multilingualism and linguistic landscapes across space and time in the public railway system in South Africa: A multisemiotic analysis

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PhD Thesis, Department of Linguistic, University of the Western Cape

During apartheid, the infrastructure in South Africa was built by the government and was designed to keep Blacks away from White areas. This infrastructure comprised inter alia the public railway system which was intended to benefit mainly the White minority population, as it momentarily allowed Blacks to provide the cheap labour needed in White areas and businesses. While Whites predominantly resided within the suburbs adjacent to the railways, Blacks were relegated to the outskirts of the cities to areas which became known as townships and homelands. Racial segregation was rigorously enforced and consequently, the signs displayed in trains and on railway infrastructure primarily served to demarcate spaces and places that were designated for use by either Whites or Blacks, respectively. Against this backdrop, the main aim of this research was to present an ethnographic, multisemiotic study of the linguistic landscape (LL) of the public railways in post-apartheid South Africa across space and time. The study focussed on the languages used on signs displayed in the individual research sites. A mixed-methods research design was employed which entailed consideration of both quantitative and qualitative data. Thus, data was collected during ethnographic fieldwork over a six month period and was analysed using a multimodal/multisemiotic approach. The results reveal insights into the social structuring of languages and the mobility of linguistic and semiotic resources across regional and national boundaries in space and time since the end of apartheid.

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Moreover, the results show an uneven spread of English across urban spaces which contradicts the normative expectation that these urban centres would display more signs in English whereas during apartheid, railway signs were mostly bilingual English-Afrikaans. Furthermore, linguistic and cultural mobility are limited to local and transnational circulation of cultural materialities of semiotic resources. The presence of languages such as Urdu, Portuguese, Juba and Spanish on signs emphasises the effects of translocal and transnational mobility which deterritorialises spaces. These foreign languages are used alongside English texts for symbolic purposes on commercial signs, as opposed to solely for instrumental-communicative purposes. Contrary to the guiding principles of South Africa's inclusive language policies and the diverse linguistic repertoires of the people, most of the local Black languages are excluded from the LL of the railways while Afrikaans has been systematically removed over time. The study concludes that the social structuring of languages and the mobility of semiotic resources across space and time in the LL of the public railways in South Africa could be attributed to inter alia developments in legislation, particularly those pertaining to the languages used for public communication, and to the migration of people across regional and national boundaries since the end of apartheid. Furthermore, the consumption of messages in the LL involves a combination of semiotic material which is derived from semiotics that is familiar to the readers of signs. Thus, the meanings of signs become entrenched in the experiences of the readers of those signs over time. Similar future studies of the LL could entail consideration of other meaning-making semiosis in their methodological and analytical approaches in terms of both data collection and analysis.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the study entitled "*Multilingualism and linguistic landscapes across space and time in the public railway system in South Africa: A multisemiotic analysis"* is my original work; that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university; and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name: Ian, Lyndon, Johnson

Signed: ______________________ **Date:** 12 November 2018

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DEDICATION

To my wife Natalie, and my children David and Amy.

"In my distress I called to the Lord; he answered me and set me free."

(Psalm 118:5, Good News translation)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEYWORDS i
ABSTRACT.. ii
DECLARATION iv
DEDICATION v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS vii
LIST OF FIGURES x
LIST OF TABLES xii
LIST OF CHARTS xiii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND 1

1.0 Introduction 1
1.1 Linguistic landscape studies 2
1.2 Background information about South Africa 3
1.3 Overview of the provinces included in the study 6
1.4 Languages used in South Africa 8
1.5 Commuter rail transport in South Africa 10
1.6 Statement of the problem 12
1.7 Aims, objectives and research questions 12
1.8 Rationale 14
1.9 Scope and limitations 15
1.10 Thesis organisation 16
1.11 Chapter summary 17

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT IN LL RESEARCH 19

2.0 Introduction 19
2.1 Defining linguistic landscape 19
2.2 Pioneering LL studies 23
2.3 Theoretical approaches to LL studies 27
2.4 Dialogicality 37
2.5 Spatialisation of the LL 41
2.6 Reconstructing signs across time 50
2.7 Recontextualising the LL 56
2.8 An ethnographic approach 62
2.9 Recent trends in LL research 63
2.10 Chapter summary 72

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 74

3.0 Introduction 74
3.1 Combined quantitative and qualitative approach 74
3.2 Identification of the research sites 79
3.2.1 Port Elizabeth and East London stations 81
3.2.2 Johannesburg Park and Pretoria stations 82
3.2.3 Durban station 84
3.2.4 Cape Town and Bellville stations 86
3.3 Categorisation of signs 88
3.3.1 Unit of analysis 88
3.3.2 Agency in the LL 89

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

3.3.3 Linguistic properties of signs 90
3.3.4 Material characteristics of signs 91
3.4.1 Data collection of LL items 92
3.4.2 Analysis of LL items 94
3.5.1 Survey questionnaire 97
3.5.2 Survey questionnaire data collection 98
3.5.3 Survey questionnaire data analysis 99
3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews 100
3.6.2 Thematic content analysis 101
3.7 Ethical considerations 102
3.8 Limitations 103
3.10 Chapter summary 105

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL STRUCTURING OF LANGUAGES AT THE RAILWAYS 107

4.0 Introduction 107
4.1 Social structuring of languages in the LL of the public raiways 109
4.2 Social structuring of languages in the provinces 112
4.3 Languages used on official and private signs 130
4.4 Languages used on official sign categories 132
4.5 Languages on official signs in the provinces 134
4.6 Languages used on private signs 138
4.7 Languages used on private signs within the provinces 139
4.8 Chapter summary 145

CHAPTER 5: SPATIALISATION AT THE RAILWAYS 148

5.0 Introduction 148
5.1 Characteristics of the respondents 149
5.2 Languages used for public railway announcements 154
5.3 Languages used in trains and on railway infrastructure 156
5.4 Languages used on signs and for public announcements 158
5.5 Cultural inclusion/exclusion in the languages used on signs 160
5.8 Towards a more culturally inclusive LL 161
5.9 Linguistic hegemony in the LL of the railways 161
5.10 Alternatives to English 162
5.11 Chapter summary 163

CHAPTER 6: RECONSTRUCTING THE LL OVER TIME 165

6.0 Introduction 165
6.1 Paying attention to the signs 165
6.2 Remebering apartheid signs and contesting perceptions on the transformed LL ... 167
6.3 Presence of mother-tongue 176
6.4 Transformation of the LL over time 177
6.5 Multilingual appropriation of space 178
6.6 Commodification of languages 183
6.7 Social identities reflected in the LL 185
6.8 Language dominance in the LL 186
6.9 Sense of belonging to a place 187

UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE
http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

6.10 Reconfiguration of multimodal spaces 188
6.11 Chapter summary 196

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSION 200

7.0 Introduction 200
7.2 Summary of the answers to the research questions 202
7.3 Contributions of the study 210
7.4 Conclusion 211

BIBLIOGRAPHY 214

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE 242

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 246

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure1.1: Map of South Africa before 1994 (RSA 2013) 5

Figure1.2: Map of South Africa after 1994 (RSA 2013) 6

Figure 3.1: Map of Eastern Cape railways (PRASA 2010) 81

Figure 3.2: Map of Gauteng railways (PRASA 2010)..83

Figure 3.3: Map of KwaZulu-Natal railways (PRASA 2010) 85

Figure 3.4: Map of Western Cape railways (PRASA 2010)....................................87

Figure 4.1: Multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa sign at Port Elizabeth station 113

Figure 4.2: Portuguese shopfront at Pretoria station...115

Figure 4.3: Bilingual English-Urdu shopfront at Cape Town station 118

Figure 4.4: Bilingual Jubba Arabic-English shopfront at Bellville station............121

Figure 4.5: Bilingual Spanish- English shopfront at Bellville station 123

Figure 4.6: Bilingual Spanish-English shopfront at Bellville station 124

Figure 4.7: Bilingual English-isiZulu shopfront at Durban station 128

Figure 4.8: Bilingual English-isiXhosa regulatory sign at Port Elizabeth station ..135

Figure 4.9: Bilingual English-isiZulu regulatory sign at Pretoria station..............136

Figure 4.10: Bilingual English-isiZulu regulatory sign at Durban station.............137

Figure 4.11: Monolingual English billboard at Port Elizabeth station 140

Figure 4.12: Bilingual English-Arabic billboard at Pretoria station......................141

Figure 4.13: Bilingual English-isiZulu advertising sign at Durban station 142

Figure 4.14: Bilingual English-isiXhosa advertising sign at Bellville station........143

Figure 5.1: Monolingual English sign at Cape Town station 156

Figure 5.2: Bilingual English-isiXhosa regulatory sign inside a train in Port Elizabeth 158

Figure 6.1: Apartheid-era bilingual Afrikaans-English sign (Getty Images 2015) 166

Figure 6.2: Whites-only bench during apartheid (Getty Images, 2015) 169

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

Figure 6.3: Apartheid-era monolingual English sign alongside a bilingual Afrikaans-English sign (Getty Images, 2015)....................170

Figure 6.4: Apartheid-era bilingual English-Afrikaans- sign (Getty Images, 2015) 172

Figure 6.5: Apartheid-era bilingual English-Afrikaans sign on train carriage (Getty Images, 2015)....................173

Figure 6.6: Multilingual English-Afrikaams-isiXhosa warning sign 174

Figure 6.7: Apartheid-era bilingual English-Afrikaans sign on a station bench (Getty Images, 2015)....................175

Figure 6.8: Multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiZulu sign at Pretoria station 178

Figure 6.9: Parade Concourse at Cape Town station – previously "Third-Class"..180

Figure 6.10: Another view of Parade Concourse at Cape Town station................180

Figure 6.11: Monolingual English signs at Johannesburg Park station.................187

Figure 6.12: Metro-Plus (First-class) sign on a train....................189

Figure 6.13: Metro (Third-class) sign on a train....................190

Figure 6.14: Removal of railway apartheid signs (Cape Times, 1990) 190

Figure 6.15: The end of railway apartheid (Jim Freeman, Cape Times 1990).......192

Figure 6.16: Parade Concourse at Cape Town station – previously 'non-Whites' and 'third-class' space 193

Figure 6.17: Informal traders and commuters on Cape Town station deck – previously 'non-Whites' and 'third-class' space 194

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Categories of LL items and sampling criteria 90

Table 4.1: Social structuring of languages in the LL of the railways in RSA 109

Table 4.2: Social structuring of languages in the research sites 112

Table 4.3: Languages used on official and private signs 131

Table 4.4: Languages used on official sign categories 133

Table 4.5: Languages on official signs in the Eastern Cape 134

Table 4.6: Languages used on official signs in Gauteng 135

Table 4.7: Languages used on official signs in KwaZulu-Natal 137

Table 4.8: Languages used on official signs in the Western Cape 138

Table 4.9: Languages used on private signs 138

Table 4.10: Languages used on private signs in the Eastern Cape 140

Table 4.11: Languages used on private signs in Gauteng 140

Table 4.12: Languages used on private signs in KwaZulu-Natal 141

Table 4.13: Languages used on private signs in the Western Cape 142

Table 5.1: The languages used for public railway announcements 155

Table 5.2: Languages used in trains and on railway infrastructure 157

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 5.1: Languages used on signs and for public announcements......................159

Chart 5.2: How commuters felt about the languages used on signs and for public railway announcements...159

Chart 5.3: Cultural inclusion/exclusion in the LL..160

Chart 5.4: Linguistic hegemony in the LL of the railways 162

Chart 5.5: Substitution of English in the LL of the railways 163

http://etd.uwc.ac.za/

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

1.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduces the study *"Multilingualism and linguistic landscapes across space and time in the public railway system in South Africa: A multisemiotic analysis".* The main aim of the study was to present an ethnographic, multisemiotic analysis of the transformed linguistic landscape (LL) of the public railways in post-apartheid South Africa to gain insights into the social structuring of languages and the mobility of linguistic and semiotic resources across regional and national boundaries. Thus, the study explored the languages that were used on the signs displayed at core railway stations across four provinces in South Africa across space and time. Moreover, the spread of languages and other semiotic resources were assessed to account for trajectories of multilingualism and multiculturalism in South Africa since the end of apartheid.

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In this first chapter, the notion of linguistic landscape is introduced as an approach to research in multilingualism in society, followed by a discussion on the sociolinguistic situation in South Africa which contextualises the study. Next, some important historical and demographic information about the country and its people is presented which facilitates the interpretation of the LL of the public railways. South Africa's language policies are then briefly clarified in terms of its implications to the study. To further contextualise the study, the significance of public rail transport in South Africa is explained. Lastly, the chapter provides a statement of the problem, the main aims and objectives, rationale, scope and limitations of the study. Chapter 1 concludes with a description of the organisation of the entire thesis. As a point of departure, the notion of linguistic landscape is introduced, followed by a discussion

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on the background information needed to effectively interpret the results and findings of the study.

1.1 Linguistic landscape studies

People use language for texts displayed on signs to indicate inter alia place names, shop signs, billboards, posters and notices. In essence, this constitutes what is widely known as *linguistic landscape.* Landry and Bourhis are generally recognised with coining the term linguistic landscape which they used to describe "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs" (1997:23). During the last decade, LL research has developed and evolved considerably. Not only has the definition of what precisely constitutes LL been adapted to suit various individual studies but there have also been many publications on the topic. Some of the recent publications that inform the current study include Pennycook and Otsuji (2015), Rubdy and Ben Said (2015), Banda and Mafofo (2016), Banda and Jimaima (2015; 2017) and Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018). In addition, an academic journal specifically dedicated to LL research was introduced in 2015 (c.f. Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015; 2016; 2017; Blackwood 2018). Some of the contributions from these more recent LL studies are explored in Chapter 2. The increasing interest in the topic saw the need for a conference specifically dedicated to LL research. Consequently, numerous international LL workshops and conferences have been convened in various cities around the world. For instance, in 2008 the first international LL workshop was convened in Tel Aviv, Israel, followed by the 2009 conference in Siena, Italy, the 2010 one in Strasbourg, France, 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2013 in Namur, Belgium, 2014 in Cape Town, South Africa, 2015 in California, United States of America, 2016 in Liverpool, England, 2017 in

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Luxemborg City, Luxemborg, the one in Bern, Switzerland in 2018. The next LL conference will be held in Thailand, in June 2019.

These developments in LL studies may have manifested for a number of reasons. For instance, urbanisation throughout the world resulted in increased diversity in urban built-up environments. Additionally, the influence of globalisation gave rise to commercial advertising becoming increasingly multilingual phenomena. For these reasons, the use of different languages on signs in the LL may serve as indicators of societal multilingualism brought about and enhanced by globalisation. Technological advancements in digital photography and videography have further enabled researchers to capture large volumes of multilingual data in the LL with ease. Researchers can therefore effectively explore and analyse the languages displayed on multilingual signs in public spaces and places. In this way, technology has immensely contributed to the development of the field of LL studies. South Africa is a multilingual, multicultural society with unique language policies aimed at promoting multilingualism in all spheres of life. For this reason, relevant background knowledge about South Africa's sociolinguistic situation is necessary to effectively interpret the LL of the public railways. Thus, a sociolinguistic background of South Africa is presented next.

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1.2 Background information about South Africa

In 1948 the White Afrikaner-led National Party gained power in South Africa and enforced its policies of racial segregation on the people in the country. The system of legislation that was used to separate the population into various racial and ethnic groups was called 'apartheid', an Afrikaans word which means 'segregation' in English. While Afrikaans largely derives from Dutch, its development can be traced

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back to the slaves in the Dutch-ruled, Cape Colony and includes influences from other languages such as Malay, German, Portuguese and the Khoisan languages. As Kriel (2013:176) points out "The linguistic landscape of Afrikaner monuments has always been an Afrikaans landscape" and consequently, Afrikaans became perceived as the language of the oppressor in South Africa.

During apartheid, South Africa had only four provinces which comprised the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and the Cape Province. These provinces were former British colonies which in 1910 became the provinces of the Union of South Africa. In 1961 the Union of South Africa gained independence from Britain and was named the Republic of South Africa. To further its policies of racial segregation, the apartheid government established the so-called 'Bantustans' or 'homelands' which were illegitimate states to which Black South Africans had mandatory citizenship. In this way, the majority of Blacks were effectively prohibited from living within urban areas of South Africa. The apartheid government used the homelands as an administrative mechanism to exclude Blacks from social, political and economic activities within South Africa. Essentially, the idea was to deprive Blacks of their South African citizenship. To achieve this, the apartheid government forced Blacks to leave urban areas of the country and move to their designated rural homelands according to their individual ethnic and cultural backgrounds. For instance, the homelands of Ciskei and Transkei were designated for the Xhosa people whereas Bophuthatswana was for the Tswana people, KwaZulu for Zulu people, Lebowa for Pedi and Northern Ndebele, Venda was for Vendas, Gazankulu for Shangaan and Tsonga people and QwaQwa was for the Basotho people. These homelands and their economies were not progressively developed and they were therefore largely dependent on the White minority South African government. In

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addition, Blacks owned merely 13% of the land in South Africa which was unsuitable for farming. As a result, millions of Blacks had no viable alternatives other than to leave their homelands and seek work opportunities in the White-dominated South Africa. Many of them worked in mines, on farms and for various other predominantly White-owned entities. In this manner, the apartheid government exploited Blacks, and the homelands primarily served as labour reservoirs. The provinces of South Africa pre-1994 and the apartheid homelands are shown in Figure 1.1.

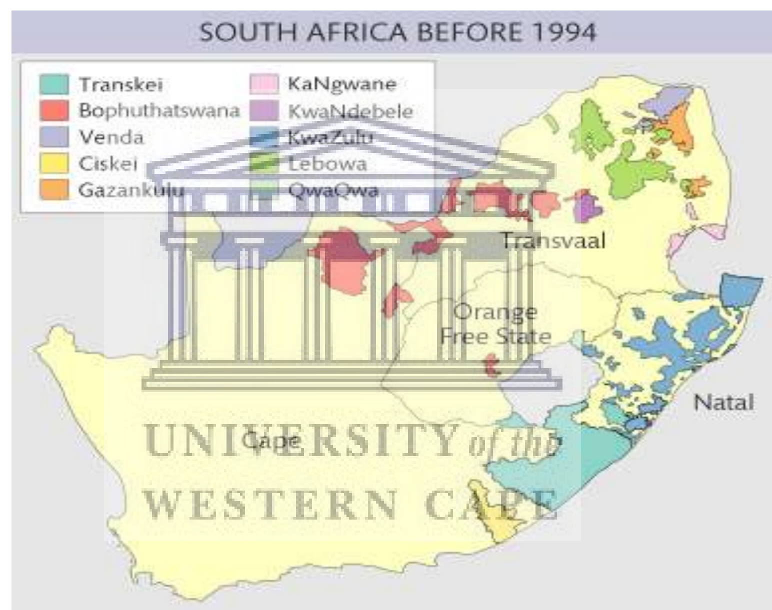

Figure1.1: *Map of South Africa before 1994 (RSA 2013)*

After the demise of apartheid in 1994, the African National Congress became the first democratically elected government of South Africa under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela. The apartheid homelands ceased to exist and were reintegrated into nine provinces in terms of the Constitution the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996). Today, these nine provinces include the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, North

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West and the Western Cape. Each province has its own distinctive landscape, population, economy and climate. Moreover, the individual provinces have their own legislature, premier and executive council. The nine provinces of South Africa are shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure1.2: *Map of South Africa after 1994* (RSA 2013)

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1.3 Overview of the provinces included in the study

The research sites selected for the current study are located within four of the nine provinces of South Africa. These provinces include the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. A synopsis of each province is given in this section to further contextualise the study. As a point of departure, the discussion begins with the Eastern Cape which is the second largest province. It has a population of more than 6.5 million people (Census 2011:18), the majority of whom speak isiXhosa as a first language followed by Afrikaans. The province has airports in Bhisho, East London, Mthatha and Port Elizabeth. Its two main harbours are situated in East London and Port Elizabeth respectively. The automotive sector is an

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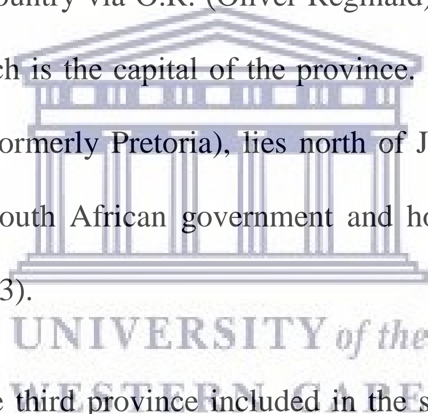
important contributor to the economy of the Eastern Cape (RSA 2013:3) which is home to some of the major car manufacturers' production plants in South Africa, such as Volkswagen, Ford and Toyota, for example.

The second province included in the study is Gauteng which is the most populous province with 12.2 million people (Census 2011:18). In Gauteng, most people speak isiZulu as a first language, followed by English, Afrikaans and Sesotho, respectively. Gauteng contributes 34.5% to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product and is also one of the biggest contributors to the economy of the African continent. Over four million employed people in South Africa live in Gauteng. Most visitors to South Africa arrive in the country via O.R. (Oliver Reginald) Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg which is the capital of the province. South Africa's administrative capital is Tshwane (formerly Pretoria), lies north of Johannesburg. Tshwane is the official seat of the South African government and houses the offices of the state president (RSA 2013:3).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KwaZulu-Natal is the third province included in the study and has a population of 10.2 million people (Census 2011:18). The majority of people living in KwaZulu-Natal speak isiZulu as a first language followed by English. KwaZulu-Natal is one of the country's most popular holiday destinations and is particularly well-known for its warm beaches along the Indian Ocean coast. The province has a diverse industrial sector with key industries situated around the port of Durban as well as agricultural and forestry industries (RSA 2013:3).

Lastly, the Western Cape is home to more than 5.8 million people, most of whom speak Afrikaans as a first language, followed by isiXhosa and English, respectively (Census 2011:18). Similarly to KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape is also a world-

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famous tourist destination and is particularly well-known for its pristine coastline. Cape Town, which is affectionately known as the *Mother City*, houses Parliament and serves as South Africa's legislative capital. The city of Cape Town is the economic centre of the province. Its manufacturing and agricultural sectors are the third largest contributors to the national economy (RSA 2013:4).

1.4 Languages used in South Africa

South Africa's linguistic and cultural diversity is the result of the migration of various groups of people to the region over many centuries. The first groups of people known to inhabit the region were the Khoi and San people. Around the twelfth century the Bantu people migrated to the south and around the seventeenth century, people began to sail to South Africa from countries in Europe and Asia. This vast migration south included people from Portugal, the Netherlands, France, Germany, England, Malaysia, Indonesia and India. Because of this vast migration during the past, today about 25 different languages are spoken in South Africa by more than 51 million people. Black South Africans are in the majority, accounting for nearly 80.0% of the population, while White and Coloured people each account for around 9.0%, respectively. The Indian/Asian population accounts for 2.5% of the population (Census 2011: 21).

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Most South Africans are multilingual and speak English as part of their individual linguistic repertoires. English is therefore ubiquitous in official and commercial public life. South Africa's other lingua franca is isiZulu. The Census (2011:25) reports that isiZulu is the mother-tongue of 22.7% of South Africa's population, followed by isiXhosa at 16.0%, Afrikaans at 13.5% and English at 9.6%. Setswana and Sesotho account for 8.0% and 7.6% each, respectively. The other official

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languages are each spoken by less than 5% of the population, respectively. The Nguni languages, comprising of isiZulu, isiXhosa, siSwati, and isiNdebele have many similarities in syntax and grammar. Similarly, the Sotho languages, comprising of Setswana, Sesotho sa Lebowa, and Sesotho, also have much in common. Many of South Africa's linguistic groups of people share a common ancestry. As these groups and clans of people migrated south, variations of their common languages evolved over time. Despite the ubiquitous cultural and linguistic diversity in South Africa, Afrikaans and English were the only official languages during apartheid. In 1991 at the 'Convention for a Democratic South Africa' (CODESA) negotiations to dismantle apartheid, White Afrikaner organisations were concerned about the status of the Afrikaans language. Their concerns threatened to derail the talks. A quick compromise entailed a constitutional clause stating that none of the languages used in South Africa at the time may be diminished in status. Since the Black homelands had their own language policies at the time, these too could not be reduced in official status. As a result, Afrikaans retained its status as an official language and the other nine languages retained theirs. Consequently, the Constitution, Chapter 2, Section 6 (RSA 1996) guarantees equal status to eleven official languages which include Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga.

The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) was established in 1995 to endorse the use of the official languages in South Africa. In addition to the eleven official languages, a number of other African, European and Asian languages are also spoken in South Africa. The PanSALB is tasked to promote recognition and respect for all languages used in South Africa, including the Khoi, Nama and San languages, Sign Language, Arabic, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi,

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Portuguese, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu. Furthermore, indigenous creoles and pidgins are also used in some communities, such as Funagalo, Tsotsitaal and Sabela (Mesthrie 1989; Hurst 2008). As mentioned previously, English is largely understood across the country, being the preferred language of business, politics and the media. Although English serves as the lingua franca, it ranks fifth out of the eleven official languages as a home language. Lastly, the Use of Official Languages Act, 2012 (Act No.12 of 2012) provides for the regulation and monitoring of the use of official languages by government and to some extent, privately owned organisations also.

1.5 Commuter rail transport in South Africa

The arrangement of communities in cities and towns within South Africa continue to reflect the legacy of apartheid-era racial segregation, poverty, and exclusion from social and economic opportunities. These apartheid spatial patterns have generally not yet been reversed despite the service delivery and socio-economic development achievements since 1994. For instance, the social and economic exclusion created by apartheid still manifest in the long distances many people travel between their homes and places of work on a daily basis. Access to reliable public transport is therefore essential for economic and social participation. To address this need, the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) was formed in 2009. PRASA is a consolidation of state-owned public transport services entities. It encompasses Metrorail, Shosholoza Meyl, Autopax bus services and PRASA Corporate Real Estate Solutions, a property management entity. PRASA was established in terms of Section 22 of the Legal Succession to the South African Transport Services Act of 1989 as amended in 2008. It is a public entity wholly-owned by the government and reports to the Minister of Transport. The legal mandate directs PRASA to deliver

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commuter rail services in the metropolitan areas of South Africa, intercity rail and bus services within, to and from the borders of South Africa.

The establishment of PRASA created a platform from which government could deliver low-cost transport services to the South African public. In this way, public transport is provided to millions of people, the majority of whom commute daily via rail. Since the inception of PRASA, apartheid-era passenger trains were overhauled and railway stations were upgraded, including those stations that form part of the current study. Incidentally, these infrastructural improvements coincided with the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament that was held in South Africa. During this prestigious event, many spectators from around the world were transported to matches via the public railways.

The improvements to the railway infrastructure are the culmination of a long process in government's efforts to transform public transport services in South Africa. Moreover, the Public Transport Strategy (RSA 2007) emphasised public rail transport as an essential component of integrated public transport networks in South Africa. In this context, PRASA is responsible for the development of intermodal transport facilities and the optimisation of services within the entire public transport system throughout South Africa. Additionally, Metrorail, a division of PRASA, transports more than two million passengers throughout South Africa daily (PRASA 2011; 2012). The need for efficient public rail transport forms an integral part of the daily lives of many South Africans, since rail transport is primarily used for work and education-related travel. It is also the most affordable mode of transport that provides mobility to working class South Africans.

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1.6 Statement of the problem

The study of linguistic landscape is an evolving approach to research in multilingualism (Blommaert 2013; Milani and Zabrodskaya 2014). There is a growing interest in LL research on the African continent, particularly in South Africa. Most LL studies explored the presence of multilingualism within a defined geographical area. The main factors influencing the LL include modernity, globalisation and multiculturalism. These factors are at the forefront of our daily lives. The character, composition and status of places are shaped by commercial activity, professional identities and demographic development, all of which find focus on the LL in place. Amid this, the relations between the authorities and society at large are constantly changing. The LL of an area can therefore be interpreted as the manifestation of the influence of official language policy and planning on our daily lives. The linguistic and other semiotic resources used in signs point backwards in time to who produced them while also pointing forward in time to an audience or public who read them. Thus, Blommaert (2013; 2014) emphasises that paying close attention to these signs gives us a sense of the competence of their writers, their language and social backgrounds, the degree to which they are older or newer migrants, and the degree to which the target audience are older or newer communities. It is therefore interesting to explore the linguistic, cultural, economic, and political resources that shape the discursive construction of the public space at the railways in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.7 Aims, objectives and research questions

The main aim of the current research is to present an ethnographic, multisemiotic study of the linguistic landscape (LL) of the public railways in post-apartheid South Africa. The idea is to explore the social structuring of languages in the LL in space

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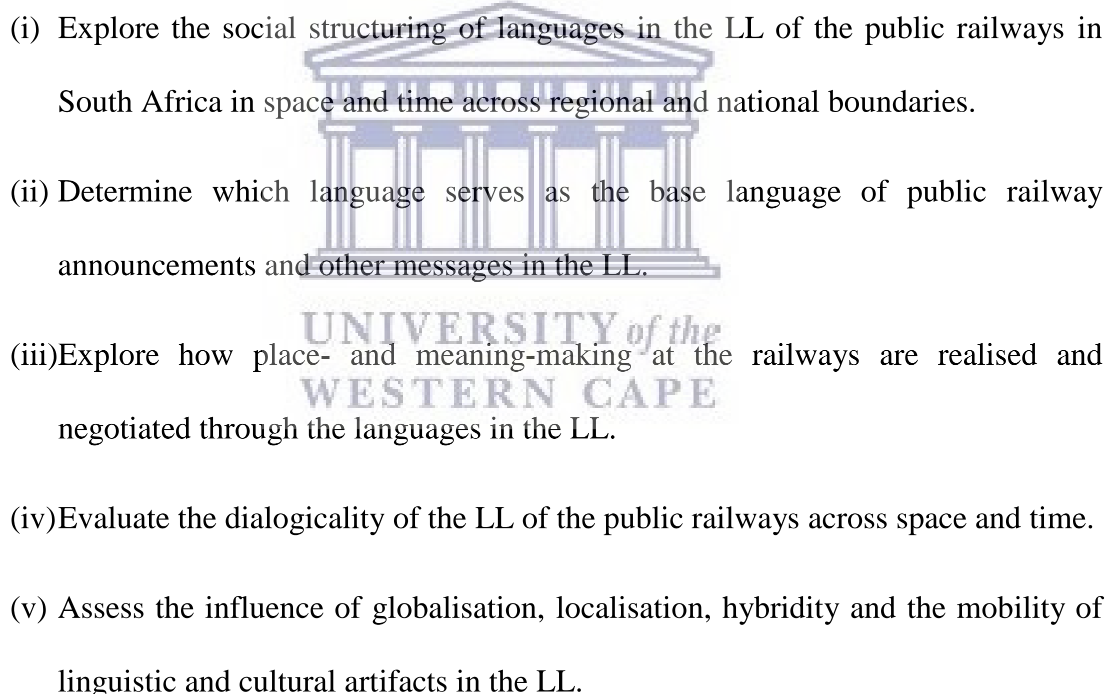
and time, across regional and national boundaries as experienced by railway commuters. The study entails consideration of the languages used on signs displayed in public trains and at railway stations across four provinces in South Africa. Moreover, the spread of languages and other semiotic resources across regional and national boundaries are assessed to account for trajectories of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the LL of the railways since the end of apartheid. A further aim of the study is to explore sociocultural transformation in post-apartheid South Africa as reflected in the languages used on signs at the railways.

The guiding research objectives are to;



(i) Explore the social structuring of languages in the LL of the public railways in South Africa in space and time across regional and national boundaries.

(ii) Determine which language serves as the base language of public railway announcements and other messages in the LL.

(iii) Explore how place- and meaning-making at the railways are realised and negotiated through the languages in the LL.

(iv) Evaluate the dialogicality of the LL of the public railways across space and time.

(v) Assess the influence of globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts in the LL.

The study answers the following research questions:

(i) How is the social structuring of languages expressed in the LL of the public railways in South Africa?

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(ii) Which language serves as the base language of public railway announcements and other messages in the LL?

(iii)How are place- and meaning-making at the railways realised and negotiated through the languages in the LL?

(iv) How is dialogicality articulated in the LL of the public railways?

(v) How do globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts influence the LL?

1.8 Rationale

During the last decade, the term linguistic landscape evolved into a fundamental theoretical concept in sociolinguistics which developed into an aspect of academic inquiry in its own right (Milani and Zabrodskaya 2014). As such, LL research continues to be an evolving field of study that follows the work of Landry and Bourhis (1997), with various other scholars having explored the LL in recent years. The available literature covers many LL studies that were done in various parts of the world (cf. Backhaus 2007; 2009, Shohamy and Gorter 2009; 2010; Blommaert 2013; 2014). Additionally, numerous LL studies were done on the African continent and in South Africa in particular (cf. Stroud and Mpendukana 2009; 2010; Banda and Peck 2014; Milani and Zabrodskaya 2014). The concept of LL is used for the description and analysis of the linguistic reality of a defined geographical area. Therefore, LL studies explore the presence of multilingualism within a defined geographical area (Gorter 2006). Since modernity, globalisation and multiculturalism are at the forefront of our daily lives, the character, composition and status of places are shaped by commercial activity, professional identities and demographic development, all of which find focus in the LL in place (Ben-Rafael

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2006). Amid this, the relations between the authorities and society at large are constantly changing hence the LL may be interpreted as a representation of the influence of language policy and planning on our daily lives within a defined geographic area. Moreover, the languages used on signs reflect changes in the dominant identities and cultures within society. It is therefore interesting to study the languages used on these signs which form the LL of a defined geographical area. In South Africa, an estimated two million people from different linguistic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds use public trains daily as their primary mode of transport. Thus, the study of the LL of the public railways is an interesting way to trace trajectories of transformation in the language and cultural situation in South Africa across spatial and temporal boundaries.

1.9 Scope and limitations

As mentioned previously, the current study is limited to signs displayed at core public railway stations in four provinces in South Africa. These provinces include the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape. Although many signs in the LL display solely icons and pictograms, only those signs containing written texts were considered for the current study. In addition, the study entails consideration of all the languages displayed on signs found in the research sites. This approach differs from some of the previous LL studies in South Africa which included exclusively those signs displaying the official languages of South Africa, as well as icons, pictograms and even graffiti.

As reported by PRASA (2011; 2012), the individual railway stations included in the current study are considered core stations in that they are used by the highest numbers of daily commuters. To this end, the research sites for the study entailed

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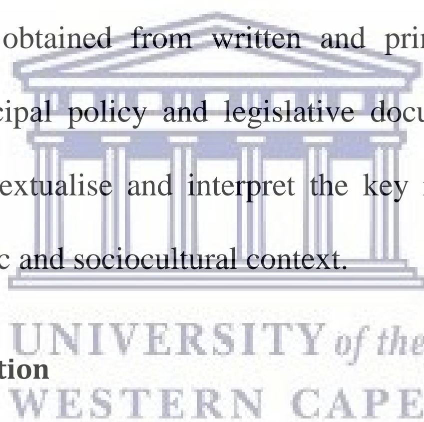
consideration of six different urban sites which include Port Elizabeth station in the Eastern Cape, Durban Central station in KwaZulu-Natal, Pretoria and Johannesburg stations in Gauteng, and Cape Town and Bellville stations in the Western Cape. Thus, LL data was captured across four provinces in South Africa. Since the study relied on a mixed-methods approach, the quantitative analysis of data is supplemented with results of a survey questionnaire. In this way, interesting insight was obtained from rail commuters about the LL of the railways. To further enhance the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a cross-section of longstanding rail commuters which yielded further meaningful insights into how the changing LL of the railways is perceived and experienced by commuters over time. Other relevant data obtained from written and print sources such as national, provincial and municipal policy and legislative documents are considered in the analysis to help contextualise and interpret the key results and findings within a broader sociolinguistic and sociocultural context.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1.10 Thesis organisation

The first chapter introduces the topic and includes some important background information needed to contextualise and interpret the study. Thus, a brief sociolinguistic background of South Africa is given, followed by a discussion about recent developments in commuter rail transport which situates the study within a broader context. The chapter further provides the aim, objectives, research questions, rationale, scope and limitations of the study. The chapter closes with a general outline of the thesis. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform the study. In addition, the second chapter outlines some of the pioneering LL research, and also examines recent developments in the field to account for how they influence the current study. Additionally, the chapter explores the spatial and

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temporal nature of the LL, since the current study is interested in the changing LL of the railways over time. The influence of language policy and planning in the LL is also discussed. The third chapter clarifies the research design and the methodological approach that informs the study. Moreover, in Chapter 3 the research approach is explained, the details pertaining to the sample population, the collection and analysis of data and the interpretation of the results and findings are clarified.

The fourth chapter presents the results pertaining to the languages found in the research sites using a quantitative approach. For ease of reference, the results are presented in frequency distribution tables and bar charts using descriptive statistics. The quantitative results are supplemented with discussions of relevant samples of LL artifacts that were found in the research sites to further contextualise the study. Chapter 5 presents the results of the survey questionnaire which entailed consideration of how current railway commuters perceive and experience the LL of the railways. Chapter 6 presents the findings of semi-structured interviews which help trace trajectories of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the LL across regional and national boundaries in space and time as experienced by railway commuters. Furthermore, the chapter examines the dialogical nature of signs in the LL. Chapter 7 draws conclusions from the overall research and summarises the study. In closing, some practical implications that the study may reveal are explored.

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1.11 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 introduced the study *"Multilingualism and linguistic landscapes across space and time in the public railway system in South Africa: A multisemiotic analysis".* The chapter provided the context in which the research was conceived, followed by a discussion on the sociolinguistic background and recent developments

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in public rail transport in South Africa. Furthermore, the chapter identified the main aim of the study, the guiding research objectives and the specific research questions were given. A statement of the problem was provided, along with the rationale, scope and limitations of the research. Lastly, an outline of the general organisation of the enture thesis was presented. A discussion on the literature pertaining to the study of the LL, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform the current study is presented in Chapter 2.

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Chapter 2: Theoretical development in LL research

2.0 Introduction

An overview of LL as an approach to research in multilingualism in society is presented in this chapter. Firstly, the notion of LL is explained, followed by a discussion on some key definitions of the term 'linguistic landscape'. Thereafter, theoretical and analytical considerations are explored in the context of previous LL research on which the current study draws. In addition, the conceptual framework that informs the current study is explored. Next, the LL is discussed in terms of both its spatial and temporal aspects. In particular, the concept of space is examined in terms of how the LL is commodified in public spaces and places. In this way, the chapter situates the current study and accounts for the mobility of semiotic resources across both spatial and temporal boundaries. Furthermore, the dialogical nature of signs is assessed, along with the historicising of public spaces, which draws on previous LL research. In addition, the concepts of resemiotisation and semiotic remediation are explained in the context of how they inform the current study. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary of the main theoretical and analytical considerations covered. As a point of departure, the notion of LL is introduced.

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2.1 Defining linguistic landscape

Landry and Bourhis (1997:25) define the LL as "The language of public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs and public signs". The definition by Landry and Bourhis (1997) was adapted by various scholars to suit the scope of their own specific research (Edelman 2010). For instance, Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, and Trumper-Hecht (2006:14) define the LL as "any sign or announcement located outside or inside a public institution or private

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business in a given geographical location". Their definition includes signs that are located on the inside of buildings also. Further, Dailey, Giles and Jansma (2005) include advertisement brochures and flyers, the spoken languages heard outside in neighbourhoods, on television and in classrooms whereas Gorter (2006) argues that the LL is essentially about the written text that is displayed in the public space. Although Backhaus (2007) cautions that such definitions make the LL too broad a field to study effectively, Shohamy and Waksman (2009) suggest a definition of LL that includes all types of text. In their view, the LL includes all discourses in the public space. Their broad view includes written or spoken texts, images, objects, sounds and even videos displayed on the inside or outside of buildings. This view also includes the Internet and cyberspace. The Internet and advancements in communication-related technologies have become a fundamental part of modern life. The reality is that language is evolving into a variety of new forms. People and their physical bodies are also included as being part of the LL because meaning is constructed by language and other modalities (Shohamy and Gorter 2009; Shohamy and Waksman 2009; Banda and Peck 2014).

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Shohamy and Waksman (2009) argue that the evolving nature of public and private signs calls for the redefining of the LL. Backhaus (2007:10) points out that there is a distinction between the terms 'linguistic landscape' and 'linguistic landscaping', citing the research by Itagi and Singh (2002). However, Backhaus argues that Itagi and Singh (2002) do not suggest any direct explanation of these terms. He explains that the inferred meaning of the term in the gerund form refers to "the planning and implementation of actions" relating to language use on signs and that the term in its noun form "denotes the results of these actions" (2007:10). Backhaus (2007) uses these terms in his study and provides useful insights about the linguistic situation of

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Tokyo. In another study, Edelman (2010:9) asserts that some scholars prefer the term 'linguistic landscape' whereas she explains that the term 'linguistic landscaping' was used by Backhaus (2009), Barni and Bagna (2009) and Coulmas (2009).

Gorter (2006a:1) introduces the term 'multilingual cityscape' which he argues describes the field more accurately. For Gorter, urbanisation and globalisation contributed to the fact that most of the previous LL studies were done in urban built-up environments within cities. He appropriately observes that signs that display written texts are generally found in built-up urban areas. Although the term 'multilingual cityscape' is probably a more specific term than linguistic landscape, the term 'cityscape' excludes studies conducted in rural areas or on the inside of buildings. For this reason Edelman (2010) cautions that the term 'multilingual cityscape' excludes the possibility of monolingualism in advance. A critical question that follows then is whether the LL is multilingual or monolingual, even in multilingual contexts. In subsequent studies to that of Gorter (2006a), linguistic landscape or linguistic landscaping is the preferred term used by many scholars (Shohamy and Gorter 2009; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael and Barni 2010). However, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) use the term 'semiotic landscapes' to illustrate that descriptions of space are not only about language, image and space but also entail consideration of how interlocutors engage with semiotic material, such as objects in place. In their study, the authors suggest extending the conceptualisation of landscape beyond what was premised by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and other earlier studies. Moreover, their interest is the intersection of visual discourse, language and sociocultural aspects of spatial practices (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010).

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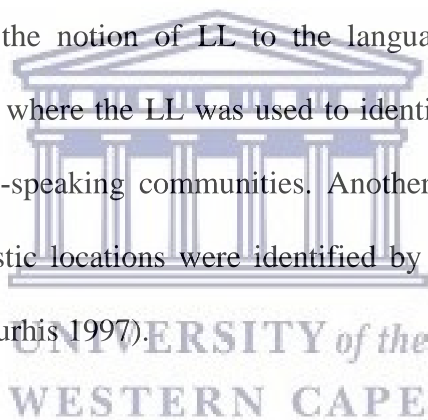
In the study of linguistics, the term linguistic lanscape refers to a language situation within a specific geographical location (Edelman 2010). For example, Du Plessis (2009:188) writes about "the changing face of the South African linguistic landscape" in a paper about the need for moving from a policy of bilingualism to multilingualism in post-apartheid South Africa. In another example in South Africa, Banda (2010:1) compares and contrasts "linguistic landscaping and identity at three Western Cape Universities". Similarly, the gerund is also used by Backhaus (2009) and Coulmas (2009) in their studies, following Itagi and Singh (2002) whereas Barni and Bagna use the noun form of the term in their study. Gorter (2006c) gives a more detailed discussion on other possible uses of the term. Moreover, Landry and Bourhis (1997) link the notion of LL to the language-planning field. They cite examples in Belgium where the LL was used to identify the geographical locations of Dutch and French-speaking communities. Another example is that of Quebec, Canada where linguistic locations were identified by the language used on public signs (Landry and Bourhis 1997).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Following Leclerc (1989), Landry and Bourhis (1997) distinguish between signs displayed by government authorities and those signs displayed by private initiative. The languages displayed on public signs are regulated by legislation whereas the languages on private signs are usually considered to be part of an individual's freedom of speech (Edelman 2010). Although private signs generally display more linguistic diversity than government signs, the languages and content on private signs are regulated through legislation as well. With these various developments in academic literature, the objects, methods and tools of analysis, indeed the very notion of LL have expanded to address a variety of research objectives and to better

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understand the role and impact of language in the public space (c.f. Shohamy and Blackwood 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018).

2.2 Pioneering LL studies

Although Landry and Bourhis (1997) are generally credited as being among the first researchers to explore the LL, studies using the languages displayed on public signs as a source of information can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s (c.f. Backhaus 2007; Spolksy 2009), In their seminal paper, Landry and Bourhis (1997:23) argue that the main aim of LL studies is to explore "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region." The focus of LL studies is on the written language that marks the public space. In following Landry and Bourhis (1997), many scholars have explored the LL from various different perspectives, such as language policy, sociolinguistics, language contact and discourse analysis (Backhaus 2007; Shohamy and Gorter 2009; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael, Barni 2010; Thurlow and Jaworski (2010).

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Backhaus (2007) describes various earlier studies of the LL in his comprehensive survey of previous research about the topic. He notes that a number of previous LL studies were overlooked mainly because of a lack of summarising terminology. Furthermore, Backhaus explores the languages displayed on signs in monolingual, bilingual and multilingual contexts in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. For instance, his comprehensive survey includes a study by Rosenbaum, Nadel and Fisman (1977), who counted the number of English and Hebrew signs in Jerusalem, Israel as part of their study to determine the spread of English. Another case study by Tulp (1978) explores the languages on commercial billboards in Brussels whereas Monnier (1989) conducted a survey of the languages on shop signs in Montreal.

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Furthermore, Calvet (1990) compared the LL of Paris and Dakar while Spolsky and Cooper (1991) investigated the languages on signs in the Old City of Jerusalem. These earlier studies contributed immensely to the development of appropriate theoretical and methodological foundations for LL studies as a sub-field of sociolinguistics (Backhaus 2007). The case studies discussed by Backhaus (2007) are valuable because of the insights they give about the history of various approaches to earlier LL studies. It also clarifies the scope of what exactly encompasses LL studies.

Most of the studies mentioned by Backhaus (2007) entail observing and quantifying the distribution of languages on public signs. Against this backdrop, Backhaus developed a system for categorising multilingual signs. He uses the framework of code preference by Scollon and Scollon (2003) and the study of the typology of multilingualism by Reh (2004). With the increased interest in LL studies, there have been numerous advancements in theoretical and methodological approaches. For example, Gorter (2006) defines the scope of LL research by addressing a number of key methodological issues and challenges posed by the sampling of empirical data, such as defining the unit of analysis and devising categorisation and coding schemes of the signs studied. In this vein, the publication by Shohamy and Gorter (2009) contributed to the development of a consistent theory and methodology for LL studies. It also highlighted a number of shortcomings in approaches used in some of the previous LL studies.

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The four structuration principles presented by Ben-Rafael (2009) give a sociological framework for LL studies which are outlined in subsequent sections in this study. Spolsky and Cooper (1991) developed three conditions for language choice on

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public signs which are further clarified in Spolsky (2009). The theoretical and methodological frameworks used by Ben-Rafael (2009) and Spolksy (2009), respectively, contributed to qualitative aspects of the LL research by providing the relevant framework within which other research studies could be developed. For instance, Thurlow and Jaworski (2010) explore how semiotic landscapes create meaning by impacting on three areas of scholarly interest which include language and visual discourse, spatial practices and global capitalism. In a broader context, they explore textual, discursive construction of place. The case studies presented in their publication illustrate how written discourse interacts with other discursive modalities such as visual images, nonverbal communication, architecture and the built environment. The authors contend that linguistics is merely one element in the construction and interpretation of place. For them, the term semiotic landscapes refers to "any public space with visible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making" (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010:2). The specific theoretical frameworks they apply range from sociolinguistics to discourse analysis. In this same publication, a contribution by Mark Sebba looks at mobile public texts, such as those on banknotes, pamphlets, tickets and vehicles, for example. He proposes that both fixed and unfixed signs should be analysed in the same way as categories of discourse in context. Sebba explains how the White population erased African languages from public spaces to account for the dominance of Afrikaans and English in South Africa during apartheid. He further argues that this type of ideological and social engineering of space was designed to promote Afrikaans as equal in status to English. However, in reality, Afrikaans had more status in the rural areas of South Africa whereas English remained the language of commerce and in urban, built-up environments. However, this ideological objective of making English

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and Afrikaans more prominent had little impact on linguistic diversity in the country as a whole, since various African languages continued to be spoken by the majority of South Africans at the time.

Ben-Rafael, Shohamy and Barni (2010) explore the LL in present-day urban settings. The basic methodology that is used to collect data in LL studies entails photographing LL artifacts which are then subjected to analysis. With recent technological advancements, such as the widespread use of digital media, researchers are able to compile a more comprehensive data corpus (Backhaus 2007; Gorter 2006b). Another technological advancement is the development of the 'Sociolinguistic Data Collection Mobile Laboratory' that enables a triangulated approach to the study of LL (Barni and Bagna 2009). This approach uses a system of geo-referencing that enables a synchronic and diachronic analysis of LL data. Despite these methodological advancements Shohamy and Gorter (2009) argue that an independent theory of the field is needed as the study of the LL intersects with various other academic disciplines, such as inter alia geography, education, politics, sociology and economics. In this regard, Shohamy and Gorter (2009) contend that because the study of the LL is interdisciplinary, it requires a multiple theory approach. Thus, scholars of the LL are concerned with exploring the meanings and messages communicated by the written languages that are used in public spaces (Shohamy and Gorter 2009). The study of LL is therefore an interesting way to explore the linguistic and social stratification that exists within society, particularly within a post-apartheid South African context, which the current study does.

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2.3 Theoretical approaches to LL studies

Since the study of LL is interdisciplinary, it intersects with various other academic disciplines as Shohamy and Gorter (2009) explain. Different researchers have therefore used various theoretical frameworks which include inter alia, sociological, sociolinguistic, economic, and ecological, multimodal and geosemiotic approaches. In this section, some of the previous LL case studies are discussed in the context of how they inform the current study. These previous case studies are explored in terms of the various theoretical approaches that can be applied to research of the LL.

As a point of departure, Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, *et al.* (2006) use a sociological framework in their study of the LL of Israel which is further expanded in Ben-Rafael (2009). The study presents a comparison of patterns of language use in Israel and focuses on the degree of visibility of the three major Israeli languages on private and public signs. These languages include Hebrew, Arabic and English. In this particular case study, the researchers found that the LL does not necessarily accurately reflect the diversity of languages in Israel. Instead, they found that the LL could be explored in terms of power relations between dominant and subordinate groups. Moreover, it could also reveal identity markers of communities and differed in attractiveness to various readers of signs.

The authors therefore argue that the LL is a symbolic construction of the public space (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006). Ben-Rafael (2009) suggests four structuration principles that shape the LL to explain the diversity. These principles include the ‘presentation of self’, the ‘good reasons principle’, ‘power relations’ and the principle of ‘collective identity’. Essentially, Ben-Rafael (2009) takes the notion of presentation of self from Goffman (1981) where social agents attempt to achieve

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their desired goals by presenting themselves favourably to others. An example of how they do this is through their linguistic choices.

In another study, Edelman (2010) explains that the signs in the LL compete for the attention of the audience and argues that the authors of signs therefore aim to present themselves positively through the messages they display. With this in mind, the principle of presentation of self suggests that languages that have prestige will be displayed in the LL (Edelman 2010). Additionally, Ben-Rafael (2009) argues that under the good reasons principle, the authors of signs in the LL attempt to influence the public by accommodating their values and tastes. This is achieved by focusing on the anticipated attractiveness of the signs to the audience. Therefore, languages that are valued and viewed as positive by the public are displayed in the LL (Edelman 2010). The principle of power relations refers to the degree to which the authors of signs impose social or political regulations on others through the languages displayed on signs (Ben-Rafael 2009). Thus, the official language displayed on public signs serves as a good indicator of the power relations that exist within society.

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In this vein, the languages of the dominant groups within society would be more visible in the LL than the languages of subordinate groups (Edelman 2010). Lastly, the principle of collective identity (Ben-Rafael 2009) indicates to which group the authors of signs in the LL belong. For example, signs that display texts in another language, such as texts in Arabic script or the words ‘halaal’ or ‘kosher’ which is common practice with some restaurants and supermarkets in South Africa, would probably attract Muslim and Jewish customers respectively because of their shared religious backgrounds (Edelman 2010). This would be particularly relevant to the

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multicultural societies prevalent in the various provinces of South Africa. In this regard, Ben-Rafael (2009) suggests that the more tolerant a society is of sociocultural differences between various groups of people, the more the LL would allow for the expression of their different identities. For this reason, the languages of minority groups may therefore also present in the LL (Edelman 2010).

In their study, Barni and Bagna (2009) explain that the LL should be interpreted using a triangulated approach. Essentially, the interpretation of the LL of an area requires the analysis of demographic information, administrative information and the historical background context. This entails consideration of the strength of the different sociolinguistic communities in an area, the language policies and the various authors involved. It also entails consideration of the socio-political situation. Another interesting study on linguistic landscape is the one by Spolsky and Cooper (1991) wherein the authors discuss their sociolinguistic framework to address the use of languages in the LL. They formulate three rules for language choice on public signs which include the 'sign-writer's skill condition' which refers to writing signs in a language you know, the 'presumed reader condition' which is the preference to write signs in the language or languages that intended readers are assumed to read, and lastly, the 'symbolic value condition' in which preference is given to writing signs in your own language or in a language with which you wish to be identified (Spolsky and Cooper (1991:81-84).

Spolsky (2009) explains these rules and suggests that the sign-writer's skill condition requires a certain level of literacy in a language for that language to be displayed in the LL. He argues that the absence of a language in the LL could be attributed to the lack of speakers of that language. This would particularly affect

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minority languages. The presumed reader condition describes the communicative goal of signs. According to Spolsky, signs displayed in the LL could include the dominant language of an area, the language of a literate minority, or it could include the language of foreign tourists. He argues that the symbolic value condition describes the language used on a sign that emphasises ownership. An example of this could be a sign displaying the name of a building or business. This could describe the order of languages that are displayed on multilingual signs. It could also explain the use of a language in advertisements that refers to certain associations with stereotypes about its speakers or a country.

Spolsky (2009) illustrates the symbolic value condition by using an example of the use of French for perfumes and Italian for foods. All three of these conditions may relate to any sign. Thus, the sign-writer's skill condition is essential and applies to all signs. The presumed reader condition and symbolic value condition are characteristic and ordered. For example, both conditions could be applied to a sign but the weighting affects which condition will have the main influence on the communicative goal. In multilingual signs the communicative goal may be achieved by the choice of languages whereas the order of the languages may be used to signal symbolic value (Spolsky 2009).

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Huebner (2008; 2009) uses a sociolinguistic framework for analysing LL items. He uses Hymes' (1972) ethnography of communication and Hymes' 'SPEAKING' pneumonic which describes the components of a speech event in terms of the setting or scene, participants, ends or goals, act sequences, key, instrumentalities, norms and genre. Huebner uses this framework to analyse LL items in terms of genre (Huebner 2009). Huebner argues that the LL is merely an overlooked source of data for the

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study of multilingualism as opposed to it being a new approach to the study of multilingualism in society (2009). In another interesting study, Kallen (2009) explores the LL of Ireland in the context of tourism. In his analysis of four urban tourist sites in Ireland, he argues that linguistic choices in the LL entail more than simply choices about language use.

Kotze and Du Plessis (2010) explore the LL of a rural township in a southern Free State province of South Africa. Their study investigates the responsiveness of the LL of rural areas to socio-political changes compared to that of urban cities. They argue that the LL reflects societal changes by creating and maintaining power relations and collective identities. They further contend that public linguistic choices are influenced by pragmatic and symbolic considerations. For example, the political transformation of South Africa in 1994 produced changes across various domains in the country. From this point of view, Kotze and Du Plessis (2010) point out that a remnant of the previous political regime is the ethnolinguistically divided neighbourhoods which were demarcated into White, Indian, Coloured and Black residential areas, respectively. This notion is corroborated and explained in more detail in the findings of the current study. Thus, the various population groups living within South Africa make different individual contributions to the LL. These contributions are motivated by their various socio-economic compositions and their new roles within the transformed post-apartheid South African society which the current study reports on in its findings.

In their research, Cenoz and Gorter (2009) suggest an economic perspective to the study of the LL and argue that language has economic value. They use the Contingent Valuation Method which was previously applied to environmental

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economics. By applying this method Cenoz and Gorter (2009) suggest that the economic value of LL research can be determined by focusing on the non-market values of the LL. They show how the LL can be linked to linguistic diversity and to the economy of language as an emerging area of research. For Stroud and Mpendukana (2009), the study of LL aims to introduce a new perspective around theories and policies of multilingualism. It further provides important information for what they refer to as a politics of language. They argue that the theorisation of space and language fundamental to the notion of LL does not encapsulate the various complexities of transnational multilingual mobility that is typical of many late-modern multilingual societies.

Stroud and Mpendukana (2009) and Mpendukana (2009) propose a material ethnography in their study which explores advertising billboards in Khayelitsha, a Black township situated on the outskirts of the city of Cape Town. Mpendukana (2009) contends that a material ethnography refers to the ways in which relationships of semiotic production, circulation and consumption are layered into material artifacts, such as signage, that can be analysed linguistically (Mpendukana 2009:94). Moreover, he argues that the LL is a form of linguistic recontextualisation of resemiotisations in the public space. In his study, Mpendukana (2009:94) draws on Bourdieu (1984) for his analysis of multilingual commercial billboards as “sites of luxury”, “sites of necessity” and “sites of implosion” in Khayelitsha. Therefore, the LL gives an indication of the distribution of multilingualism in society.

In a similar vein, Blommaert and Huang (2010) draw on Kress (2003; 2009), and Scollon and Scollon (2003) in their construction of a materialist theory of signs. Essentially, they argue that signs are material forces which have measurable effects

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in social life. Informed by the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006), Sebba (2010) argues for a multimodal approach to the study of LL. He highlights the need for further research of multilingual texts that encompass prominent visual elements such as advertising, posters and Internet web pages. In support of his argument Sebba (2010) offers a proposal for a typology of multimodal, multilingual texts through his illustrative example of how this can be applied to the analysis of a multilingual Internet website.

The ethnographic approach proposed to LL studies entails consideration of the present and past histories of the LL in place. For instance, Dyers (2010) notes that English replaced Afrikaans as the dominant language on signs in a post-apartheid South Africa. The question that arises is whether this change in the LL could be attributed to Spolsky's (2009) 'symbolic value condition' which relates to language choice on signs. The researchers find that certain information on signs, such as the prices of goods and commercial slogans, are processed selectively. In another study, Hult (2009) uses the ecology of language theoretical framework in which aspects of multilingualism are explored through individual language choices in social settings. Hult (2009) relies on LL analysis and nexus analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2003; 2004) in his study of multilingualism and language policy in Sweden. He explains that the ecology of language is a useful orientation to the holistic investigation of multilingual language policies because it draws attention to relationships among speakers, languages, policies, and social contexts at varying dimensions of social organisation. As such, it is an approach to LL research that stands to facilitate the integration of micro and macro-sociolinguistic inquiry in language policy and planning.

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An interesting notion used for analysis in LL studies is that of indexicality, a concept initially developed by Peirce *et al.* (1982). Indexicality refers to how our perceptual judgments and uses of language point to external entities whether conceptual or material. Indexicality is therefore an attribute of all signs since the most fundamental form of reference is indexical (Peirce *et al.* 1982). When applying this concept to semiotic systems and signs, indexicality refers to how signs are used to refer to constructs and objects which are bound to a particular context. Scollon and Scollon (2003) focus on the analysis of language use on signs in terms of their physical placement and social context. The authors use the notion of indexicality to develop their socially constructed theory of signs known as geosemiotics. Geosemiotics, which uses some of the concepts developed by Peirce and applies them more concretely in the analysis of signs within social settings, centres around the idea that signs are context-bound or dependent on the environment where they are situated.

Indexicality is considered by Scollon and Scollon (2003) as the property of the context dependency of signs. They define their theory of geosemiotics around this fundamental concept. Geosemiotics is therefore "The study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and of our actions in the material world" (Scollon and Scollon, 2003:211). In the analysis of signs, this framework offers not only to look at the content, organisation, structure, and layout of signs, but also to examine how signs are framed and situated within a particular social context. This dimension of semiotic studies, which takes into consideration the social context of signs, is in line with a perception of the LL as context-bound rather than a-contextual, and fits into a trend of research where the experience of space is always socially constructed (Gupta and Ferguson, 1977). In this regard, signs can only make sense if they are located within a particular setting. A stop sign is only meaningful in

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place when it is located where it will serve its contextual purpose, and is therefore not operative when it is devoid of context. Bearing on this definition, the connection between geosemiotics and Peirce's concept of indexicality becomes clear. While Peirce pointed out that a sign refers to its object, something outside itself, emphasising the importance of the context or object in Peircean semiotics which the sign refers to, Scollon and Scollon (2003) explain that a sign only makes sense because of the context and situation where it is placed.

It follows then that the placement of signs in a particular space is a crucial notion since it allows sign readers to interpret the signs in view of the context in which they are situated. Thus, signs depend on their context for meaning. In another LL study, Banda and Mafofo (2016) explore the mission statements of three universities; the University of the Western Cape, the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University. By using interdiscvursivity and intertextuality, combined with the notion of remediation, they show that these universities do not only refer to prior texts; they use these texts as semiotic resources, which they transform into mission statements to market themselves and to construct their unique brand identities. Focusing on place semiotics and visual semiotics, their paper emphasises how the placement of signs contributes to the discourse in the material world of the institutions. The authors argue that, this in turn, gives the institutions social meanings and different identities.

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Moreover, Backhaus (2005a) explores the presence of linguistic diversity in a perceived monolingual society in Tokyo whereas Backhaus (2005b) deals with the presence of layering of signage as used in the sense of diachronic linguistics. Layering is the gradual changing or replacing of older signs and usually stems from

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a political or language regime changes. It refers to coexisting older and newer signs (Scollon and Scollon 2003). Backhaus (2007; 2009) finds an increasing presence of multilingualism in Japan in his investigation of official and non-official multilingual signs. He illustrates the differences between these signs in terms of the languages used and how they are arranged on the signs. The notions of power and solidarity are used to interpret these differences. He finds that non-Japanese languages in official signs are used to express and reinforce power relations as opposed to private signs that index solidarity. He concludes that official signs reveal the power relations at play whereas non-official signs which are mostly in English reflect solidarity among different cultures. It also reflects the influence of globalisation.

Backhaus (2007; 2009) focuses on linguistic diversity in Tokyo. He explores code preference to show how language hierarchies are displayed on signage through spatial and graphical features. In this case, Backhaus develops coherent research parameters aimed at answering the three fundamental questions. The first question pertains to the authors of signs or the concept of agency. Therefore, a basic distinction is made between official and non-official signs (Backhaus 2007; 2009). The geographical distribution of the signs and the commercial domains in which they are used are also explored under this question. The second question refers to the audience or the intended recipients of the messages on signs. The third question refers to the relationship between the languages and texts displayed on signs. It also refers to the changing patterns of language preference or code preference on signs over a period of time. Backhaus concludes that over time there has been an increase in the number of non-Japanese languages displayed in the LL. He notes a similar increase in information content that signs convey and contends that the city of Tokyo

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is experiencing an ongoing process of linguistic diversification despite its perceived monolingualism (Backhaus 2007; 2009).

In recent years, LL research has used different theoretical perspectives. For instance, Franco-Rodriguez (2011) and Kasanga (2012) continued in the tradition of ethnolinguistic vitality theory which follows Landry and Bourhis (1997). In an analysis of the Welsh in Patagonia, Coupland and Garrett (2010) used a frame-analytic perspective based on Goffman (1974). This approach was repeated by Coupland (2012) in an analysis of language policy in Wales. In addition, Kallen (2010) used a similar approach in his analysis of the multilingual landscape of Dublin whereas Jaworski and Yeung (2010) used it to explain the naming of residential buildings in Hong Kong. Essentially, these studies illustrate that a frame-analytic perspective can be used to enhance LL studies. The theoretical frameworks discussed in this section are not exhaustive. Although the field of LL studies developed from various different theoretical assumptions and continues to evolve, these previous studies contributed meaningful insights about language use and multilingualism in society and inform the current study.

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2.4 Dialogicality

Another interesting theoretical notion also used in LL studies is that of dialogicality, a concept introduced by Peirce *et al* (1982) who argued that all thinking is dialogic in form. He contends that anything which has significance for humans, such as our experiences, has a three-dimensional quality. He termed this quality 'thirdness' which he considers to be the defining characteristic of signs. This idea was further developed by Bakhtin (1981) which led to dialogicality becoming a recurring theme within social semiotic theories. It has also been mentioned in social, interactional

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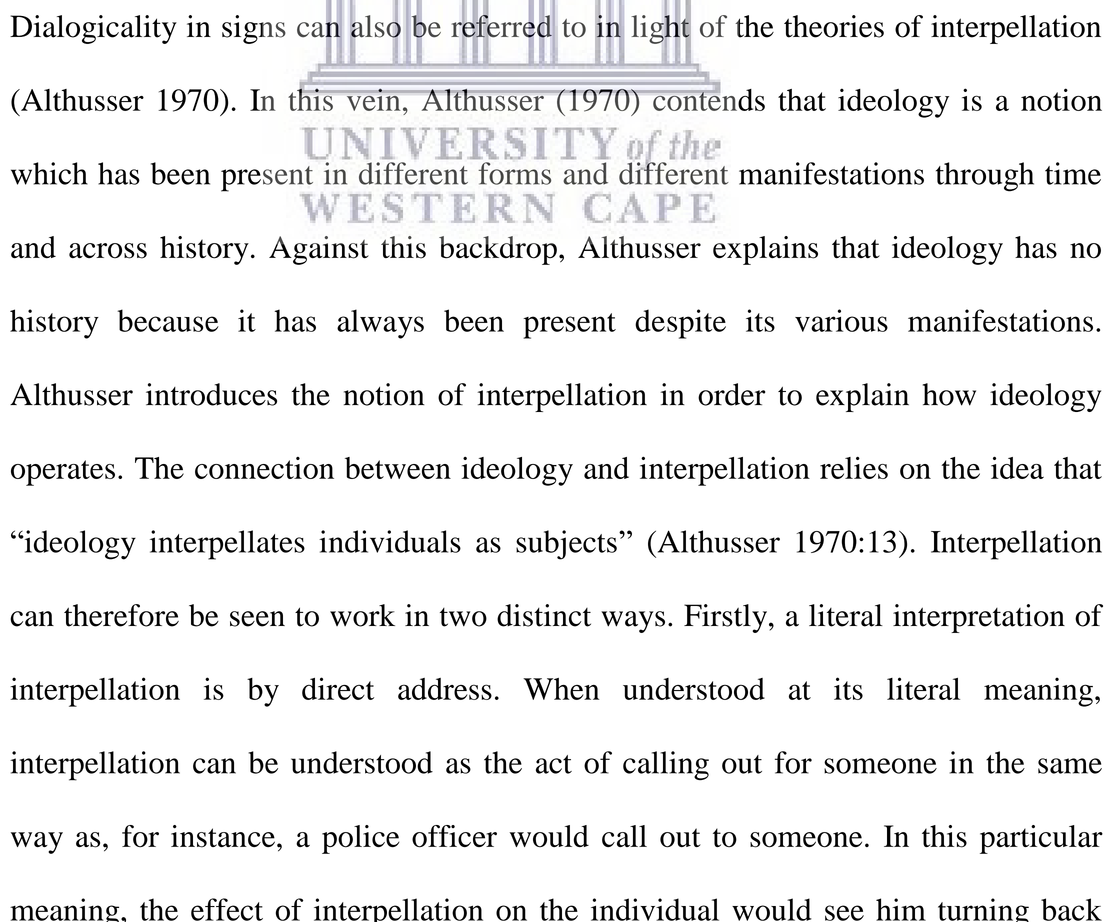
analyses of signs. Dialogicality may therefore be relevant to the understanding of the LL. An idea which is introduced in the geosemiotics framework of Scollon and Scollon (2003) is that signs operate in a network of semiotic aggregates. Semiotic aggregates are defined as “the intersections of multiple discourses and the interaction order in particular places” (Scollon and Scollon 2003:167). Therefore, Scollon and Scollon (2003:205) contend that while all signs operate in aggregate, once they are placed in a particular context or environment they become part of an interdiscursive, intersemiotic, dialogic system. Within a semiotic aggregate, different discourses may interact and influence one another in such ways as, for example, a municipal regulatory discourse aimed at pedestrians and motorists which may interact with a commercial discourse. This idea is consistent with Peirce’s idea of the dialogical nature of signs.



Dialogicality in signs can also be referred to in light of the theories of interpellation (Althusser 1970). In this vein, Althusser (1970) contends that ideology is a notion which has been present in different forms and different manifestations through time and across history. Against this backdrop, Althusser explains that ideology has no history because it has always been present despite its various manifestations. Althusser introduces the notion of interpellation in order to explain how ideology operates. The connection between ideology and interpellation relies on the idea that “ideology interpellates individuals as subjects” (Althusser 1970:13). Interpellation can therefore be seen to work in two distinct ways. Firstly, a literal interpretation of interpellation is by direct address. When understood at its literal meaning, interpellation can be understood as the act of calling out for someone in the same way as, for instance, a police officer would call out to someone. In this particular meaning, the effect of interpellation on the individual would see him turning back

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and answering to this calling. A second way of interpellating an individual is by indirect address. This second type of interpellation can be found in discursive practices such as advertisements and media discourses, and more relevant to this study, in railway signs which form part of the LL. In such cases, ideology constructs subject positions for social subjects and interpellation is the actual process by which ideology constructs these subject positions. As argued by Althusser, the recognition that the individual experiences, which results from the interpellation, is qualified as 'mis-recognition' and is the process whereby an individual identifies or recognises himself as a subject.

The concept of interpellation can therefore be applied to the analysis of signs in the LL where messages are used on these signs to project identities and appeal to a specific audience. This notion is appealing in the field of media in general and can be applied to the analysis of the LL. In this regard, signs at the railways are used to interpellate commuters by using various linguistic devices and discourses. More specifically, signs usually address their audience in direct terms or appeal to emotions. In this way, signs target the audience in terms of a particular culture or subculture. Moreover, interpellation may be more targeted and may have a stronger effect on the interpellated subject since the calling out appears more intimate or personalised. When the audience recognises that they are being spoken to or interpellated, they may interact more intensely with the discourse and may even accept the social role offered. In this way, interpellation is relevant to the understanding of messages on signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa and how their linguistic content is designed to call out to sign readers and represent various linguistic, cultural, historical, and social identities.

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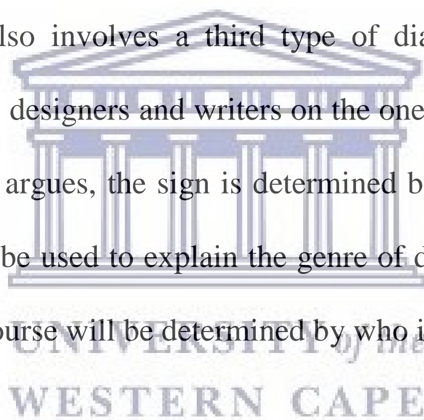
In a similar vein, Kress (2005:19) and also Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) explain that signs are embedded in larger discourses and when designed they are framed in relation to other signs. Whomever they are made by, the signs are always also a response to, and an anticipation of, other signs. Thus, signs need to be understood relationally, and to understand them is also to understand them as an enactment of social relations. This important development contributed by Kress's (2005) model of social semiotics not only explains how signs are embedded in a particular context of social action, but also how they reveal the discursive dialogicality between social actors. Following Scollon and Scollon (2003), the semiotic aggregate quality of signs is not limited to the dialogue between signs, and between signs and sign readers. Instead, it also involves a third type of dialogicality that is a dialogue between sign drafters, designers and writers on the one hand, and sign readers on the other hand. As Kress argues, the sign is determined by who acts, and in relation to whom. This idea can be used to explain the genre of discourse represented on signs since the type of discourse will be determined by who is speaking, and to whom.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In this regard, this idea supports the notion that signs represent the interplay of the dialogicality of speaker/addressee or designer/audience. More specifically, the genre of discourse on signs not only communicates about the nature of the sign but also gives us an idea about the type of audience the signs address. By being situated in a particular social environment, signs provide a representative picture of the context in which they are embedded. Signs are also symbolic of wider social relationships and structuration. Therefore, by examining signs in the context of the broader discourses and social arrangements in the LL of the public railways in South Africa, a complex view emerges of the sociolinguistic practices and linguistic norms within a post-apartheid South African society.

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2.5 Spatialisation of the LL

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) contend that visual images can be read as text and that the metaphor of grammar can be applied to the study of visuals. In their view, grammar is a set of socially constructed resources for the construction of meaning, as opposed to being a set of rules for the correct use of language. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) this grammar can be used by individuals to shape the subjectivities of others. They suggest a concept of the semiotic landscape which has boundaries, a history, specific features, and landmarks. They believe that visual design, like language and all semiotic modes, is socially constructed. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) provide a framework for interpreting visual semiotics in terms of categories such as left-right, up-down, front-back, centre-margin, colour and saturation. This framework is useful for the study and analysis of multilingual signs in the LL.

The technological advancement in visual communication in recent years has significantly impacted the semiotic landscape. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) suggest its importance could be attributed to the cultural diversification that has transpired within Western societies, along with the effects of globalisation. Along this vein, Spolsky (2009) contends that a distinction should be made between local and global signs. He argues that global signs are mostly reproductions of international advertisements as used worldwide and that the languages used on these signs would seem immaterial.

Furthermore, Edelman (2010) points out that proper nouns and global brand names affect the results of LL studies and reveal important information of the linguistic situation. Also, the prevalence of English in most LL studies can be attributed to the

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influence of globalisation (Backhaus 2007). Thus, English in the LL can be found at various sites, such as tourist attractions or urban locations that have mixed sociolinguistic groups. In these instances English would serve as the lingua franca. However, Huebner (2006) argues that the perception that English in Bangkok is aimed mainly at tourists and other foreigners is not necessarily accurate. Backhaus (2007) concurs with Huebner regarding the use of English in Tokyo. While, Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) suggest that in Israel, English is used for tourism and it also indicates prestige whereas Cenoz and Gorter (2006) point out that English is used because it has the status of the language of international communication.

In their research that presents an economic approach to the study of the LL, Cenoz and Gorter (2009) explain the benefits of using English within the context of globalisation. They argue that throughout the world, multilingual signs tend to include English which can be associated with "markets of production, consumption, international orientation, modernity, success, sophistication and fun" (2009:57-58). Furthermore, Leeman and Modan observe that LL is a commodified and subjective space which they view as "topographies that shape and are shaped by the items with which they are collected" (2010:182). In this way, LL is therefore both a product and producer of meaning.

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In addition, because of the commodification of space, its meaning is polysemous which is premised on the contention that the urban landscape is a platform for the commodification of space (*ibid*). Using a contextualised approach to the material manifestations of language, as well as design elements in the built environment in Chinatown, the authors further observe that "the language on [the] sign gains its meaning from the extralinguistic phenomena, such as the political and economic

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interests that led to its creation or its location in space, as well from the language of the other signs around it" (Leeman and Modan 2010:182). People are therefore able to create their own identities by using processes of geographical imaginings (Thurlow and Jaworski 2010). Furthermore, the authors argue that in much the same way as locating oneself in a particular space may include the ownership of place and the interactions with such places with other occupants, national or regional identity is constructed via physical attributes of a place, such as images and the linguistic representations of the particular space (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010).

In an earlier study on the use of European languages in Japanese advertising, Haarmann (1989) describes how foreign languages used in advertising attempt to associate the advertised product with an ethnocultural stereotype about the speakers of a particular language. He explains that whether or not the target audience actually understands the meaning of a foreign language, they identify the advertised product as belonging to a particular language. In addition, they attach an ethnocultural stereotype about the language group to the advertised product. For example, Haarmann found that stereotypes usually associated with English include "international appreciation, reliability, high quality, confidence, practical use [and] practical life style" while French is associated with "high elegance, refined taste, attractiveness, sophisticated life style, fascination and charm" (1989:11). Furthermore, English is used for products such as alcohol, cars, TV sets, stereos, and sport wear with these qualities whereas French is used for fashion, watches, food and perfumes (c.f. Haarmann 1989; Kelly-Holmes 2005; 2010; 2014).

In a similar vein, by considering visual multilingualism in advertising, Kelly-Holmes (2005; 2010) explores the use of German in advertisements targeting an English

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audience in the United Kingdom. She contends that the use of German in advertisements addresses a predominantly English-speaking audience in the United Kingdom and serves to index positive stereotypes about inter alia, German car engineering and beer brewing competence, for instance (Kelly-Holmes 2005:49-50). Building on and extending this work, Kelly-Holmes (2014) explores the notion of 'linguistic fetish' as a sociolinguistic practice across various modes and media. She uses the term linguistic fetish in reference to the use of languages for symbolic or fetishised purposes in marketing and advertising texts, as opposed to instrumental-communicative purposes. Kelly-Holmes (2014) further elaborates that the concept of linguistic fetish was developed to explain multilingualism in commercial displays, such as marketing and advertising texts.

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Thus, Kelly-Holmes (2014) suggests that language can be used as part of an advertisement or LL, not merely for its semantic content, but also for the way it looks. Drawing on the notion of linguistic fetish, she points out that the languages that constitute visual multilingualism in the LL could be seen as interconnected modes of meaning. She examines the commodification of visual language in contemporary consumer culture to determine their sociolinguistic implications. In an example of foreign language as visual in a French beer advertisement, she shows how linguistic fetish entails an understanding of foreignness from the point of view of one's own habitus. She explains that the foreign words used in such texts are arranged from the point of view of another language that is considered as the norm, in this case English (Kelly-Holmes 2014:141). She therefore suggests that English serves as "the blank canvas on which a little French is painted" (Kelly-Holmes 2014:141). Furthermore, she explains that this type advertisement relies on a common practice in foreign language fetish, whereby the name of the product is

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given in the language of the country of origin. She offers examples of the use of the word "bier", for German beer; "auto", for German cars; "technik", for German technology and "kaas", for Dutch cheese (2014:141).

With regards to her analysis of the Internet Web pages of French beer, Japanese cars and Finnish pottery, respectively, Kelly-Holmes (2014) argues that visual English, foreign and minority language fetish, all confirm the growing manipulation of the visuality of language in commercial domains, particularly the Internet. Thus, in increasingly multimodal contexts, she demonstrates that it has become more complicated to distinguish visual from textual functions of text. Consequently, she argues that the visual has become a fundamental focal point in late-modern society, particularly since the Internet forms part of many people's daily sociolinguistic practices. Furthermore, Kelly-Holmes mentions that it is also a developing site of sociolinguistic inquiry and contends that "visual multilingualism is a playful practice that enriches and potentially challenges the monolingual's world" (2014:49). However, she also cautions that researchers should continue to interrogate those languages which are present or absent in the public domain, and what they reveal about the various ideologies of languages and their speakers.

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Seen in this way, the branding of commodities and places in the LL can be attributed to the influence of globalisation and consequently, spaces are designed according to the identities which people desire to portray within those particular spaces. It is therefore possible to differentiate between particular places by merely observing the semiotic resources within these places, such as branding and other signs in the LL. Therefore, the iconic signs of place, such as products, buildings, statues and towers would form part of the perceived epitome of the official national identity which

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Sörlin (1999) calls the 'articulation of territory'. It is a process by which the natural and constructed architectural landscapes are described, reproduced, and recreated in various texts and social practices (c.f. Cosgrove *et al*., 1995). The concept of territorial articulation is linked to Lefebvre's (1991) dimensions of space. It entails consideration of 'conceived space' which includes perceptual images of space such as commercial advertisements, 'perceived space' which is the physical space responsible for both economic and social production, and lastly, 'lived space' which is produced through either the experiential and interactional of both the conceived and perceived spaces. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010:8) consider these three concepts as modes of spaces which they refer to as 'spatialisation', where semiotic representations are structured and used to produce meanings of spatial and social practices.

Against this backdrop, Kitiarsa (2006:1) suggests that "commodifying processes are highly inventive and specifically embedded in the local-global trajectories of the market economy" since the commodification of space, language and culture involves a mutual trade-off between these elements and the goods that are being sold in a particular space. Furthermore, Leeman and Modan (2010:186, 188) explain that "The commodification of culture and marketing of places, goods and services is mutually reinforcing and it takes place at multiple scales" and that "culture is used not only to frame public space and to attract consumers of goods and services, but also to legitimate the appropriation of that space by private and commercial interest" (*ibid*). Most shopping centres therefore have spaces for leisure, culture and entertainment which make shopping more of a relaxing activity. In this way, cultural artifacts in shopping spaces therefore add value to the commodities being sold, in much the same way as commodities add value to the accompanying cultural artifacts.

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The commodification of language could therefore be seen "as the very processes of globalisation which impact on language, interdependence, compression across time and space, disembedding and commodification" (Coupland 2003:467). Moreover, the idea of contrasting goods and cultural artifacts is also described at restaurants to illustrate it as experiences. For instance, it may therefore seem trendy to see rock and roll memorabilia complexly entangled within built-up environments and the foods being sold. In addition, there is usually a preference for ethnic, locally grown or organic foods, associated with "a sense of sophistication or cultural caché" (Leeman and Modan 2010:185). The authors draw attention to urban areas where historical architectural sites are preserved and integrated with commercial retail sites. They explain that in these places, commodities are sold through the accompanying cultural artifacts and language and argue that language and ethnic commodification serve as a means to generate a sale (Leeman and Modan 2010: 186-191).

Examples of this can be seen in signs displaying a foreign language with or without a different orthography from the language of the target consumer. In such cases, language is valued based on its ethnicity and aesthetic qualities as opposed to its semantic content. Typical examples may include Chinese signs in Chinatown or as mentioned previously, Arabic script on a sign to index 'halaal' food, for instance. In these types of signs, unfamiliar orthography, such as Chinese, is backgrounded while aesthetic qualities are accentuated when the signs are viewed by non-Chinese speaking readers. In this regard, Leeman and Modan (2010:192) contend that it is actually the language that is being sold as opposed to it being used to sell commodities. The commodification of language in the LL of the railways in South Africa therefore serves to enhance commodities in much the same way as the built environment serves as spaces in which culture is commodified. Furthermore, tourists

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may tend to experience a sense of having visited an authentic place in the face of foreign or minority languages displayed on signs in the LL. In this way, language may therefore also serve to index ethnicity but this is not always the case as pointed out by Banda (2010). When linked to commercial products, places and experiences, language adds to the commodification of culture, typical of the symbolic economy. Leeman and Modan (2010:196) therefore argue that "written language is anchored to territory and becomes a vehicle both for the spatialisation of culture and the commodification of spaces". Thus, the current study draws on the notion of commodification as used by Leeman and Modan (2010) to recontextualise sociocultural artifacts, as well as semiotic resources in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. In particular, the visibility of non-regional and foreign languages in the LL is also taken into account.

Drawing on Peck and Banda's (2014) and Noy's (2011) mobility and pliability of space, the current study shows that space is constantly being reconfigured and recontextualised based on the semiotic resources visible and salient to the user in time and space. Since semiotic resources are socioculturally and historically dependent, they are constantly being replaced, enhanced or transformed by social actors within these spaces. As Peck and Banda (2014:1) observe; "it is the people within space who carve out new social practices in their appropriated space". In following Scollon and Scollon (2003), Peck and Banda (2014) view space not just as objects and boundaries, instead, space encompasses language and interactional practices apparent in a community. Space could therefore be conceptualised as a combination of "language, artifacts, cultural symbols, kinds of social interaction, as well as sociocultural composition of constituencies in a specific area" (Peck and Banda 2014:4). However, Leeman and Modan (2010) caution that space should be

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considered as subjective representations rather than objective physical spaces. The reason for this is that the readers of signs may not always interpret the author's subjective or objective representations. Furthermore, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2003; 2006) contend that both sign makers and consumers are influenced by their ideology in the production and consumption of signs. Seen in this way, the production and consumption of signs centred on ideology increases the potential for subjectivity in the LL which should therefore not necessarily be viewed as an objective space.

In a more recent study, Banda and Mokwena (2018) use LL images from two rural communities in the Northern Cape, South Africa to illustrate how indigenous African languages and localised English are entangled as commodities. They show that new forms of commodification do not necessarily involve 'standard' English, which is considered an effect of globalisation (c.f. Coupland 2013:3). In addition, they explain that these new forms of commodification are not reserved for modern, urbanised landscapes which are intended solely for consumption by the wealthy or tourists. Instead, they argue that rural and traditional modes of production are also capable of influencing commodification in the LL in terms of their various offerings. Thus, drawing on commercial advertising in the LL of the Northern Cape, Banda and Mokwena (2018) show how local languages are also commodified. The authors argue that the symbolic value of English as the absolute language of commodification, as portrayed in the literature, is not universal. Furthermore, they argue that in contexts such as the Northern Cape, English competes with the other local languages; in this case, Setswana and Afrikaans. Seen in this way, Banda and Mokwena (2018) demonstrate that the local languages, Setswana and Afrikaans, are valuable commodities in the LL since they serve as languages of marketisation. In addition, the authors observe that in instances where English is used, it is mostly

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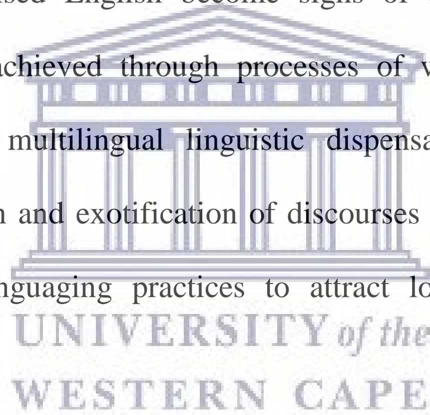
localised to assume Bantu language morphophonology. In addition, English is often blended with one or two of the local languages for aesthetic and marketisation purposes in commercial advertising in the localised spaces (Banda and Mokwena 2018). In addition, they show that the commodification of languages and the accompanying hybridised forms entail consideration of the semiotic choices of the local authorship of signs. It also entails consideration of the influence of local communities' languaging practices in the LL.

Banda and Mokwena (2018) conclude that local languages probably share a similar commodity status with English in the LL of the Northern Cape. Therefore, local languages and localised English become signs of commodification in the LL. Essentially, this is achieved through processes of what the authors refer to as "Africanisation and multilingual linguistic dispensation economic practices in place"; "mystification and exotification of discourses as marketisation tools"; "and the use of local languaging practices to attract local customers" (Banda and Mowkena 2018:30).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2.6 Reconstructing signs across time

Most of the previous LL case studies discussed in this chapter are synchronic in nature and capture the language situation as it was at the time of data collection only. However, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) use a diachronic approach in their analysis of signs in the streets of Jerusalem. They found that languages, their order and translation on signs were subject to change depending on who was in power. Similarly, Backhaus (2005; 2007) also uses a diachronic approach in his study of Tokyo. He compared older signs with newer ones to illustrate the changes in signage over time. Backhaus (2007) argues for a diachronic approach because it enables the

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researcher to capture the dynamic nature of the LL within a given area. This approach also enables the researcher to assess changes in the LL over time and to interpret the aspects that influence those changes. This is because language in the public space serves as a platform for not only power struggles and affirmation, but also for linguistic and ethnolinguistic conflicts. In addition, it serves as a platform for the expression of identity and beliefs of individuals and groups within society. Backhaus (2007) therefore contends that synchronic studies of the same areas done at different intervals do not reveal these dynamic trends as effectively as diachronic studies do.

In this vein, Blommaert (2013:7) argues that LL studies "require a historicising sociolinguistic analysis" because it could account for social change and transformation in the texts displayed in the public space over time. Moreover, Blommaert argues that "LL studies attempt to produce accurate and detailed inventories of urban multilingualism" (2013:5). Thus, Blommaert points out that such LLs are usually found in late-modern, globalised cities. Also, these types of cities are considered to be densely multilingual environments in which the language on public signs indexes the presence of various linguistically distinguishable groups of people. For Blommaert (2013) LLs are beneficial since they serve as a first-line sociolinguistic analytic of a particular geographical area. In addition, they offer a complete theoretical framework for analysing the sociolinguistic characteristics of an area. In this way, LLs serve as instruments for explorative fieldwork which is the case with the current study. Blommaert (2013) therefore supports using LL studies as an approach to research space in sociolinguists. He argues that such an approach is needed to shift sociolinguistic research from its synchronic nature to a historicising sociolinguistics (Blommaert 2013:7). Such a shift is valuable since it

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offers researchers tools which could assist them to recognise changes in the emplacement and semiotic characteristics of signs in the LL which index change. Without these tools, these changes may still become visible but over longer periods of time through census reports and other similar official studies. Blommaert (2013) offers an example of this which can be seen in an ethnographic study of a neighbourhood called Berchem, in Antwerp, Belgium. Thus, Blommaert suggests a paradigm shift about sociolinguistic thinking, foregrounding a historically sensitive sociolinguistic ethnography thereby clarifying how it relates to LL studies. Furthermore, Blommaert (2013) emphasises the importance of understanding peoples' historical trajectories, the normative histories of space, and the interaction order that emerges as a person's historical body moves through different spaces (c.f. Kress 2009; Scollon and Scollon 2003, 2004; Silverstein and Urban 1996).

A LL approach thus entails consideration of the person, space, and interaction order as the object of ethnographic inquiry (Blommaert 2013). A description of the emplacement and semiotic construction of signs in spaces is therefore the first step involved in this type of inquiry. The reason for this is that the linguistic and other semiotic resources used in signs point backwards in time to who produced them while also pointing forward in time to an audience or public who would read them (Blommaert 2013). Therefore, Blommaert (2013) explains that paying attention to these signs would reflect the competence of their writers, their language and social backgrounds, the degree to which they are older or newer migrants, and the degree to which the target audience are older or newer communities. Furthermore, Blommaert (2013) demonstrates the potential of this approach in his comparison of three posters in his neighbourhood; the first is a professionally published one written in a register of Turkish, and the other two are produced on a home computer and printer in

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registers of Spanish and Polish, respectively. He explains that these posters reveal much about the writers and their intended audience. For instance, the Turkish sign which is emplaced in a Turkish store advertises a Turkish singer coming to another town in Belgium from Turkey. The emplacement, style and information on the poster point to a well-networked, well-financed, and older migrant community. On the other hand, the Spanish and Polish posters which advertise local recently formed community groups point to these groups' limited resources. The emplacement of these posters in stores not associated with either of these emergent communities supports the view that these posters are made for and intended for members of newly emergent communities (Blommaert 2013).

Blommaert shows that the semiotic resources found in posters and other signs in combination with their emplacement reveal information about historical change in a particular space. The use of bilingual posters or shop signs, for example, conveys a historical message. It speaks about the children of migrants who had access to the types of education that provide upskilling in Dutch which enables the production of bilingual signs. Signs produced by later generations of migrants are contrasted with other signs that contradict limited and unstable literacy competences, e.g. grassroots literacy, which can point to newer migrants with limited literacy in either Dutch or their own language/s. These comparisons of literacy practices reveal changes in the LL and the relationships between different sets of signs over time. For example, upskilling in the literacy competencies of the children of older migrants, such as those who produce bilingual signs, also enables them to move into service industries, which create the necessary infrastructure to encourage further migration while meeting the consumption demands of both old and new migrants. Blommaert identifies this interdependent nature of different layered interaction orders as

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complexity and an empirical feature of what he calls 'superdiversity'. As an ordering logic of complexity, emergent infrastructure also includes abbreviated and basic competence in Dutch and the newly opened churches and shops selling cheap goods. Blommaert notes that these emergent infrastructures also engender a type of sociability which he calls 'conviviality'. He contends that a LL approach enables researchers to see change as the central and defining feature of sociolinguistic inquiry (Blommaert 2013). Thus, the current study draws on Blommaert's approach which advocates for a move beyond synchronicity and boundedness towards a historicising of signs in the LL of the public railways in South Africa.

In keeping with Blommaert (2013), in a publication entitled *"Translocal skinscapes: mobility and spatialisation of tattoos on skin as local space"*, Banda, Roux and Peck (2018) show how female student tattooees rely on translocated material culture to historicise objects, events, memories and experiences through the tattoos imprinted on their skin. As a point of departure, the authors explain that tattoos were previously mainly symbolic of transgressive, masculin lifestyles, particularly in Western societies. However, they point out that this view has evolved over time. More specifically, they explain that in recent years tattoos are considered by some as fine art and are not necessarily indicative of rebellious, transgressive lifestyles. In addition, the authors emphasise that tattoo parlours have become legitimate businesses, with skilled tattoo artists, offereing various innovative designs to their customers. Against this backdrop, Banda, Roux and Peck (2018) explore verbal and image texts of tattoos to demonstrate how tattoos are used to create various narratives about rebellion, the subculture of tattoo social networks and how they are used to shape alternative lifestyles to mainstream norms. Furthermore, the authors explore the duality of the alternative lifestyles of the tattoo subculture to showcase

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the visible and the invisible life-worlds of tattooees. In doing so, they uncover a unique visualisation of space that tatooees use to maintain this tattoo subculture which exists parallel to mainstream norms. Their interview findings show that tattoos have significant emotional and symbolic context which is largely invisible when viewed by mainstream outsiders.

The authors conclude that visible and invisible skinscapes produce parallel visualisations of space. They juxtapose what appears to be a typical untattooed, female student when viewed from the outside, with a rebellious, trangressive tattooed student on the inside. Banda, Roux and Peck (2018) argue that the first visualisation is what outsiders typically perceive while insiders recognise the complex interaction between both visualisations. Thus, they suggest that the parallel worlds of the tattoo subculture and the mainstream comprise hybrid, alternative lifestyles of female tattooees. Lastly, the authors argue that tattoos are not necessarily representative but rather, they portray the embodiment and existence of "translocated mobile cultural objects and symbols, which charge the emotional energies, that are re-channeled back to maintain the alternative subculture" (Banda, Roux and Peck 2018:28). Thus, the current study draws on Banda, Roux and Peck's (2018) research on how translocated material culture is used to historicise objects, events, memories and experiences through the tattoos imprinted on female students'skin. Moreover, Banda, Roux and Peck's (2018) study helps to explain some of the ways in which commuters respond to the transformed LL of the public railways in a post-apartheid South African context, and to juxtapose the present-day LL with their memories of the apartheid LL.

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2.7 Recontextualising the LL

Resemiotisation, as an extension of multimodality, entails consideration of how texts make meaning, flowing through different contexts, from one mode of communication to another, from practice to practice, or from one phase of a practice to another (Iedema 2003:41). Thus, resemiotisation involves what O'Halloran (2011) explains occurs within unfolding multimodal discourses as these discourses move between various resources and across different contexts. Furthermore, resemiotisation entails a reconstruction of meaning as semiotic choices change across spatial and temporal boundaries. It results in semantic variations in texts since these choices from different semiotic resources are often disproportionate (Lemke (1998). Resemiotisation offers analytical tools for tracing the translation and interpretation of semiotics across various modes. It centres on how some meaning-makings are accessible and negotiable because of the resources used, such as ordinary talk, gesture and posture. Other meaning-makings may require additional resources such as brochures, music, jingles and so on. It is for this reason that Stroud and Mpendukana (2009:371) contend that resemiotisation involves a remodulation or reframing of discourses and modalities, contextualisation and recontextualisation. They support Iedema's (2003:30) idea that resemiotisation entails consideration of the transformative dynamics of socially situated meaning-making processes thereby recognising the shifting and re-ordering of textual meanings. In addition, Mpendukana (2009) explains that dealing with resemiotisation involves exploring how discourses are encoded through semiotics across various technologies. For example, still or mobile visual images, written texts in newspapers, brochures, billboards, leaflets and various types of audio-visual electronic messages. Since these types of discourses are multimodal and often include other multimodal texts

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within the same mode, the result of resemiotisation could be linked with intertextuality. The linguistic creativity, mobility, and transformation within these discourses reveal how social, cultural and historical situations are realised and recontextualised through the process of resemiotisation (Iedema 2003:29).

Resemiotisation focuses on the principle and the possibility of social change. It centres on transfigurations and shifts from somewhat transitory or transient to sturdy or enduring social practices and resources (Iedema 2010). Moreover, Iedema (2010:143) explains that it "borders and determines social difference reconstructed in contemporary hierarchies of semiotic organisation". Iedema (2010) further explains that resemiotisation is not described in terms of textual transformation; instead, it can be described in terms of social and/or organisational expansions. In his study of public policy shifting, Iedema (2010:154) notes that resemiotisation is an important consideration for planning perceptible issues, such as policy reforms. This view can be attributed to the complex and sophisticated nature of policy reforms which have also become multisemiotic. Thus, resemiotisation reveals systems which are invisible or concealed, through a process of open disclosure trajectory as pointed out by Prior and Hengst (2010). In addition, Prior and Hengst (2010) explore semiotic remediation as a discourse practice in the sense that, just as people account and re-voice other people's words in talk, they also habitually re-perform others' gestures and actions, repurpose objects, represent ideas in different media and remake both their environments and themselves. Such reworking involves numerous categories of signs such as talk, gesture and writing, designing of spaces and making of objects. Prior, Hengst, Roozen and Shipka (2006:734) explain that adopting semiotic remediation as a social practice draws attention to the diverse ways that human and non-human semiotic performances, histories or images are

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represented and re-used across modes, media and chains of activity. Therefore, the significance of semiotic remediation stems from ways that activity is remediated through taking up materials at hand, putting them to present use thereby producing transformed circumstances for prospective accomplishment. As opposed to mediating afresh, it entails using the old semiotics for reading a current situation. It moves away from re-branding where re-branding is re-designing for the purposes of maintaining global scapes, such as ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes (Thurlow and Aiello 2007:308).

Prior and Hengst (2010:6) contend that remediation focusses on the positioned and mediated nature of activity thereby simultaneously identifying the concealed combination of semiotic mediation with the practices of daily sociocultural life. This view explains how individuals deal with various modes of communication across spatial and temporal boundaries. Furthermore, Prior and Hengst (2010) explore how novels and narratives are developed into movies which then become video games that are turned into web 'fanzines' and product brands through a process of 'repurposing'. Although this centres on how semiotic artifacts are understood and include various semiotic modes such as texts, images, sound and the Internet, Prior and Hengst (2010) explain that it does not focus on the developing remediation of the situated production and reception of those artifacts. Although multimodality and repurposing appear to overlap, messages that are initially communicated orally and are then later printed onto a board would be regarded as an example of remediation. However, if the board was used for something else previously, then it would be repurposing. Thus remediation indexes broader forms of communicative methods as opposed to merely transmitting information from one mode of communication to another.

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Silverstein and Urban (1996) developed the notion of entextualisation which is a process whereby a text is moved from its original context and inserted into a new one. Therefore, entextualisation is simultaneously recontextualisation and linked to resemiotisation which complements the concept of multimodality. While research on multimodality tends to address the interaction among multiple semiotic modes in one text, resemiotisation examines how a text is transformed from one mode to another. Although the concept of discourse cycle (Scollon and Scollon 2004) is similar to that of resemiotisation and entextualisation, it has a broader analytical scope. In particular, discourse cycles entail not only tracing trajectories of texts but also the trajectory of individual social actor, as well as the trajectory of each material resource (Bourdieu 1984:170; Scollon 2001:144). Essentially, all these trajectories form discourse cycles which circulate through a particular moment of social interaction. Thus, resemiotisation, entextualisation and discourse cycles are complementary and not mutually exclusive therefore any of these concepts may be suitable during LL analysis. Since the current study specifically focusses on resemiotisation and entextualisation in the LL of the public railways in South Africa, it offers a comprehensive nexus analysis (Scollon and Scollon 2004) of discourse cycles involved in these processes. For example, in a longitudinal study of organisational communication in a health facility, Iedema (2003) traces the trajectory of how spoken interactions at a meeting were transformed into written documents which were used in the spatial reconfiguration of a hospital. The concept of resemiotisation therefore focusses on the change in the material form of text whereas studies of entextualisation focus on the discursive and metadiscursive plane of meaning, such as content.

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Offering an example of resemiotosation in the material world, Banda and Jimaima (2015) explore the LL in rural areas of Livingstone and Lusaka, Zambia, where oral language is mainly used for remediating the production and consumption of signs in the LL. In particular, the authors focus on how oral language is used for the narration of place across various purposes through processes of realigning semiotic material such as trees, hills, bush paths, physical objects and faded signs. The authors rely on the notion of repurposing to demonstrate how people from rural areas expand the repertoire of signs to include the aforementioned semiotic material without necessarily relying on written texts. Banda and Jimaima (2015) show how people re-use memory, objects, artifacts and cultural materialities in place to new uses, and for extended meaning potentials. In this way, people in these rural areas use their mental system of signs to transcend the limitations of their material conditions. The authors explain that focusing on the semiotic ecology in the LL helps to emphasise the multisemiotic and diverse process characteristics of meaning-making, particularly in areas that do not have written texts on signs indicating street and place names. In addition, they argue that sign and place-making is a dynamic and continuous process since space is constantly imagined, reimagined, created and reinvented. These processes unfold "as people draw different meanings from the semiotic material in place as mediated by communication needs, memory, sentiments and perceptions of producers and consumers" (Banda and Jimaima 2015:649).

Furthermore, Banda and Jimaima (2015) point out that different people might use different reference points, and recognise different features of the semiotic material in the LL to give directions, for instance. In addition, they show that oral linguascaping enables people to easily repurpose ideas, sociocultural knowledge and materialities, and other semiotic materials in place, for meanings and functions for which they

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were not necessarily known or designed for. Thus, Banda and Jimaima (2015) argue that following the multimodal turn in LL studies, texts on signs do not necessarily have to be physically visible neither do they have to be present in place. Banda and Jimaima's (2015) assertion is useful in the current study in that it helps to explain how commuters perceive and experience the LL of the railways, particularly in those places and spaces where apartheid signs were previously displayed, but are no longer physically there.

In another more recent study, Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018) explore the notion of semiotic remediation to emphasise repurposing and agency in sign making and consumption, and also as a tool in social semiotic approaches to multimodal discourse analysis in LL studies. Using data from observations, interviews and images of linguistic landscapes in Chinese from two rural sites in Zambia, they highlight the agency of social actors in the re-imagination and re-invention of Chinese signs for new meanings and new purposes in narrations of place. The authors show how social actors appropriate authorship of signs from the Chinese originators, through oral re-narrations that infuse Chinese signs with new local meanings and purposes.

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Considering that local people do not necessarily read and recognise signs as Chinese sign makers intended, Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018) discuss the layered materialisation of authorship, along with the duality of sign and object, and the subsequent intended meanings resulting from the dynamic interactions of sign, people and place. In addition, they emphasise the need for LL studies to theorise sign production and consumption that levels the interests of the sign maker with those of local people who impose their own interests through what they call subjective

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remediations. The authors conclude that as the Chinese signs become part of the local repertoire of signs, they concurrently connect and disconnect local and far-away Chinese life-worlds, and the transformation of the local and global contexts of sign making and consumption.

2.8 An ethnographic approach

In addressing the guiding research objectives of the current study and to provide answers to the specific research questions, digital images of signs in the LL were collected in the individual research sites, supplemented with survey questionnaire responses and interviews with rail commuters, along with an evaluation of policy and demographic documents. Combined, these constitute the ethnographic methodology that was used for the current study. Ethnographic designs are qualitative research procedures aimed at describing, analysing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language that develop over time (Creswell 2012). Ethnography therefore inquires, describes and explains details about the lifestyles of the researcher and in particular, the research subjects. Ethnography also involves participant observation since the researcher is immersed in the daily lives of those being researched (*ibid*). In this way, the ethnographic methodology used in the current study aims to yield data about the languages used on signs, the linguistic content of the signs and their semiotic potential, observations of the LL by the researcher and the perceptions and experiences of rail commuters of the LL. It is envisaged that the analysis of these different types of data will extrapolate answers to the specific research questions about the LL of the railways in South Africa.

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The main reason for relying an ethnographic approach for the current study is that data collection in ethnography renders the study valid and reliable as pointed out by Scollon and Scollon (2003:17) In a similarly vein as Cresswell (2012), Scollon and Scollon also explain that ethnographic research procedures entail consideration of field work, participant observation, strange making and contrastive observation (*ibid*). Thus, instead of speculating on the happenings, the ethnographer conducts fieldwork by selecting a real place with actors and activities. Thereafter, ethnographic data is collected by means of observation, participation and interviews. Data is recorded ethnographically inter alia, by taking field notes and photographs, thereby documenting the observable activities or patterns of the daily life of the community. Thus, ethnography essentially entails iterative-inductive research that draws on a combination of methods, such as maintaining direct and sustained contact with people, within the context of their daily lives, and observing and recording their behaviours over a period of time (O'Reilly 2005:3). An advantage of ethnographic research is that it entails a broader study that includes historical and political contexts that help researchers understand various aspects of human nature, such as patterns of behaviours and cultures (Low, Taplin and Scheld 2005:179). The current study therefore relies on an ethnographic approach to explore the political, sociocultural and the historical influences on semiotic resources in the LL of the public railways in South Africa across spatial and temporal boundaries.

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2.9 Recent trends in LL research

Woldemariam and Lanza (2014) explain that the issue of language contact in the LL is seldom addressed, particularly issues pertaining to agency and power. They point out that the LL allows for exploring agency in the context of literacy, language rights

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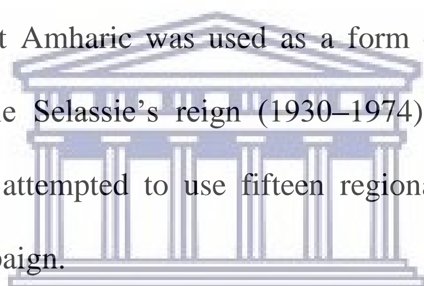
and identity in multilingual environments. In particular, the authors note that little attention has been given to the study of the LL in urban sites in the Global South. Thus, they explore the LL of two different regions in Ethiopia to provide an analysis of language contact that takes place between regional languages. Their study is based on data collected through field work and participant observation from two federal regions in the country; Tigray and Oromia. Their results show the various ways in which speakers of the regional languages draw on their multilingual resources to create a new arena for language use, thereby asserting their agency in developing new literacy practices. Furthermore, the authors show that Amharic is used as a lingua franca by people of various ethnic origins and backgrounds. Moreover, the authors point out that Amharic was used as a form of domination in the country during Emperor Haile Selassie's reign (1930–1974). After this period, the new military government attempted to use fifteen regional languages as part of their national literacy campaign.



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While the development of regional languages became an official government aim, the use of these languages was limited to oral conversations only. Thus, Amharic remained the dominant language, particularly in literacy. It continued to be used as the official language of instruction and literacy in primary education, until the demise of the communist military regime in 1991. Thereafter, the newly formed government introduced a national educational policy which was based on the use of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction in schools. These changes in policy aimed to foster national unity, identity and development, while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity. The authors argue that despite this new policy which aimed to elevate the status of regional languages, there is a persistent ideology supporting the use of Amharic as a national language. In this way, Amharic continues to pervade

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literacy practices and remains the language of choice for formal spoken language to this day. Thus, Woldemariam and Lanza (2014) conclude that examining the LL provides an interesting perspective for evaluating agency and power, as their study demonstrates.

In their study on immigrant languages in Sienna, Italy, Barni and Bagna (2015), reflect on the developments in LL research over time. They analyse its role and aims, and in particular, offer a critical discussion on the methods and tools used to collect and interpret data. Their analysis highlights that subsequent LL studies have significantly expanded since the pivotal study by Landry and Bourhis (1997). Moreover, the authors explain that the objects, methods, and tools of analysis in LL studies have changed to satisfy different research goals, to describe specific aspects of the LL, and to interpret and understand the LL using interdisciplinary approaches. The authors describe how both the methodologies and objects of analysis have developed over the years and consider various previous LL studies (c.f. Gorter, 2006; Shohamy and Gorter, 2009; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael, and Barni, 2010; Hélot, Barni, Janssens, and Bagna, 2012).

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As a point of departure, Barni and Bagna (2015) discuss their own research on Italian among foreigners and immigrant languages in Italy. They acknowledge that earlier LL studies were predominantly quantitative in nature and that later, more interdisciplinary approaches developed, such as semiotic, sociological, political, geographical and economic approaches. The authors explain that these developments entailed consideration of not only quantitative but also qualitative research methods. Thus, they argue that merely counting the number of languages in the LL is insufficient to account for the complex and dynamic situations in which various

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languages coexist. In addition, the authors point out that a more global approach to LL studies developed over time which led to an expansion in the topics of analysis. Furthermore, Barni and Bagna (2015) contend that LL studies should not be confined to verbal and written languages and argue that it also entails consideration of the complexity of semiotic spaces; people as authors, actors, and users, all of which form part of LL research.

Similar criticism has been levelled by Blommaert and Maly (2014). They point out a predominantly quantitative approach in previous LL studies, in which public visible languages are counted and mapped in terms of their distribution over a specific area. The authors argue that such studies fail "to explain how the presence and distribution of languages could be connected with specific populations and communities and the relationship between them, or with the patterns of social interaction in which people engage in the particular space" (Blommaert and Maly, 2014:3). Thus, they argue that studying the LL should not be limited to merely counting the languages present in it, but it should also entail contextualising the analysis, broadening it to encompass the actors who shape or use the landscape, and the factors which have contributed to its development over time.

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In addition, they explain that different investigative methodologies could be used, depending on the guiding research objectives. For instance, Blommaert and Maly, (2014) explain that purely quantitative LL studies are valid, if such a methodology is suited to the goal. However, they caution that it may fail to provide detailed insights into what is really going on in particular settings. With this in mind, it becomes clear that not all LL studies require quantitative approaches since certain research goals may call for qualitative methods, such as personal interviews or survey

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questionnaires. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative approaches may have value if they are applied appropriately to specific research goals and contexts. Moreover, Blommaert and Maly, (2014) explain that quantitative and qualitative methodologies are not mutually exclusive. It may be more useful to view them as situated on a continuum rather than as a dichotomy, as demonstrated in mixed-method research in LL, which the current study does.

Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) in their study of speakers and their speech communities in Sydney and Tokyo, emphasise that as opposed to merely counting languages, they aim to develop a more detailed framework for analysing the LL. In doing so, they introduce brief descriptions of speech, collected and noted during ethnographic fieldwork in these two cities. They transcribe and translate their data into English and thereafter analyse the data by means of metalinguistic commentary, supplemented with more detailed, qualitative information about the specific speech community. The authors illustrate how different languages interact in situations where a speech community is multi-ethnic and when certain members of a speech community cater for others who do not share their native languages. One of the main premises of this work is that monolingualism is an anomaly since “nobody is monolingual” (2015:16). They argue that a diverse combination of languages is the norm in most parts of the world.

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Furthermore, they advocate for an analytical approach that shifts away from concepts that indicate the specific relations between languages, such as bilingualism, multilingualism, and codeswitching. Rather, they employ a term that serves as the main title of their book, ‘Metrolingualism’, to denote what they insist is the natural situation in large urban centres. Thus, Pennycook and Otsuji (2015:16) refer to a

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"network of languages" that is used by speakers in cities comprising various ethnolinguistic groups.

In another publication on the LL by Hua, Otsuji and Pennycook (2017), the research described in their special issue is situated in a diversity of contexts comprising a street market and small shops in Mumbai, a subway in Cape Town, a greengrocer in Copenhagen, Bangladeshi-run stores in Tokyo and Sydney, a Polish-run shop in London, Afghan and Iranian-run stores in a Sydney suburb, and markets in Hong Kong. These diverse studies all entail consideration of a number of similar concerns in that they focus on interactions in markets and small shops; they employ a broad understanding of social semiotics that includes body, space, gesture, senses and objects; they look at the intersecting modes of multilingual, multimodal and multisensory semiosis; and they rely on complex forms of linguistic or semiotic ethnography as a research tool. In addition, these papers all focus on sites of ordinary, daily commercial transactions. The emphasis of the analyses is on is the complexity of social, spatial, linguistic, cultural and semiotic relations, and not necesarily on the commercial transactions themselves.

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Furthermore, Hua, Otsuji and Pennycook (2017) explain that markets and small shops could probably describe the diversity of human interaction better than any other city space. To support this view they draw on Hiebert, Rath, and Vertovec (2015:16) who suggest that markets offer "an ideal setting to explore the relationship between economy and society, especially when we consider the ways that these markets reflect, but also shape, the nature and meaning of social and cultural diversity." In addition, they draw on Wood and Landry (2008:148) to emphasise that

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the market, both as a concept and a physical location “is central to any understanding of intercultural exchange”.

Thus, Hua, Otsuji and Pennycook (2017) point out that the focus of the papers in their publication is not so much on the structure of the interactions between participants but rather on the complexity of semiotic resources involved in these interactions. For instance, they explain that both sellers and customers are engaged and concerned with the smells, quality, taste, presentation and cleanliness of the commodities on offer in the various markets. Furthermore, they suggest that touch, gesture and direction of eye gaze all contribute in terms of the negotiation process and social interaction. They contend that people participate in routine activities by drawing on various available multilingual, multimodal and multisensory resources in their local environments. By doing this, people draw attention to not only linguistic and personal relations, but also to artifacts, spatial organisation, gender, ethnicity and other multimodal, sensory and spatiotemporal aspects. Hua, Otsuji and Pennycook (2017) explore the features of such everyday, routine, transactions from a multisemiotic perspective.

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Likewise, Mills (2016:150) argues that an evolving focus on sensory literacies brings “power, place and the body” into conversation with the focus on spatial and material concerns raised by multimodal and material literacies. The papers in Hua, Otsuji and Pennycook (2017) focus on the interconnectedness of language, people, senses, material artifacts and space in semiotic interactions. The idea of ‘semiotic assemblages’ introduced by Pennycook and Otsuji (2017) is based on the idea that meanings materialise from the brief assemblages of material and semiotic resources intersecting at a given place and time. Of importance, is the idea that meaning is not

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seen as existing in in one particular semiotic resource, such as language, but as developing from the brief assemblages of people, place and objects.

Thus, Pennycook and Otsuji (2017) remind us that central to everyday exchanges, it is the frozen fish, phone cards, onions, rice and freezers that become a part of the spatial repertoires. They argue that the multimodal, multilingual and multisensory resources of spatial repertoires make possible the semiotic assemblages that develop at certain moments in time. In this way, the spatial focus of the research highlights the dynamic interplay of multimodal and multilingual and multisensory resources, revealing simultaneously how this interplay produces and reproduces space. For example, objects such as Thai herbs, frozen fish, mobile phones, and even the smell in shops, subways and markets are not accidental products in a particular place but rather spatial actants that produce place. Thus, the studies in this special issue extend recent research to include a broader sense of distributed practice. These papers move away from individualistic accounts of sociolinguistic performance, in which participants have traditionally been thought of as people with certain self-contained competencies that they bring to an interaction.

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The pubication shows how people draw on a range of semiotic possibilities from the spaces in which they interact and the resources emerging from these interactions. The papers are thus marked by attempts to get at the semiotic complexity of such contexts. Moreover, they aim to capture something close to the total communicative context, not just speech events, as can be seen in the example of a deaf-blind shopper in Mumbai, where objects, smells, touch, gesture, prayer and tactile interaction all matter. This is an attempt to arrive at a more comprehensive view of communication than is common in much of sociolinguistics, pointing to the situational setting and

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framing and the complexity of moves and semiotic resources as customers and sellers texture their talk in and around the products and the space. It is also an attempt to develop new ways of thinking about language, the linguistic repertoire is only one of a range of multisensory and multimodal semiotic possibilities that are activated, assembled and arranged to make and communicate meaning to achieve a specific purpose or desired outcome.

In their study, Rubdy and Ben Said (2015) aim to expand into new areas of inquiry by bringing together notions of language ideologies, language politics, language policies, language hierarchies, and ethnolinguistic struggles to conceptualise research based on conflicting and contesting linguistic landscape sites. The authors focus on the theme of 'conflict and exclusion', and 'dissent and protest'. The articles discussed in their publication cover various cities across the world. Their publication expands LL research and includes many semiotic analyses of resources such as banners, flags, graffiti, cyberspace, and buildings. They show how different approaches are used, such as nexus analysis, geosemiotics, and multimodal analysis to study the LL in various places across the world. The emphasis is on places where there were conflicts between language practices and language ideologies. Rubdy aplty clarifies the main aim of the publication, which is to explore "not only how linguistic landscape represents discursive and semiotic signage, but also crucially, acts as a site of identity construction and representation" (2015:1).

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The book describes studies by various scholars. Their research into LL offers a wide range of theoretical perspectives and methodologies applied in diverse contexts in countries such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, India, Bahrain, DR Congo, Algeria, and Tunisia. Although the book includes a range of definitions of

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LL as addressed by many scholars, Rubdy emphasises that its focus is on “the role of the linguistic landscape as a place of affect wherein displays of words and images often manifest the tensions between the hegemony and dominance of global capitalism and the grassroots reactions of local communities”.

Lastly, Hibbert (2016) explores discursive trends during the first twenty years of the new democracy in post-apartheid South Africa. She outlines the climaxes and challenges of transforming policy, practice and discursive formations. Furthermore, the author analyses a range of discourses which signal how and by what processes the linguistic landscape and identities of South Africa’s inhabitants have changed, finding that struggles in South African politics go hand in hand with shifts in the linguistic landscape. In a country now characterised by multilingualism, heteroglossia, polyphony and translanguaging, the author discusses where the discourse practices of those born post-1994 may lead. The study contributes on post-apartheid discursive practices in the media and other modalities, as well as on discourses of identity, diversity, empowerment and socio-economic transformation in the new South Africa. Hibbert (2016) demonstrates that the LL of post-apartheid South Africa is indeed a complex phenomenon which the key findings of the current study confirm.

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2.10 Chapter summary

Chapter 2 introduced the notion of the LL as defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and was explored as an approach to research in multilingualism. Although there have been various definitions of the LL that were used by different authors to suit the scope of their respective research, the definition that was coined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) forms the basis for most LL research that was done in recent years.

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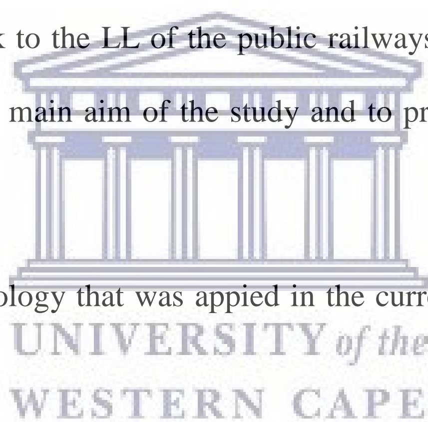
Next, theoretical and analytical frameworks that inform the current study were discussed in the context of earlier and more recent trends in LL research. It was revealed that studies of the LL are interdisciplinary and therefore require a multiple theory method. Hence, the current study relies on an ethnographic, multisemiotic and mixed-methods approach. Borrowing from a range of analytical tools from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, the theoretical frameworks proposed in the current study regards the LL as text which is situated in temporal and spatial contexts. The purpose of doing so is to illuminate the complex dialogical interactions among language, discourse, space, and place, through the study of LL as material and visual representations of languages in the public space. By applying this theoretical framework to the LL of the public railways in South Africa, the general idea is to address the main aim of the study and to provide answers to the specific research questions.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The research methodology that was appied in the current study is discussed next in Chapter 3.

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Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.0 Introduction

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology that was used for the current study. In particular, the chapter clarifies the research design and identifies the individual research sites. Furthermore, the sampling procedures, data collection and the analysis of data are explained. Lastly, ethical considerations are presented, along with the limitations of the current study. The research design and methodology are informed by the methodological approaches that were used in some of the previous LL studies discussed in Chapter 2.

3.1 Combined quantitative and qualitative approach

The LL of the public railways in South Africa was explored using an ethnographic, multisemiotic approach. This type of multifaceted approach enabled the researcher to create a defined corpus of LL data which allowed for the effective analysis and interpretation of the languages used in the LL of the public railways across four provinces in South Africa. Since it is generally accepted that quantitative and qualitative research methods are complementary, the current study relies on a mixed-methods approach.

Although the origins of mixed-methods research can be traced back to the last century, today it is used by an increasing number of researchers (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007; Dunning, Williams, Abonyi, and Crooks 2008; Creswell 2012). Thus, it is necessary for researchers to understand and appreciate the value of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches as two distinct methodologies. Furthermore, research that involves collecting and analysing two different types of data using a

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mixed-methods approach may take longer to complete (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011). Researchers may therefore require additional funding for inter alia, materials, to conduct interviews or to administer survey questionnaires which was the case in the current study. In addition, researchers may even need to employ research assistants to assist with data collection which was also necessary during data collection for the current study. Moreover, knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies is an essential requirement for a researcher using a mixed-methods approach. Therefore, the current study entailed consideration of these key methodological issues.

Drawing on previous LL research, the main aspects of the quantitative research for the study entails a description of the individual research sites, unit of analysis and most importantly, the categorisation of signs (Gorter 2006b; Backhaus 2005a), particularly in terms of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signs. In this way, taxonomies and classifications enable the researcher to determine the patterns of language use in the LL. The brief history about South Africa and the overview of the individual provinces included in the study as presented in Chapter 1 provides the background information needed to effectively interpret the LL of the public railways. Furthermore, the demographic information, obtained from Census (2011) data, places the study into a broader South African sociolinguistic context. A number of other pertinent issues involved in LL studies that used quantitative analyses were also discussed in Chapter 2 (see Backhaus 2007; Gorter 2006; Pavlenko 2009, and Spolsky 2009).

Some of the key challenges encountered in previous LL research include the sampling procedures, decisions about the unit of analysis and the categorisation of

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signs, for instance. Thus, some of the previous LL studies discussed in Chapter 2 expose theoretical limitations, such as the lack of consistent methodology, for example. Despite these shortcomings, a number of common factors are also evident which are accounted for in the current study. Firstly, the research sites are clearly identified and linked to the main aims of the study, secondly, the unit of analysis is clarified in terms of what precisely constitutes a sign and lastly, details about the categorisation of signs are explained, particularly the distinction between monolingual, bilingual and multilingual signs (Gorter 2006b; Backhaus 2005a).

To recapitulate, the quantitative research entails counting the signs, grouping them into appropriate categories in terms of agency, function or purpose and code preference thereby determining patterns of language use in the LL. In addition, categorisation entails consideration of whether the signs are monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. The material from which signs are manufactured is also considered which could enable the researcher to distinguish between permanent or temporary signs (Reh 2004; Spolsky and Cooper 1991). In addition, signs could be stationary or mobile in terms of the spatial mobility of the sign carriers (Reh 2004). Lastly, official government surveys such as census data and language policy documents could also be used in the analysis and interpretation of the signs. For the current study, the taxonomies and classification of signs facilitated the researcher to identify patterns of language use in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. The signs found in the research sites were captured on digital camera, counted, and categorised into official and private signs. Signs were then further sub-divided into genre, function and the distribution of the different languages on the signs and whether signs were monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. Next, the data was analysed using descriptive statistics with Microsoft Excel software. For ease of reference the results

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are illustrated in frequency distribution tables and bar charts. In this way, the quantitative data enables the researcher to extrapolate meaningful information about the language situation in the LL of the public railways of South Africa.

Qualitative-only LL studies may provide limited insight into the LL because of potential bias in the selection of the sample for the analyses. It is also difficult to identify trends and dynamics in the LL based solely on qualitative data. A qualitative approach therefore relies on more details and variables than a quantitative approach. For example, qualitative analysis may entail consideration of the colours used on signs (Malinowski 2009; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006), the direction of the text (Scollon and Scollon 2003), the intended meaning of the message (Curtin 2007), the images and the perception of the area or sign (Shohamy and Waksman 2009). Moreover, Backhaus (2005a:56-60) poses fundamental questions which relate to Ben-Rafael's (2009) structuration principals and Spolsky's (2009) conditions for language choice on signs. More specifically, Backhaus (2005a:56-60) enquires about the authors of signs, the intended audience and the changing patterns of language use in the LL. Observations about the sign writers could be explained in terms of the principle of presentation of self, as well as the condition to write in a language you know. The good reasons principle and Spolsky's (2009) presumed reader condition refers to observations about the intended readership. In addition, the changing patterns of language use in the LL could be linked to the main aim of the study. Lastly, Spolsky's (2009) symbolic value condition and Ben-Rafael's (2006) principles about collective identity and power relations could be used to clarify observations about changes in the LL across spatial and temporal boundaries.

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Another aspect concerning qualitative research may include interviews and/or survey questionnaires with the intended readers and/or authors of signs to determine how they perceive the LL (c.f. Landry and Bourhis 1997; Shohamy and Gorter 2009). Thus, qualitative research can be used to attempt to answer questions on complex phenomena, such as the LL in place, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the perspective of respondents (Cohen *et al*. 2011: 28-30; 219-227). Therefore, to supplement the quantitative data, the current research relies on data obtained through a self-completed structured survey questionnaire as well as semi-structured interviews with railway commuters. These qualitative tools employed in the current study are discussed in more detail in the subsequent section. In this way, the current study ensures triangulation of data in that the combination of the quantitative results, the findings of the survey questionnaire, along with the interview data are used to trace trajectories of multilingualism across space and time in the LL of the public railways in South Africa as experienced by commuters. Furthermore, the qualitative research reveals meaningful insights into the changing patterns of language use in the LL of the public railways across linguistic and cultural boundaries since the end of apartheid. In addition, the qualitative research examined the signs in terms of code preference and relied on Scollon and Scollon's (2003) system of geosemiotics and Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework for analysing multimodality. The signs were further described in terms of their spatial and temporal frames and also their linguistic content. In addition, the signs were assessed in terms of how the languages used on the signs were perceived by railway commuters using data obtained through survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The research instruments employed in the current study will be explained in more detail in the subsequent section.

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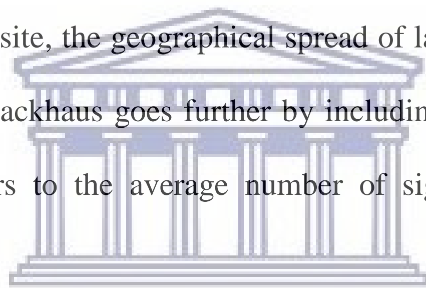
3.2 Identification of the research sites

Most of the previous LL research that was discussed in Chapter 2 was done in urban built-up public spaces (see Shohamy and Gorter 2009; Shohamy, Ben-Rafael and Barni 2010; Barni and Hélot 2012). A public space is defined as "every space in the community or the society that is not private property, such as streets, parks or public institutions" (Ben-Rafael 2009:40-41). Edelman (2010) contends that the criteria for the selection of a research site in any space will depend on the purpose of the study. However, Gorter (2006b) and Gorter and Cenoz (2008) caution that clarifying the research site is not sufficient and emphasises that language representation is also important. Backhaus (2005a) supports this view and suggests that in addition to defining the research site, the geographical spread of language trends should also be taken into account. Backhaus goes further by including the concept of sign density which basically refers to the average number of signs per metre for each area (2005a).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For some LL studies, it may not be necessary that the research site be representative (Cenoz and Gorter 2006). In such studies, a complete quantitative inventory of all the signs in the area would enable a researcher to do a reliable analysis of the linguistic situation. Therefore, exploring the LL of the public railways in South Africa is interesting, since rail transport serves as the primary mode of transport for most working class commuters in the country. Furthermore, it is estimated that more than two million passengers commute by rail everyday across the four provinces which comprise the research sites for the current study (PRASA 2011; 2012). Moreover, a significantly larger proportion of South African commuters rely on rail transport, compared with all the other available modes of transport combined, such as buses, minibus taxis and private vehicles. It is estimated that rail transport has a

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53% public transport modal share, while all the other available modes account for 47%, combined (PRASA 2011; 2012). The main reason for this preference is that rail transport is the most cost effective mode of public transport available in South Africa. Also, rail travel offers benefits over road-based travel in terms of safety and time saving, mainly because it has dedicated right-of-way.

In high density urban areas of South Africa, the public railway system penetrates extensively across middle to high income areas and caters particularly for low income areas. Moreover, the apartheid government designed and built the railway system to transport cheap labour in and out of the Black areas to White areas and businesses throughout South Africa. In this way, the railway system primarily benefited Whites, who predominantly lived in the suburbs adjacent to the railways. Since many people in South Africa still live in apartheid spatially designed places, not much has changed. Rail transport therefore attracts a wide range of commuters from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. For this reason, the signs displayed along the public railways could be interpreted as an indication of the dynamics influencing and shaping the LL across South Africa. In addition, the individual railway stations included as research sites in the current study each have unique sociolinguistic and ethnocultural compositions, further evidence of the diversity within South Africa. These individual research sites are used by more than half of the total number of daily rail commuters in South Africa, who also account for a quarter of commuters across all the available modes of public transport. Therefore, the research sites selected situate the study within a broader South African sociolinguistic and ethnocultural context.

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3.2.1 Port Elizabeth and East London stations

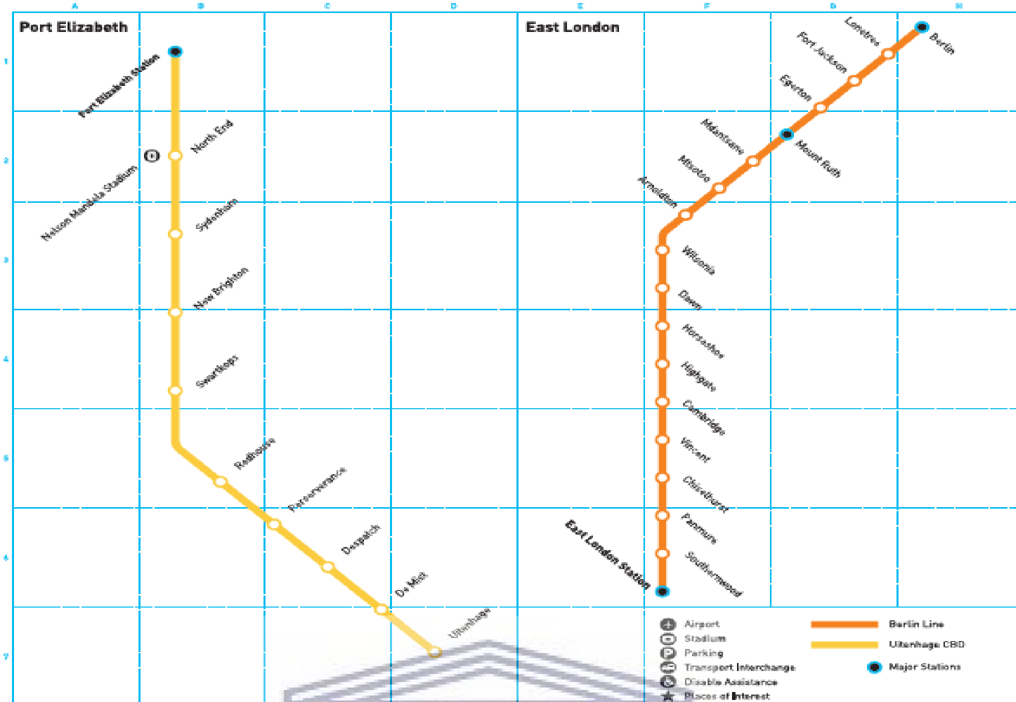

Figure 3.1: *Map of Eastern Cape railways (PRASA 2010)*

The map showing the Eastern Cape rail network is illustrated in Figure 3.1 to help contextualise the study. Commuter rail services in the Eastern Cape are provided on two lines; one connecting Port Elizabeth, Despatch and Uitenhage, and the other connecting East London, Mdantsane and Berlin/Buffalo City. The Port Elizabeth line starts at Port Elizabeth railway station in central Port Elizabeth, and runs northwards along the main Port Elizabeth–Bloemfontein line as far as Swartkops, where it branches west through Despatch up to Uitenhage. The East London Line starts at East London railway station and runs along the main East London–Bloemfontein railway line through Mdantsane and ends in Berlin (PRASA 2010). As previously mentioned, many people in South Africa still live in apartheid spatially designed places and not much has changed in this regard. With reference to Figure 3.1, most people who live in Port Elizabeth and Despatch are predominantly Whites whereas

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Uitenhage comprises mostly Coloureds and Blacks, respectively. The majority of people in East London, Mdantsane and Berlin/Buffallo City are Blacks. These demographics still largely reflect the apartheid-era spatial planning which remains much the same to this present-day.

3.2.2 Johannesburg Park and Pretoria stations

In Gauteng the railway routes spread out across the province from three main hubs; Johannesburg Park Station in the City of Johannesburg, Germiston Station on the East Rand, and Pretoria station. Rail routes serve central Johannesburg, the East Rand, Soweto, the Vaal Triangle, the West Rand, central Pretoria, and suburbs to the north, east and west of Pretoria. Some of the northern suburbs of Johannesburg are served by the Gautrain rapid-rail system. Johannesburg Park station is the central railway station in the city of Johannesburg and is also the largest railway station in Africa. It is located between the Central Business District and Braamfontein, and is the centre of the Witwatersrand rail network. Daily commuter rail services run west to Carletonville, Randfontein and Soweto, east to Springs, Nigel and Daveyton, north to Pretoria and south to Vereeniging. Pretoria railway station is the central station in Pretoria which is the executive capital of South Africa. It is located between Pretoria's central business district and Salvokop, in a building that dates back to 1910. It is the main hub of commuter rail services in the northern part of Gauteng and a major stop on the intercity rail services from Johannesburg to Polokwane and Nelspruit (PRASA 2010). Figure 3.2 shows the extensive rail network in Gauteng. When viewing the map from the middle, Johannesburg Park station is located slightly to the left of the map. Furthermore, this station is shown as a major intermodal transport hub on the map. In addition, the map clearly shows that Johannesburg Park station connects to the entire rail network in Gauteng. Pretoria

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station is situated diagonally, upwards to the right of Johannesburg Park station on the map. In addition, Pretoria station is shown as a major connecting hub between the southern and northern Gauteng lines.

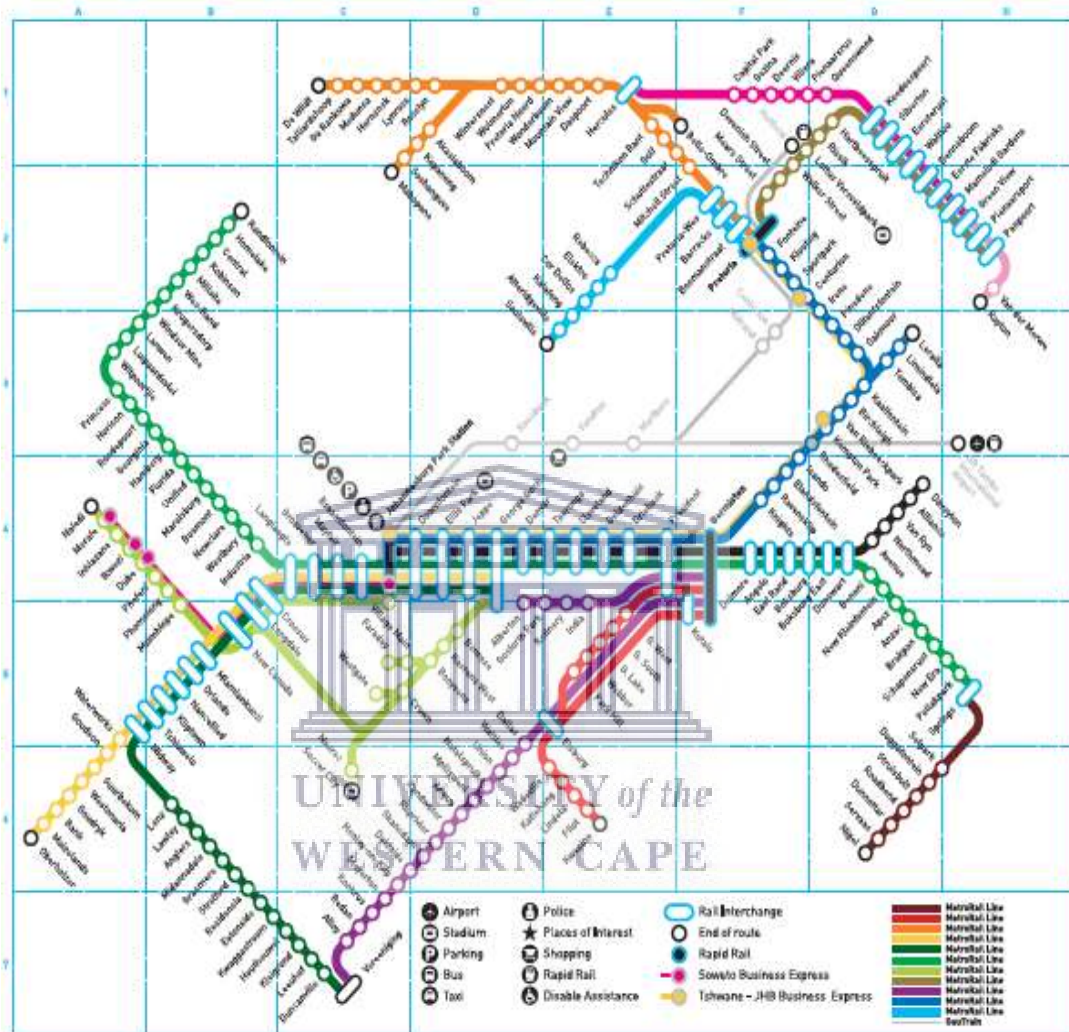

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Figure 3.2: *Map of Gauteng railways (PRASA 2010)*

With reference to Figure 3.2, the suburbs and townships of Johnanesburg were racially segregated during apartheid and remain largely that way to this present day. Most Blacks live in townships close to the central city, of which the two most populous are Soweto and Alexandra. Many Black migrant workers still live in apartheid-era hostels in these townships and commute daily via the railway system to

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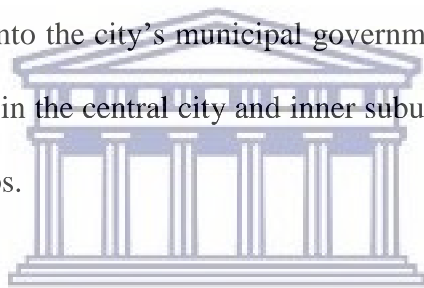
work in the city and its surrounding suburbs. Most of the Coloured population lives in the townships west of the central city while the Indian population predominantly lives in the township of Lenasia. The inner-city suburbs of Joubert Park, Hillbrow, and Berea are formerly White areas to which Blacks started moving into after apartheid ended. These areas are mostly inhabited by Blacks nowadays. The suburbs of Yeoville and Observatory which were formerly Jewish and Portuguese neighbourhoods are today multiracial areas. Johannesburg's western suburbs comprising Briston and Melville are home to middle-class Whites while the northern suburbs, such as Parktown and Houghton are elite areas where mostly wealthy Whites live. Since the end of apartheid, Johannesburg's Black townships have been gradually integrated into the city's municipal government. Many Blacks moved into formerly White areas in the central city and inner suburbs while most Whites moved to the northern suburbs.



3.2.3 Durban station

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Figure 3.3 shows a map of the rail network in KwaZulu-Natal. Durban railway station is the central station in the city of Durban. It is located between Umgeni Road and Masabalala Yengwa Avenue, to the north of the central business district. Most rail services in KwaZulu-Natal pass through the two main stations in central Durban comprising Berea Road and Durban station, respecively. These stations are the main terminals of intercity rail services from Johannesburg and Cape Town. They also serve as hubs for commuter rail services that stretch from KwaDukuza to the north, Kelso to the south, and Cato Ridge inland (PRASA 2010). The map depicted in Figure 3.3 shows that Durban station is located slightly to the right, when viewed from the middle of the map. In addition, Durban station connects all the other areas along the rail network as can be seen in the map.

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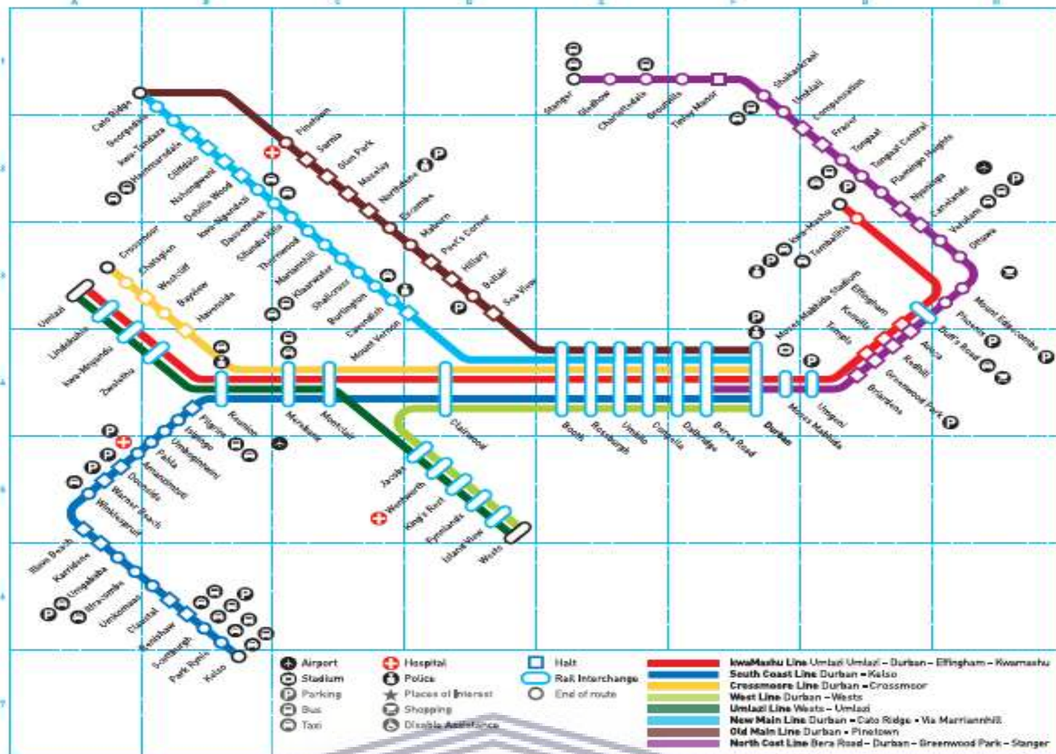

Figure 3.3: *Map of KwaZulu-Natal railways (PRASA 2010)*

The city centre where Durban station is located was predominantly a White residential area during apartheid whereas today it largely inhabited by Blacks. Other areas, such as Chatsworth and Phoenix which were created as apartheid-era townships, are still largely inhabited by Indians. Areas such as Esplanade have become diverse, multiracial areas with a mixed population comprising Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. The largest residential area within the city centre is Albert Park which was formerly a White area and became an integrated space after apartheid ended. Most of its diverse population today comprises Blacks, Coloureds and Indians and older generation Whites. In recent years, middle-class Blacks and Whites have started moving out of the city centre to the surrounding suburbs, such as Pinetown, Westville and Berea. Despite the notable migration of diverse people in and out of formerly White areas, most Blacks still live in the townships located on

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the outskirts of the city, such as Umlazi and Kwamashu. Thus, today, in much the same way as during apartheid, most Blacks still commute daily via the railway system in an out of the city, mainly for work.

3.2.4 Cape Town and Bellville stations

Commuter rail services in and around the metropolitan area of Cape Town are probably the most comprehensive of any of the cities in South Africa. Cape Town station is a major intermodal hub of commuter transport in the Western Cape. Most rail services commence and/or terminate at Cape Town station which is situated in the centre of the city. The rail network comprises of five lines, all of which originate from Cape Town. The Southern Line via the Southern Suburbs towards Simon's Town passes through mostly formerly White areas, such as Rosebank, Plumstead and Lakeside while the Cape Flats Line via Athlone to Retreat passes through mostly Coloured areas. The Central Line via Langa to Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha and Bellville passes through most of the Black and Coloured Townships whereas the Northern Line via Bellville to Paarl, Stellenbosch and Somerset West passes through predominantly formerly White areas. The Malmesbury and Worcester lines pass through small farming towns situated on the outskirts of the city of Cape Town, such as Kalbaskraal, Wolseley and Tulbach which are largely inhabited by working-class Blacks and Coloureds, and some older-generation Whites. A map of the rail network in the Western Cape is shown in Figure 3.4. Bellville railway station is the second largest station in the Western Cape after Cape Town station. All trains on the Northern Line pass through Bellville and a branch of the Central Line also terminates there. It is also a major stop for intercity trains that terminate in Cape Town. Bellville station serves as a major intermodal transport hub for both local and national bus and minibus taxi transport services. Moreover, Bellville station is home

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to the Bellstar Junction, an important shopping complex in the area for commuters which is included in the current study.

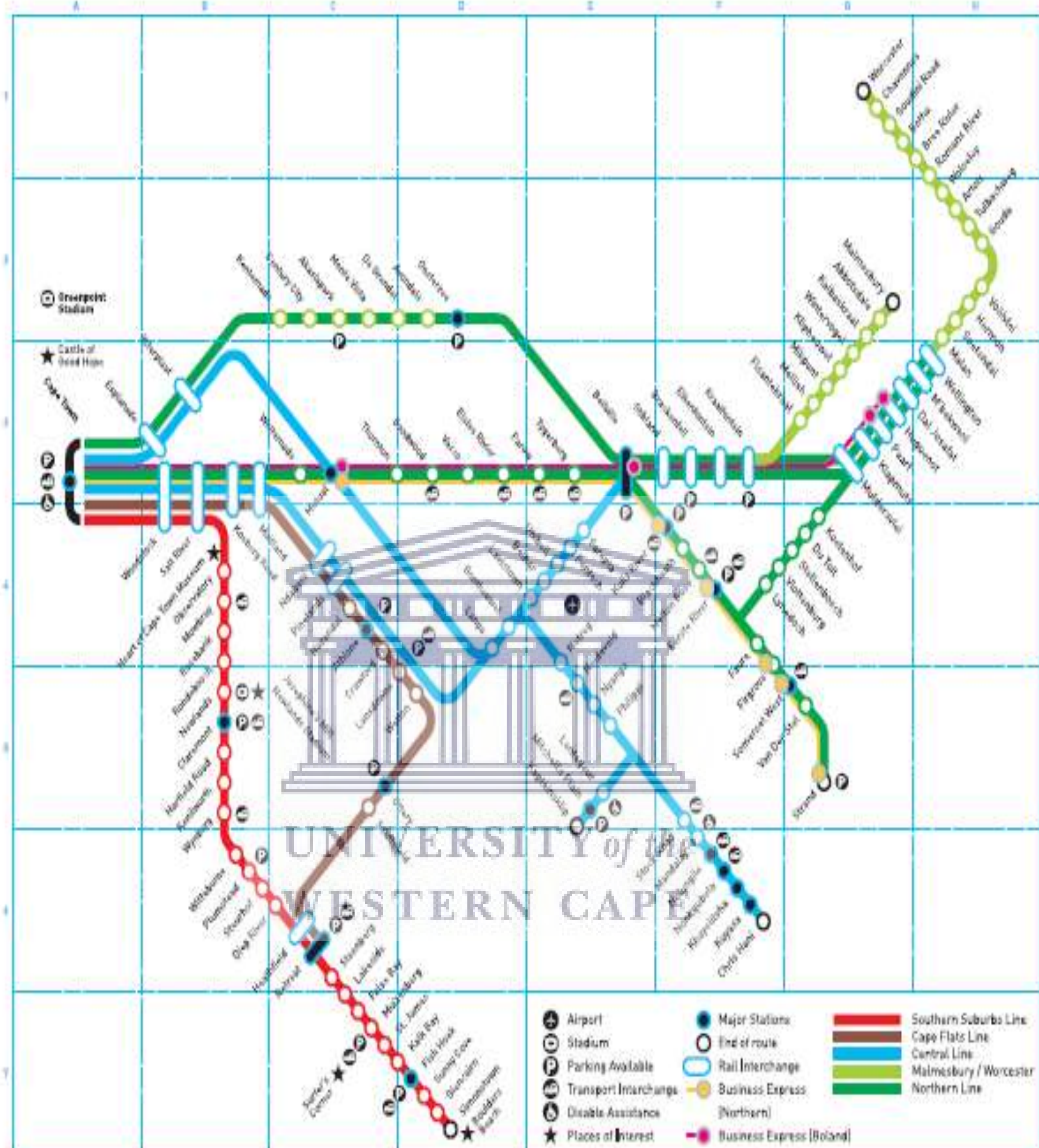

Figure 3.4: *Map of Western Cape railways (PRASA 2010)*

With reference to Figure 3.4, Cape Town station is located to the far left hand side, when viewed from the middle of the map. It can clearly be seen that it is the final stop for all trains travelling into the city. Bellville station is located slightly to the

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right from the middle of the map. The map shows that Bellville station is a major transport hub for trains travelling on the Northern Line in the Western Cape.

As mentioned previously, the apartheid government designed and built the railway system to transport cheap labour in and out of the Black areas to White areas and businesses throughout South Africa. The discussion on the the individual research sites and the accompanying maps of the rail network in South Africa reveals that the rail system primarily benefited Whites during apartheid and continues to do so in post-apartheid South Africa since not much has changed. The population demographics in these areas still largely reflect the apartheid-era spatial planning and many people in South Africa still live in apartheid spatially designed places.

3.3 Categorisation of signs

3.3.1 Unit of analysis

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To define the unit of analysis entails describing what constitutes a sign. Some studies prefer a semiotic definition, as argued Shohamy and Waksman (2009) whereas others define signs according to their physical attributes. Another issue concerns whether to consider signs individually by counting all signs as one item (Backhaus 2005a), or collectively (Cenoz and Gorter 2006; Gorter and Cenoz 2015), whereby each establishment is counted as a unit of analysis. Other issues relate to signs with multiple surfaces of inscription, the visibility of signs such as font size, visibility with the naked eye, visibility from street level, as well as the qualities of signs relating to mobility and permanence. Reh (2004:3-8) draws the distinction between stationary and mobile texts because the reading conditions differ in terms of the reader's mobility and the number of ways in which languages and information can be arranged on the two surface types. As can be seen, the unit of analysis has been

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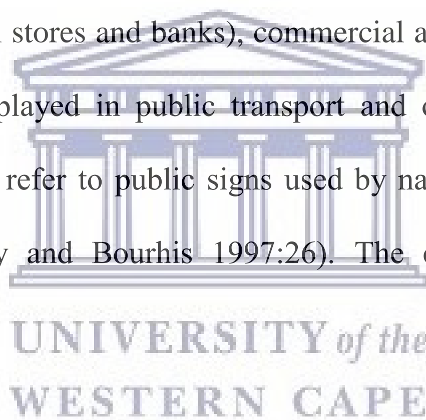
defined in various ways by researchers of the LL The current study draws on the definition by Backhaus (2007:66) who defines a sign as "any piece of written text within a spatially definable frame". He counts all the signs in a photograph as one item which is the same approach used for the current research.

3.3.2 Agency in the LL

A basic distinction is made between private and official signs in LL (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006). Also, the definition by Landry and Bourhis (1997:26) in Chapter 2 clarifies the differentiation between private and governmental signs in LL. To reiterate, "Private signs include commercial signs on storefronts and business institutions (e.g. retail stores and banks), commercial advertising and billboards, and advertising signs displayed in public transport and on private vehicles" whereas "Governmental signs refer to public signs used by national, regional, or municipal government" (Landry and Bourhis 1997:26). The current study draws on this distinction.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Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006:10) define official signs as signs displayed by "institutional agencies which in one way or another act under the control of local and central policies" whereas private signs are displayed by "individual, associative or corporative agents who enjoy autonomy of action within legal limits". According to Calvet (in Backhaus, 2005a:41) the significance of these distinctions is that it presents "two different ways of marking the territory". Thus, official and private signs contribute differently to LL. Official signs are generally regulated by official government policy and legislation. Although private signs are authored by private individuals or organisations and enjoy a certain degree of freedom of expression, they are also in some way subject to government regulations. However, Landry and

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Bourhis (1997) contend that private signs display greater linguistic diversity than official signs because it is generally less controlled. This is particularly true in democratic societies where the freedom of expression is governed by legislation (RSA 1996). Private signs should therefore, in theory, generally more accurately reflect the sociolinguistic situation of an area than official signage since authors of private signs have a greater degree of freedom than those of official signs. In terms of authorship/agency, signs in the LL in the current study are categorised as either official or private, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: *Categories of LL items and sampling criteria*

Agency	Sampling criteria	
Official	Identification Information Regulatory	161 (51.8%)
Private	Advertising Billboards Shopfronts	150 (48.2%)

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3.3.3 Linguistic properties of signs

When examining the linguistic properties of signs, Gorter and Cenoz (2008) explain that it is difficult to compare some LL studies because of the different types of coding schemes used by the various researchers. The majority of LL studies focus on the spread of the dominant and/or minority languages in society. For example, Backhaus (2007) focuses on the emerging multilingualism in Tokyo and developed a methodology to distinguish between monolingual and multilingual signs in the LL

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whereas Reh (2004) categorised texts according to the arrangement of information on multilingual signs. Based on the classification of texts by Reh (2004), duplicating writing gives an exact translation of the entire message into other languages whereas fragmentary writing involves the translation of selected parts of the text.

Furthermore, overlapping writing is where one part of the text is displayed in two or more languages and other parts are given in different languages while complementary writing presupposes a multilingual author. However, there is no overlapping of information given in different languages (Reh 2004). Since there are various approaches used by researchers for distinguishing the linguistic properties of signs, the categorisation of signs is largely determined by the focus of the research. Therefore, the coding scheme developed for the categorisation of official signs in the current study was adapted from the PRASA Public Wayfinding Guidelines (PRASA 2010). Moreover, the official sign categories include identification signs, information signs and regulatory signs. Lastly, the coding scheme that was developed for the non-official signs is informed by Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) and includes advertising signs, billboards and shop fronts. In addition, code preference is also considered and is informed by Scollon and Scollon's (2003) system of geosemiotics as explained in Chapter 2.

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3.3.4 Material characteristics of signs

In terms of the material characteristics of signs, texts in the LL could be displayed on either stationary and mobile objects (see Reh 2004; Backhaus 2007; Thurlow and Jaworski 2010). In addition, texts could also be displayed on temporary and permanent signs (Spolsky and Cooper 1991). Furthermore, the durability of signs is determined by the type of material from which the sign is manufactured, such as

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stone which is considered permanent, whereas paper is deemed temporary (cf. Spolsky and Cooper 1991). Another material characteristic of signs includes the medium of inscription, such as a painted sign or an engraved or embossed one. Here, the general assumption is that public signs made from materials that are more durable are intended to be more permanent.

For the current study, the durability of signs was noted as either permanent or temporary. Thus, signs made of metal, wood, plastic, stone, or those that were painted onto structures were considered to be permanent whereas temporary signs were those printed, written or painted onto paper, cardboard or similar disposable materials. Although most signs in the LL of the public railways in South Africa were relatively permanent, temporary signs were also considered which account for the notion of layering (Scollon and Scollon 2003:137; Backhaus 2005b). Another important aspect is the text size or font size where Hult (2009) uses photographs that are visible to readers at street level while Huebner (2009) gives equal consideration to all signs in the research sites, irrespective of the size and placement of the text on the sign.

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3.4.1 Data collection of LL items

The current study draws on the method of capturing signs developed by Backhaus (2005a:92-94) and Gorter (2006b:2-4) as discussed in Chapter 2. Essentially, this entailed consideration of the research sites, the unit of analysis and the categorisation of signs. Consequently, there are other practical considerations, such the privacy of individuals which entailed excluding identifiable information, such as people's faces or names. In addition, it was important to obtain written permission from PRASA to

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photograph signs at railway stations since this could be deemed a security risk. Also, some sign owners could be uncomfortable with their signs being documented.

Quantitative sampling was purposive and all the signs displayed in the individual research sites were captured. The research sites include those stations which have the highest numbers of daily commuters, according to the results of the most recent available customer surveys (PRASA 2011; 2012). Since these sites are used by the majority of daily commuters, the findings of the study are representative. The geographic spread of linguistic trends was taken into account and the sites included in this study were explored separately to analyse their respective and combined contributions to the LL in detail. Since the focus of the current study is on the transformation in the languages displayed on signs at the public railways in South Africa, the experiences and perceptions of commuters of the LL were of primary importance. Shohamy and Waksman (2009) contend that studies of the LL should include all written text displayed in the public space. However, as discussed in Chapter 2, some of the previous LL studies show that this view is problematic because it may be too inclusive, resulting in too large a corpus for meaningful interpretation.

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Thus, data was collected over a period of six months, spread out from the beginning of April 2015 until the end of June 2016. During this period, the researcher travelled extensively throughout South Africa, covering a total distance of approximately 6,500 kilometres across four provinces in South Africa, via air, minibus taxi and most importantly, public rail transport. A synchronic approach was used for the collection of data and only artifacts that displayed written text were considered. Although there were many instances of signs comprising of only pictures, emblems, pictograms or numbers, these signs were excluded since this study is primarily

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concerned with written texts. The LL artifacts included in this study were legible and visible at street level and at the specific station platform level (Backhaus 2009).

The method of data collection for the quantitative research entailed capturing images of official and private signs in the LL. A modern digital camera was used for capturing images of signs. More than 1,000 digital images were photographed during data collection across the four provinces included in this study. Unclear, incomplete and duplicated images were not included in the final analysis. Images of the same sign were included in the analysis more than once only in cases where there was text on the sign in a different language or in different combinations of languages. In the end, 311 separate images of signs were considered relevant for the analysis. Captured images of signs were transferred from the digital camera onto a computer hard drive. The researcher noted the automatic numbering system of the camera to track which signs were photographed, along with their location. Signs were grouped into folders, firstly, by province, then by station, followed by the function of the sign. The data collected for the current study could prove useful for comparison in follow-up studies in future.

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3.4.2 Analysis of LL items

For the quantitative research, data were quantified and presented as per the criteria discussed previously in this chapter. More specifically, the languages on the signs were statistically mapped using frequency distribution tables and bar charts to reflect the linguistic reality as faced by commuters in South Africa. Essentially, the quantitative analysis reveals information about the distribution of languages on signs and the patterns of language use on signs in the research sites. In answering the research questions, it was necessary to determine which languages were represented

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on the various signs and how those languages were used. To facilitate the effective analysis of the LL artifacts, the frequency distribution tables and bar charts were created using Microsoft Excel software. This entailed counting and grouping the signs into the various categories, such as the distribution of languages on signs and the different types of signs found. In this way, the taxonomy of signs facilitated the analysis of the patterns of language use in the LL for the quantitative analysis. Thereafter, data were presented in terms of the languages displayed on the signs and whether the signs were monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. In addition, the signs were analysed in terms of those authored by official and private agency. Signs were further analysed in terms of function and use, for example, advertising signs, billboards, shop fronts, and so on. Thus, the general methodological approach entailed categorising the signs into the languages displayed on the signs and their respective functions. The official languages on signs according to the Constitution of RSA (1996) were generally easily identified. Since South Africa is a diverse, multicultural society with a history of colonialism and imperialism, the presence of foreign languages in the LL were also taken into account (Kotze 2010; Edelman 2010).

The development of a suitable coding scheme for the analysis of LL artifacts enabled the researcher to determine code preference. Scollon and Scollon's (2003) system of geosemiotics is generally used as a framework for this purpose. The languages on multilingual signs do not share the same space. For example, one language will usually be displayed in a more prominent position on the sign than the other. Therefore, Scollon and Scollon (2003) argue that the placement of languages on signs usually gives an indication of which language is the preferred code. Scollon and Scollon (2003) also argue that in most Western contexts, texts displayed on top,

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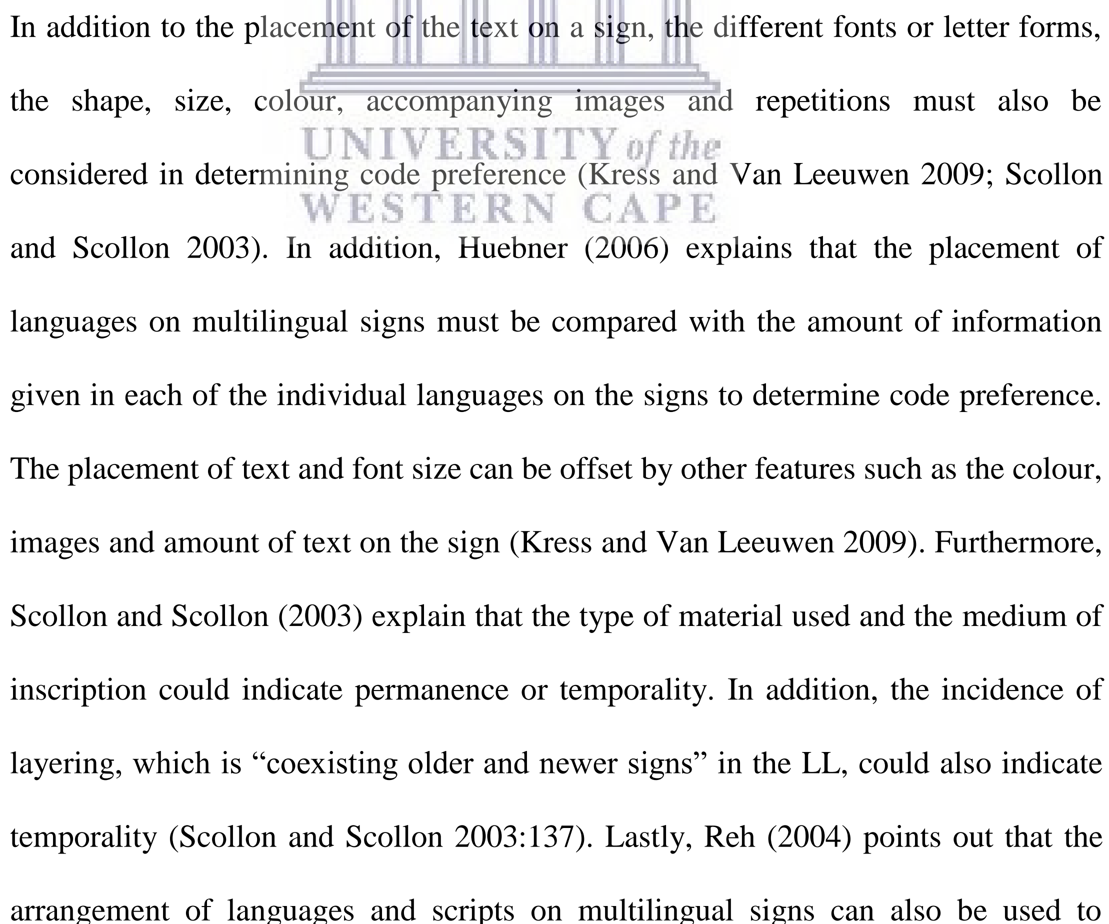
the left, or in the centre of signs are usually more prominent within a geosemiotic framework. They argue that a choice must be made regarding which language will take the dominant position on a sign. Scollon and Scollon (2003) note that for languages written from left to right there are basically three possibilities. Firstly, if the languages are aligned vertically, the preferred code is located above the secondary code. Secondly, 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 is that the preferred code is located in the centre. The secondary code is placed on the margins of the sign. They point out that salience can offset this code preference. For example, the language in the lower position of a sign is displayed in large letters or more prominent font than the language in the top position Scollon and Scollon (2003).



In addition to the placement of the text on a sign, the different fonts or letter forms, the shape, size, colour, accompanying images and repetitions must also be considered in determining code preference (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2009; Scollon and Scollon 2003). In addition, Huebner (2006) explains that the placement of languages on multilingual signs must be compared with the amount of information given in each of the individual languages on the signs to determine code preference. The placement of text and font size can be offset by other features such as the colour, images and amount of text on the sign (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2009). Furthermore, Scollon and Scollon (2003) explain that the type of material used and the medium of inscription could indicate permanence or temporality. In addition, the incidence of layering, which is "coexisting older and newer signs" in the LL, could also indicate temporality (Scollon and Scollon 2003:137). Lastly, Reh (2004) points out that the arrangement of languages and scripts on multilingual signs can also be used to

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determine code preference. Thus, the methodology used to distinguish code preference in the current study is informed by the aforementioned considerations.

3.5.1 Survey questionnaire

As mentioned previously, a survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher for the current study (see Appendix A) which was adapted from questions used by Malinowski (2009:110) and Garvin (2011:104). A survey questionnaire is a useful research instrument for collecting and recording information about a particular issue of interest (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Thus, the main purpose of the survey questionnaire in the current study was to assess how rail commuters perceive and interpret the languages used on signs at the railways. Some of the main advantages of using a survey questionnaire include that self-completed questionnaires are inexpensive to manage, and are useful when dealing with a study population that is dispersed over a wide geographic area, such as respondents in the current study. In addition, participants are more likely to give candid answers via electronic mail as opposed to interacting with a researcher using a paper-based questionnaire (Hofstee 2006:132-133; Cohen *et al*. 2011:271-274). These advantages were particularly relevant to the current research since participants were geographically widespread across four provinces in South Africa.

Hofstee (2006:132-133) and Cohen *et al.* (2011:271-274) point out that there are also disadvantages of using a survey questionnaire. For instance, a researcher has no control over who completes the questionnaire, and respondents with low levels of literacy or poor access to computers and electronic mail are unlikely to complete a questionnaire. In addition, response rates to survey questionnaires generally tend to be low. Despite these disadvantages, responses to the completed survey

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questionnaires offered meaningful insights towards providing answers to the research questions in the current study. All the questions were developed within the context of obtaining rail commuters' perceptions and interpretations of the transformed LL of the public railways in a post-apartheid South African context. Thus, all the questions were considered to be relevant, with some questions added to either corroborate or enrich responses to other questions. The questionnaire had two main sections and consisted of nineteen questions in total which were numbered and ordered logically and coherently.

The questionnaire was piloted among twenty rail commuters to test for relevance, clarity, logic and flow of the questions (Mouton 2001:103). The first section of the questionnaire prompted respondents about their demographic information and rail usage practices. This information was used to compile a sociolinguistic profile of the respondents. Responses to the questions in this section were important to ensure that respondents were in fact rail commuters at the time of the study and that they were familiar with the railway environment. In addition, these responses were particularly relevant since the focus of the research was on how rail commuters perceive, interpret and experience the LL of the public railways in South Africa. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of a mix of closed and open-ended questions pertaining to the languages used at the railways. In this way, the survey questionnaire served to provide answers to the second and third research questions of the study, respectively.

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3.5.2 Survey questionnaire data collection

In total, about 1,000 survey questionnaires were sent to potential study participants in electronic format via electronic mail, along with a request to participate.

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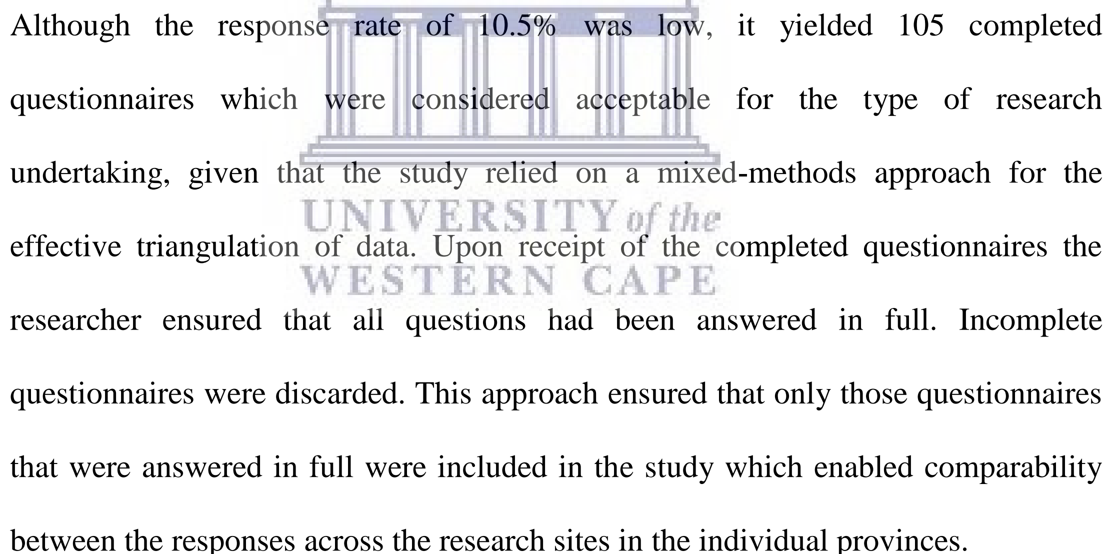
Electronic mail addresses were sourced via advertisements placed on various social media platforms which included Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin, inviting rail commuters to participate in the study. The questionnaire was accompanied by an introductory background electronic mail message which included an informed consent form (Fowler 2009:58; Cohen *et al.* 2011). See Annexure A for the survey questionnaire form. Potential participants were requested to read through the information, and were then prompted to decide whether or not they wanted to voluntarily participate in the study. Those who agreed to participate were requested to complete an informed consent form and the accompanying survey questionnaire electronically, and to re-submit the information to the researcher via electronic mail, which they did.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Although the response rate of 10.5% was low, it yielded 105 completed questionnaires which were considered acceptable for the type of research undertaking, given that the study relied on a mixed-methods approach for the effective triangulation of data. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires the researcher ensured that all questions had been answered in full. Incomplete questionnaires were discarded. This approach ensured that only those questionnaires that were answered in full were included in the study which enabled comparability between the responses across the research sites in the individual provinces.

3.5.3 Survey questionnaire data analysis

The 105 completed survey questionnaires were electronically transferred to a spreadsheet, using Microsoft Excel software. Responses were then analysed using descriptive statistics and illustrated in frequency distribution tables and bar charts. This approach facilitated the comparative analysis of the linguistic situation in the

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individual research sites across the four provinces. It further enabled the researcher to identify trends, patterns of language use and emerging themes about the languages used at the public railways in South Africa.

The results of the responses to the open questions were analysed based on the thematic coding for each of the open questions. Coding of open questions took the form of a thematic content approach rather than a numeric approach. Furthermore, the coding could not be anticipated for the open questions since the responses could not be predicted. As such, the thematic coding of the open questions took place after the researcher worked through all the responses for particular questions and was then able to identify thematic trends in the study participants' responses. Based on the themes identified for the responses to each of the open questions, a descriptive statistical analysis was done of the total study population to explore commuter perceptions and experiences of the LL of the railways in South Africa.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

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Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a cross-section of twelve longstanding rail commuters, all of whom were South African citizens. Thus, rail commuters were randomly interviewed to explore how they perceived and experienced changes in the languages used on signs at the public railways over time. Eleven of the interviews were conducted within the individual research sites and one telephonic interview was conducted. The researcher invited a number of current railway officials and business owners to participate in the study but they all declined to be interviewed, citing privacy and security issues. In a similar approach that was used with the survey questionnaire, the interview questions were adapted from those questions used by Malinowski (2009:110) and Garvin (2011:104). Thus, interviews

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comprised ten questions (see Appendix B). Interviewees were asked to comment about their experiences and perceptions of the languages used at the railways during apartheid, and also after apartheid ended. Interviews were conducted to gain insights into how commuters experience and respond to the changing LL of the public railways, particularly in a post-apartheid South African context. Specific utterances and statements of the interviewees were recorded verbatim in a notebook by the researcher and were later transcribed into an Excel spreadsheet according to the questions they addressed for further analysis. As mentioned previously, interviews took place within the individual research sites included in the study, except for one which was a telephonic interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed in English by the researcher.

3.6.2 Thematic content analysis

A thematic content analysis approach was used for the analysis of the interview texts. Thematic content analysis is probably the most common method used in qualitative research. It aims to find common patterns and themes across a data set. Thematic content analysis entails a series of steps which includes getting familiar with the data by reading and re-reading, coding or labelling the whole text, searching for themes within broader patterns of meaning, reviewing themes to ensure they fit the data, defining and naming themes, and then writing-up a coherent narrative that includes quotes from the interviewees (Cresswell 2012). Thematic content analysis has been described as a foundational method, constituting a core skill for qualitative researchers. It can be flexibly applied to enable both descriptive and interpretative analysis as required (Braun and Clarke, 2006:78). Thus, to recapitulate, in keeping with Malinowski (2009:110) and Garvin (2011:104) the interviews were analysed using a thematic content analysis which is a qualitative method used to identify,

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analyse and report patterns and/or themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thus, the main methodological aspects for the analysis of interview data entailed recording and transcribing interviews, thereafter the content of each interview text was analysed for its meaning and significance. In this way, comparing and contrasting interviews, and interpreting the interview texts, meaningful insights were revealed about commuter experiences and perceptions of not only the languages used at the public railways, but also about the changing patterns of language use on signs in the LL across spatial and temporal boundaries in South Africa.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical procedures are an important component of all research because they are intended to safeguard the privacy and lives of the research participants. Since the current study collected data from both public spaces and people, ethical considerations were important from the outset. Firstly, it was compulsory for the researcher to obtain ethics clearance from the University of the Western Cape Research Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of data collection, as per university regulation. While the current research did not pose any risks to the lives or health of people, the data collected for the study entailed photographing signs in public places, recording the responses of people to a survey questionnaire and interviews with key informants, respectively. Thus, prior to commencing data collection, permission was obtained from individual participants by means of giving them relevant background information about the study, accompanied by informed consent forms which they had to read, sign and return to the researcher. In this way, the researcher ensured that all participants were informed about the nature of the study and that they had consented to participate.

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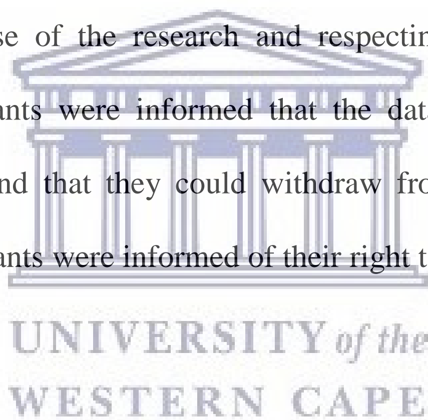
A set of accepted ethical obligations applies to all research which involves human participants, such as informing the participants about the nature and potential benefits of the study prior to engaging them. In addition, it entails informing the participants of any potential risks associated with participating in the study. In this way, participants give what is known as informed consent, based on the information provided about the research (Cant 2003; Cresswell 2012). Therefore, as mentioned previously, relevant information about the research was provided to participants upfront and the research posed no risks to their privacy or health in anyway. Also, the researcher agreed to adhere to accepted, ethical research protocol. This entailed indicating the purpose of the research and respecting the rights and privacy of participants. Participants were informed that the data was solely to be used for academic purposes and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. Furthermore, participants were informed of their right to know how their information would be used.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3.8 Limitations

The current study continues the interdisciplinary convention of the field of LL. Given that the LL is approached from a language policy planning perspective, the theoretical framework is informed by conceptualisations from the disciplines of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. While the methodology entails empirical data collection that is quantified, it is also analysed against qualitative considerations. In this way, the study offers another example of how various fields of study and academic disciplines can interact and support each other. Although agency remains a problematic aspect in LL methodology, differentiating between local and external agents allows a more nuanced approach and addresses the concern

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that national and international, private and commercial enterprises exert the same, if not more influence in the LL than the official agents. Thus, including regulatory instruments as an aspect of agency allows for a more direct comparison between the communicative norms of official agents and the actual choices made in the LL. In addition, future LL methodologies could consider differentiating between the purposes for which signs are developed and the actual purpose for which signs are used.

A further limitation is that during data collection, PRASA security staff members harassed and detained the researcher for a number of hours at Johannesburg Park station. The researcher was further harassed by PRASA security staff at both Cape Town and Durban stations, respectively, and therefore had limited access to these stations. In addition, a research assistant that volunteered to collect data at Port Elizabeth station was also harassed and threated by PRASA security staff. Appeals to senior officials at PRASA for assistance were largely ignored. This type of harassment and general lack of cooperation by PRASA staff could probably be attributed to the formal investigation by the former Public Protector, Advocate Thuli Madonsela, into allegations of rampant corruption, of what became known as 'state capture' at PRASA at the time. Her final report, entitled *"Derailed"*, was published in 2015 and uncovered detailed allegations of widespread financial mismanagement, maladministration and corruption within PRASA. The resultant effect of these issues on the current study is that the data collected in the specific research sites was done hastily and under considerable duress from PRASA security staff. This may have led to the unintentional omission of important LL artifacts and/or other relevant LL data from the study. Despite these significant challenges, the data that was successfully collected is nonetheless considered valid and relevant since it offers meaningful

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insights into the LL of the railways in South Africa at a particular point in time. Moreover, the quantitative research is triangulated through the results of the survey questionnaire, interview findings and participant observation, thereby ensuring credibility and validity of the results of the overall study.

3.10 Chapter summary

The main aim of the current research is to present an ethnographic, multisemiotic analysis of the LL of the public railways across four provinces in South Africa. Considering government's official policy to develop multilingualism in all spheres of life, the focus of the study is on the languages used on signs in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. In this chapter, the research sites and the sample population were clearly identified. Since the study relies on a mixed-methods approach it entails consideration of both quantitative and qualitative data. Details of the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were clarified. There are various approaches used as criteria to determine which texts should be included or excluded in LL studies. For this reason, the unit of analysis and which texts will form part of the research must be clearly defined in the research methodology, which the current study does. Furthermore, all readable texts on signs in the individual research sites are included. In keeping with Cenoz and Gorter (2006) each individual sign is counted as a unit of analysis. Lastly, signs could be either stationary or mobile in terms of spatial mobility of sign carriers (Reh 2004) therefore signs at station platforms, as well as signs in trains which are mobile sign carriers, are included in the current study. Signs created on or affixed to windows, walls or doors were considered stationary whereas signs on/in trains were considered to be mobile. Since the study involved photographing signs displayed in public places, along with responses to a survey questionnaire and interviews, it was

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necessary to account for ethical considerations which were explained in detail in this chapter. Lastly, the limitations of the study were explained and clarified. The results and findings are presented and discussed in the subsequent chapters.

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Chapter 4: Social structuring of languages at the railways

4.0 Introduction

Chapter 4 provides answers to the first research question and thus explored the social structuring of languages in the LL of the public railways in South Africa in space and time across regional and national boundaries. In addition, the chapter provides answers to the sixth research question in that it assesses the influence of globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. The results are presented and discussed in terms of the statistical analysis that was done to show the social structuring of the languages on signs in the LL of the railways.

As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, Weber and Horner (2012:179) explain that many of the previous LL studies were largely quantitative rather than interpretative. They contend that such studies focussed mainly on counting the languages on multilingual signs. Thus, the authors argue that LL studies should entail ethnographic approaches which provide more meaningful interpretations of the LL (*ibid*). Blommaert and Maly (2014:3) raise similar concerns. They argue that a predominantly quantitative approach in LL studies, which accounts for the distribution of languages in a specific area, fails "to explain how the presence and distribution of languages could be connected with specific populations and communities and the relationship between them, or with the patterns of social interaction in which people engage in the particular space". Furthermore, Blommaert and Maly (2014) point out that quantitative data in an LL study is still valid if it is appropriate for answering the research objectives. However, the authors caution that not all LL studies require quantitative approaches since some research may require

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qualitative methods. Thus, it becomes clear that both quantitative and qualitative approaches have value and could be appropriately applied depending on the research objectives and context, as demonstrated by some of the previous mixed-method research of the LL discussed in Chapter 2.

The social structuring of languages in the LL of the railways entails understanding how the languages used on signs in the research sites are un/equally produced, reproduced, maintained and contested in public spaces. As such, the study entailed an ethnographic, multisemiotic analysis of the languages used on signs displayed in trains and at railway stations across four provinces in South Africa. In addition, the spread of languages and other semiotic resources across regional and national boundaries were assessed to account for trajectories of multilingualism and multiculturalism in space and time since the end of apartheid. A further aim of the study was to explore social and cultural transformation in post-apartheid South Africa as reflected in the languages used on signs at the railways. Thus, the study explored transformation in the LL of post-apartheid South Africa as experienced and perceived by railway commuters. To achieve the research aims and objectives, a corpus of all the LL artifacts that were captured in the research sites is presented, followed by a synopsis of the languages that were used on the signs in the individual provinces. Next, the languages that were used on the official and the private signs are compared and contrasted in terms of their spatial and temporal contexts, using a multisemiotic approach. In this way, the various types of signs are assessed for their linguistic and cultural diversity. Moreover, the quantitative results are supplemented with qualitative analyses and discussions of examples of relevant signs that were found in the individual research sites. Thus, the study is situated within a broader

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sociolinguistic and sociocultural context. Furthermore, the quantitative results are illustrated using frequency distribution tables and bar charts for ease of reference.

4.1 Social structuring of languages in the LL of the public raiways

The results in Table 4.1 present an overview of the languages and the combinations of languages on all of the signs that were captured on camera in the four provinces which comprised the research sites.

Table 4.1: *Social structuring of languages in the LL of the railways in RSA*

Languages	Quantity	Percent
Monolingual	**267**	**85.8%**
English	265	85.2%
Afrikaans	1	0.3%
Portuguese	1	0.3%
Bilingual	**41**	**13.2%**
English, Afrikaans	14	4.5%
English, Arabic	2	0.3%
English, isiXhosa	15	4.8%
English, isiZulu	3	1.0%
English, Spanish	3	1.0%
English, Urdu	1	0.3%
Multilingual	**3**	**1.0%**
English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa	3	1.0%
n =	**311**	**100%**

The results show that most of the signs (85.2%) in the sample population are monolingual English. A number of possible reasons may explain this widespread use of monolingual English in the LL of the railways. For instance, English is acquired as a second or third language among many Black South Africans. The same applies in various other African countries, and also in many other countries around the world, as a consequence of colonisation by the British. English also serves as a lingua franca in multilingual environments as explained in Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006). Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2009) suggest that the ubiquitous prevalence of

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English in LL studies could be attributed to the influence of globalisation. They argue that throughout the world, multilingual signs tend to include English which could be associated with "markets of production, consumption, international orientation, modernity, success, sophistication and fun" (2009:57-58). In a similar vein, Jimaima (2016:4) points outs that "English enjoys an unrivalled prestige, and that it is used in formal domains" in his study about the social structuring of language in the LL of Zambia. In a study on commercial advertising in the Northern Cape, South Africa, Banda and Mokwena (2018) caution that the symbolic value of English as the absolute language of commodification, as portrayed in the literature, is not universal and that in contexts such as the Northern Cape, English competes with the other local languages (*ibid*). Their argument could probably be said about the use of English on signs at the railways in South Africa.

Thus, English in the LL can be found at various sites, such as tourist attractions or urban locations that have mixed sociolinguistic groups. Seen in this way, English may be used to address not only native speakers of the language but also people from various other African countries and also tourists from abroad (Ben-Rafael *et al.* 2006). Additionally, English could be used for its perceived prestige and positive connotations (Ben-Rafael 2006; Cenoz and Gorter 2009; Kelly-Holmes 2014; Jimaima 2016). Consequently, most of the messages in English in the LL of the railways might therefore actually be addressed to non-native speakers of the language since English serves as the lingua franca and is also the official language of communication for both government and private commercial enterprise in South Africa. Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018) note that people do not always read signage, especially in English, as they use and speak other languages in their daily lives. Thus, the number of people with English as their mother-tongue is limited in

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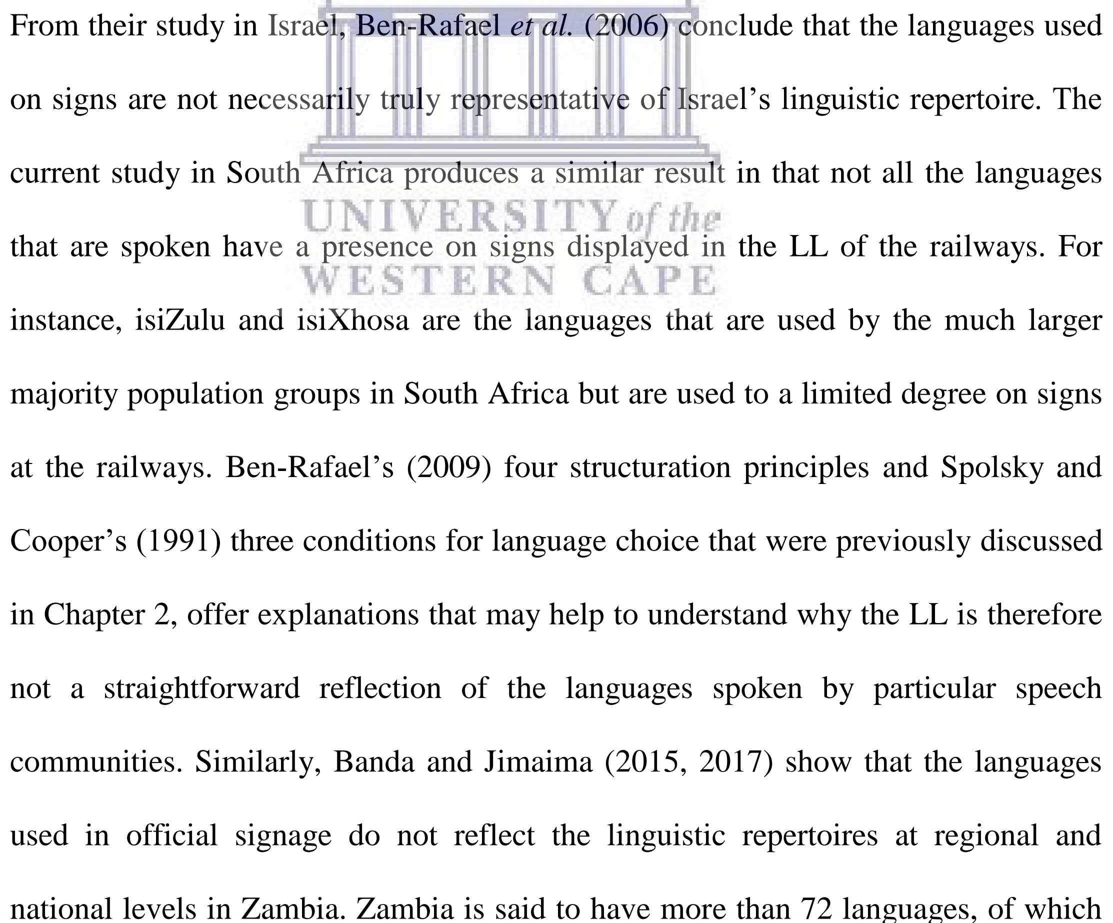
comparison to those who use the other official languages instead. Supporting evidence is found in the Census (2011:25) which reports that merely 9.6% of the South African population speak English as their mother-tongue. The results further reveal that in the LL of the public railways of South Africa, 13.2% of the signs are bilingual. These signs displayed combinations of English and another language on the signs. Bilingual sign combinations included 4.5% English-Afrikaans signs, 4.8% English-isiXhosa signs and 0.3% English-Arabic, English-Spanish, English-Urdu and English-isiZulu sign combinations, respectively. Generally, there was a limited incidence of multilingual signs in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. Moreover, only three distinctive multilingual signs were found with English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa language combinations on the signs.



From their study in Israel, Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) conclude that the languages used on signs are not necessarily truly representative of Israel's linguistic repertoire. The current study in South Africa produces a similar result in that not all the languages that are spoken have a presence on signs displayed in the LL of the railways. For instance, isiZulu and isiXhosa are the languages that are used by the much larger majority population groups in South Africa but are used to a limited degree on signs at the railways. Ben-Rafael's (2009) four structuration principles and Spolsky and Cooper's (1991) three conditions for language choice that were previously discussed in Chapter 2, offer explanations that may help to understand why the LL is therefore not a straightforward reflection of the languages spoken by particular speech communities. Similarly, Banda and Jimaima (2015, 2017) show that the languages used in official signage do not reflect the linguistic repertoires at regional and national levels in Zambia. Zambia is said to have more than 72 languages, of which

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seven are regional official languages, but the LL is dominated by English (Banda and Jimaima 2015, 2017).

4.2 Social structuring of languages in the provinces

In this section, a general overview is presented of the languages that were found on the various types of signs in the individual provinces. For ease of reference, the provinces are listed alphabetically in the data tables. The results in terms of the languages used on signs in the individual provinces are presented in Table 4.2. The results in Table 4.2 reveal that in the Eastern Cape, a total number of 38 signs were found which account for 12.2% of the sample population. Of these signs, 63.2% were monolingual English. The remainder of the signs comprise bilingual and multilingual combinations, respectively. Moreover, the bilingual sign combinations include 7.9% English-Afrikaans signs, with 23.7% English-isiXhosa signs, respectively.

Table 4.2: *Social structuring of languages in the research sites*

Languages	Eastern Cape		Gauteng		KwaZulu-Natal		Western Cape	
Monolingual	**24**	**63.2%**	**119**	**91.5%**	**31**	**91.2%**	**93**	**85.3%**
English	24	63.2%	118	90.8%	31	91.2%	92	84.4%
Afrikaans	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Portuguese	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bilingual	**12**	**31.6%**	**11**	**9.2%**	**3**	**8.8%**	**15**	**11.0%**
English, Afrikaans	3	7.9%	8	6.2%	1	2.9%	2	1.8%
English, Arabic	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	4	3.6%
English, isiXhosa	9	23.7%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%	5	4.6%
English, isiZulu	0	0.0%	1	0.8%	2	5.9%	0	0.0%
English, Spanish	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	2.8%
English, Urdu	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Multilingual	**2**	**5.3%**	**0**	**0.0%**	**0**	**0.0%**	**1**	**0.9%**
English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa	2	5.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.9%
Total	**38**	**100%**	**130**	**100%**	**34**	**100%**	**109**	**100%**

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Of all the signs, 5.3% are multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa. An example of such a sign can be seen in Figure 4.1.

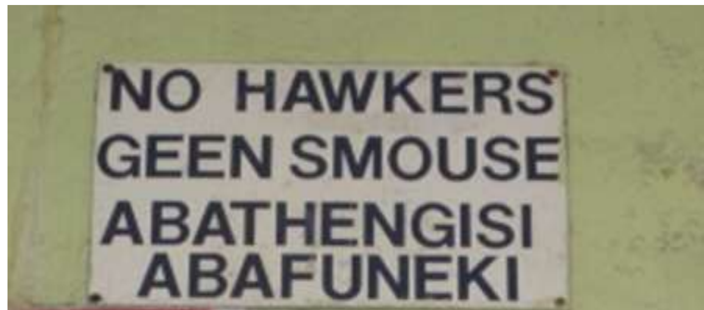

Figure 4.1: *Multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa sign at Port Elizabeth station*

The isiXhosa text 'abathengisi abafuneki' at the bottom of the sign in Figure 4.1 translates to 'vendors not required'. This translation differs slightly from the English and Afrikaans text on the sign which have the same meanings when translated verbatim; 'No Hawkers' – 'Geen Smouse'. During apartheid, most signs were bilingual English-Afrikaans since these were the official languages of South Africa and government communication at the time. In post-apartheid South Africa, the Black languages spoken in the country are now also recognised as official languages and should be included on signs as per government policy. For this reason, the isiXhosa text appears on the sign in Figure 4.1 albeit a slight variation of the English and Afrikaans text. However, when read in the context of the entire sign, the texts of all three of these languages convey the intended message in much the same way on the sign. In addition to language choice and code preference, the text vector is another geosemiotic feature of signs that has changed over time in the LL of the railways in South Africa. Text vector refers to "the normal or conventional reading direction of text in a language" (Scollon and Scollon 2003:216). With reference to the multilingual sign in Figure 4.1, the three different languages of the texts on the

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sign are written in the same font, size and colour. The only distinguishing feature in this particular sign which helps identify code preference is that the English text takes the primary position at the top of the sign, followed by the Afrikaans text in the middle and lastly, the isiXhosa text which has a slightly different meaning, is perceived to take the least prominent position at the bottom of the sign, in western contexts (Scollon and Scollon 2003:216).

The data in Table 4.2 reveals that 130 signs were captured in Gauteng which account for 42% of the total sample. The majority of these signs are monolingual English and represent 90.8% of all the signs that were found in Gauteng. Other signs that were found in the province comprise bilingual sign combinations which include 6.2% English-Afrikaans signs and 0.8% English-Arabic and English-isiZulu signs, respectively. The results in Gauteng reveal that Portuguese, a European language, has a minor presence in the LL of the railways. Furthermore, the Portuguese language seems to carry prestige in advertising as revealed by the sign in Figure 4.2 and it may serve to present positive images of the LL actors. In addition, it does not necessarily represent any specific ethnolinguistic groups within the research site. Instead, it is considered to be an 'outsider language' that is used solely for advertising brand names which Haarmann (1989:11) calls 'impersonal multilingualism' (c.f. Banda and Mafofo 2014; 2015). An example of this phenomenon can be seen in the sign in Figure 4.2, a sign that was captured at Pretoria station in Gauteng which displays the name of an establishment in Portuguese.

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Figure 4.2: *Portuguese shopfront at Pretoria station*

The sign in Figure 4.2 displays the name 'Vida e Caffè' which is known locally simply as 'Vida' in Portuguese. It is a sign of a well-known branded coffee shop which has numerous outlets in South Africa. According to their website, the concept of 'Vida e Caffè' is that of a European espresso bar, aiming to serve high quality espresso and pastries. The brand has a Portuguese theme since 'Vida e Caffè' translates to 'life and coffee' in Portuguese. In addition, the menu is written in both Portuguese and English.

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In her study of advertisements for 'Warsteiner Beer', Kelly-Holmes (2005:49) observes that the use of German indexes the German brewing competence which she calls "country-of-origin-based" advertising (c.f. Haarman 1989:11). In keeping with Kelly-Holmes (2005:49) and Haarman (1989:11), the sign in Figure 4.2 uses the Portuguese language to reflect a Eurocentric cultural competence to making coffee and pastries, as opposed to indexing a Portuguese community per se. Furthermore, in a subsequent study, Kelly-Holmes (2014) explores the notion of 'linguistic fetish' as a sociolinguistic practice across various modes and media. The term linguistic fetish is used in reference to the use of languages for symbolic (fetishised) purposes in

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marketing and advertising texts, as opposed to instrumental-communicative purposes, as seen in the sign in Figure 4.2.

Thus, Kelly-Holmes (2014) suggests that language can be used as part of an advertisement or LL, not merely for its semantic content, but also for the way it looks. Drawing on the notion of linguistic fetish, she points out that the languages that constitute visual multilingualism in the LL could be seen as interconnected modes of meaning. She examines the commodification of visual language in contemporary consumer culture to determine their sociolinguistic implications. In an example of foreign language as visual in a French beer advertisement, she shows how linguistic fetish entails an understanding of foreignness from the point of view of one's own habitus. She explains that the foreign words used in such texts are arranged from the point of view of another language that is considered as the norm; in this case it is English (Kelly-Holmes 2014:141). She therefore suggests that English serves as "the blank canvas on which a little French is painted" (Kelly-Holmes 2014:141). Furthermore, she explains that this type advertisement relies on a common practice in foreign language fetish, whereby the name of the product is given in the language of the country of origin. She offers examples of the use of the word "bier", for German beer; "auto", for German cars; "technik", for German technology and "kaas", for Dutch cheese (2014:141).

Therefore, the sign in Figure 4.2 is an example of how the language on the sign is valued based on its ethnicity and aesthetic qualities as opposed to its semantic content, as argued by Leeman and Modan (2010: 186-191). Thus, the success of the 'Vida e Caffè' brand in South Africa could be attributed to what Leeman and Modan (2010:192) explain as the language that is being sold, as opposed to language being

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used to sell commodities. In addition, in his study of signs in Tokyo, Backhaus (2007; 2009) explains that the language used on private signs in the LL may reflect the influence of globalisation and the mobility of languages across cultures in the LL, which the use of Portuguese on the sign in Figure 4.2 evidently does. Other similar examples are included in the subsequent findings in the Western Cape, such as the use of Arabic and Spanish on shopfronts at Cape Town and Bellville railway stations, respectively.

Moving to the results in the Western Cape, 109 signs were captured in the research sites which account for 35% of the sample. Of these signs, 84.4% are monolingual English, 11.0% are bilingual sign combinations and 0.9% comprises multilingual sign combinations. The bilingual sign combinations comprise 1.8% English-Afrikaans signs, 3.6% English-Arabic, 4.6% English-isiXhosa, and 0.9% English-Urdu signs, respectively. Interestingly, 2.8% of the signs comprise English-Spanish bilingual combinations. One multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa sign accounts for 0.9% of the total number of signs that were found in the Western Cape.

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The sign in Figure 4.3 is an example of a bilingual English-Urdu sign that was captured at Cape Town station in the Western Cape. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan, a status which it shares with English. It is also spoken and understood in many other countries around the world where Pakistani communities have settled, such as South Africa. In keeping with Scollon and Scollon (2003:153) who explain that salient points consist of doorways and corners of buildings, the Urdu script is positioned at a more salient point than the English text on the sign. Looking at the sign from the perspective of visual composition as described by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), the Urdu message is coloured in bright yellow ink and takes the

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primary position on the sign, since it appears above the English text which is coloured white. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) explain that these visual framing devices are used to highlight the most important information in various types of designed discourses, as can be seen in the sign in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: *Bilingual English-Urdu shopfront at Cape Town station*

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Through these visual contexualisation cues (Scollon 2008), readers are cued to identify the Urdu text as the most significant information on the sign in Figure 4.3. The Urdu text at the top of the sign is a transliteration of the English text below it which reads ‘AKI Restaurant’. Although the sign identifies the three brothers who own the establishment; Abid, Khalid and Imran, readers of the sign will not necessarily know this. In addition, the Urdu script on the far left of the sign is also a transliteration of the English text ‘open 24 hours’. Thus, the sign should appeal to readers who identify with the Urdu script. However, the target audience is perceived to be Muslim commuters by readers of the sign in the area. The rationale for this observation is that the Urdu script is similar to Arabic script which is recognised by readers of the sign in this particular area. Also, it is common knowledge to local

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commuters travelling through this area and other parts of the city, that the Arabic script and language are associated with Muslim people and the Islamic faith (Johnson 2012:84).

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018) explore the role of social actors in sign making and consumption as a way to theorise and characterise the materiality of the duality of sign and object in the LL. They consider the extent to which social actors read and recognise signs as per the original producer's intentions. Considering that the signs used in their study were emplaced by the Chinese, and are mostly in Chinese script, with little or no translation into English or local Zambian languages, both of which use the Roman alphabet; they highlight the senses and meanings local social actors produce and consume from the physical attributes of the Chinese signs in the narrations of place (Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena 2018). Thus, they draw on the notion of semiotic remediation as repurposing to contribute to social semiotic theory of multimodality, and to account for the transformation of semiotic material and discursive regimes during narration of place. Furthermore, Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018) use the notion of translocality to account for the localised nature of sign consumption and meaning-making, despite where the sign was originally produced. Translocality in this sense refers to the movement of people and cultural objects such as food, language, scripts and clothing within and across national boundaries. Thus, the sign in Figure 4.3 serves as a good example of the global cultural flows, in this case it is Urdu cuisine, from its origins in Pakistan to Cape Town station in the Western Cape (Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena 2018).

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Although the Urdu script is a slight variation of Arabic script, the sign in Figure 4.3 does not necessarily serve to index the presence of Arabic people in the area neither does it index an Urdu community. Instead, the owners of the restaurant point out that the use of the Urdu script is perceived by readers of the sign to symbolise a Muslim/Islamic identity because of what is perceived to be Arabic script on the sign. Consequently, the establishment is perceived to serve 'halaal' food that is permissible for consumption by Muslims which echoes a similar finding by Johnson (2012:84) in his study of the language on signs in the Western Cape. The sign is also an example of what Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) explains about how signs in the LL could reveal identity markers of communities which differed in attractiveness to various readers of signs since the perceived Arabic script on the sign makes this particular establishment attractive to Muslim commuters who may want to buy a meal, for instance. Also, the presence of the Urdu script on the sign offers evidence of the idea that the LL is a symbolic construction of the public space as pointed out by Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) and Ben-Rafael (2009). Moreover, the sign's perceived function is to index the presence of Muslim people in the LL in this particular area which is in fact accurate.

Another interesting sign is that of a bilingual English-Arabic sign displayed at the entrance to a store that is owned by Somali immigrants at Bellville station in the Western Cape; see Figure 4.4.

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Figure 4.4: *Bilingual Jubba Arabic-English shopfront at Bellville station*

Unlike the previous sign in Figure 4.3, the Arabic script is not used on the sign in Figure 4.4. Instead, the Arabic word 'Jubba' (also spelt Juba) is printed using the Roman alphabet, followed by the English text on the sign. In this particular sign, it can be observed that 'Jubba' appears above the English text 'womens and mens clothing and shoes'. The word 'fashions' appears in bold, red capital font below this text. Once again, drawing on Scollon and Scollon's (2003) system of geosemtiotics, and more specifically in terms of the placement of the Arabic text, the word 'Jubba' can clearly be seen to take the primary position, since it is positioned above the English text. Furthermore, the text is printed in bold, black, easily identifiable font. In this way, the authors of the sign draw the attention of readers of the sign to the word 'Jubba' on the sign (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006).

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Juba is the name of the capital city of South Sudan. In addition, Juba is a speech variety of the Arabic language which serves as a lingua franca that is spoken mainly in Equatoria Province in South Sudan and Somalia. It derives its name from the town of Juba which is located in South Sudan. Juba is spoken among communities of people from South Sudan living in peripheral towns within South Sudan. Furthermore, the Juba language derives from a pidgin based in Sudanese Arabic,

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although it has a much simplified grammar. Thus, the presence of the word 'Jubba' on the sign in Figure 4.4 is used in reference to not only Juba, the capital of South Sudan but also to Jubaland, an administrative region in Somalia. It is also a reference to the Juba River which lends its name to the Somali administrative regions of Middle Juba and Lower Juba, as well as to the region of Jubaland (Brudvig 2014). In addition, the sign in Figure 4.4 serves as another good example of global cultural flows as explained in Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena (2018). Moreover, there are many formal and informal traders with a notable presence in the LL of the railways throughout South Africa. Many of these traders are transnational migrants from various other African countries, such as Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia for example, who develop transnational links through the sale of goods and services, and use multilingual communication on a daily basis (Brudvig 2014). These transnational migrants have transformed Bellville station, particularly the adjacent Bellstar Junction, and saturated its spaces and places. One of the largest such transnational migrant groups in Bellville is particularly the Somali migrant community (c.f. Gastrow and Amit 2012; Williams and Lanza 2016). Thus, the sign in Figure 4.4 displaying the name 'Jubba' is an expression of the global trajectories and mobility of languages in the LL across linguistic and sociocultural boundaries. In particular, it serves to reflect the relocalisation and translocation of Somali culture in the LL of the public railways in Bellville, Western Cape (Williams and Lanza 2016; Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena 2018).

In Figure 4.5, the term 'Chicanos' on the sign illustrates the translocation of the Spanish language and culture in the LL of the railways at Bellville station in the Western Cape (Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena 2018). The Spanish text 'Chicanos' takes the primary position on the sign (Scollon and Scollon 2003) which is printed in

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bold, red capital letters in the centre of the sign (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006) and is positioned above the English text 'living in fashion'. The text is framed by a blue, red and white background. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:57) explain, the language that is placed at the top of a bilingual sign could be regarded as the most salient by readers of the sign. Thus, in this way, the placement of the Spanish text 'Chicanos' on the sign in Figure 4.5 would make it most salient to readers of the sign. Furthermore, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:56) explain that an author of a sign "colours in and makes specific the abstract meanings that derive from the inherent properties of shapes and from the histories of their cultural uses".

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Figure 4.5: *Bilingual Spanish- English shopfront at Bellville station*

Signs could therefore reflect the social histories of both the sign makers and sign users, which would also likely reflect their language choices on signs in a transformative way (Jimaima 2016:94). For this reason, the choices of the languages and the specific colours blue, red and white, which are also the colours of the American flag on the sign in Figure 4.5, could be interpreted as reflective of the dichotomy between the Spanish-American (Chicano) identity and that of newly graduated isiXhosa male intitiates. Also, the material culture of Chicanos resonates

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with the local materiality of newly graduated isiXhosa male intitiates, known as ‘Amakrwala’ (Aronin and Ó Laoire 2012:2).

In a variation of this sign as seen in Figure 4.6, the isiXhosa text on the sign translates to ‘we sell clothes for graduate iniates’. Thus, this store primarily sells men’s clothing and apparel, specialising in ‘Amakrwala’ clothing, an isiXhosa term that will be briefly clarified.

Figure 4.6: *Bilingual Spanish-English shopfront at Bellville station*

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Different cultures may require its members to undergo specific rites of passage during their lives as an integral part of socialisation. These rites of passage may entail specific rituals which serve to indicate the different stages of an individual’s development and his or her specific role within the broader cultural community. In African culture, particularly the AmaXhosa culture, a major ritual for a male youth is the transition to manhood. Traditionally, Xhosa boys aged between eighteen and twenty-three attend Xhosa circumcision schools for a manhood initiation ritual. This ritual signifies life changes which affirm their identity and status in the community (Mhlahlo 2009). Essentially, this initiation ritual comprises four phases: the ‘entering

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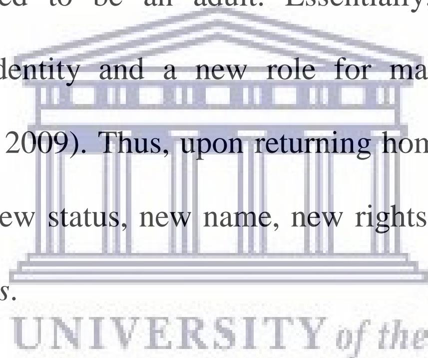
stage', known as 'umngeno', followed by the phase of 'being an initiate' which is called 'ubukhwetha', the 'coming out phase' termed 'umphumo' and lastly, the phase of 'being a graduate' which is termed 'ubukrwala' (Mhlahlo 2009). The last phase is particularly significant because this is where an initiate is presented to his family and other members of his culture.

Thus, after returning home from the initiation school, Xhosa initiates are guided through a six month process where their elders teach them about manhood protocol. During this process, the initiates are traditionally called 'Amakrwala' which is isiXhosa for 'new initiate'. It is at this stage that an individual is no longer deemed a boy but is considered to be an adult. Essentially, being called 'Amakrwala' symbolises a new identity and a new role for male youths within the Xhosa community (Mhlahlo 2009). Thus, upon returning home from the initiation ritual, a graduate acquires a new status, new name, new rights, new duties and he therefore also needs *new clothes*.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As previously mentioned, in the context of the signs in Figures 4.5 and 4.6, the term 'Chicanos' refers to a chosen identity of some Mexican Americans living in the United States of America (USA). The blue, red and white colours which frame the text are synonymous with the American national flag (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006). The term 'Chicano' is sometimes used interchangeably with the term 'Mexican-American'. Both terms are preferred identities within some Mexican-American communities. Moreover, the term 'Chicano' originally became widely used by the 'Chicano Movement' during the mid-1960s which coincided with the 'Black Power' movement in the USA. Essentially, this period in history was a time of global struggles against colonisation and oppression which also manifested in

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increasing resistance to apartheid in South Africa. Thus, ‘Chicano’ became a term that was used by Mexican Americans to express pride in a shared ethnocultural identity. However, the term also had many negative connotations and it presently continues to be viewed negatively within some of the local American communities.

When viewed in its positive context, the ‘Chicano’ culture is a fusion of indigenous, European and other ethnocultural groups, mainly Spanish, which originated as a result of colonisation and migration over time. As mentioned previously, the term ‘Chicano’ first became widely visible during the American civil rights movement and was used by to assert their civil rights. Moreover, these Mexican-American activists asserted their unique ethnocultural identity and political consciousness by proudly identifying themselves as Chicanos. The use of the term ‘Chicanos’ on the sign serves to index a unique ethnocultural identity and consciousness among newly graduated AmaXhosa initiates, who proudly identify themselves not as ‘Chicanos’ but as ‘Amakrwala’. Accordingly, Chicanos is the men’s clothing store of choice in the area for the Amakrwala, offering the style of clothing and accessories which symbolise the successful transition to manhood. The use of the term ‘Chicanos’ on the signs is therefore interesting, not only for its rich linguistic and sociocultural value in the LL of the railways but also for its historical significance.

The signs discussed in this section explored the linguistic and cultural diversity in the LL. In particular, the discussion entailed consideration of the effects of globalisation, localisation and tranlocalisation, material culture, and the mobility of languages across spatial and temporal boundaries in the LL of the railways in South Africa (c.f. Aronin and Ó Laoire 2012; Williams and Lanza 2016; Jimaima 2016; Banda, Jimaima and Mokwena 2018). Although the languages used on these signs

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may seem irrelevant, the results and discussion in this section demonstrate the contrary. More specifically, the results show that it is actually the languages used on the signs that are responsible for selling the goods and services that are on offer at the individual businesses, and not necessarily the commodities or services themselves which are being sold (Leeman and Modan 2010:182).

Furthermore, the results validate Edelman's (2010) assertion that global brand names reveal important information about the linguistic situation within a given area which can be seen in the languages used on the signs that were discussed. In their research which offers an economic approach to the study of the LL, Cenoz and Gorter (2009) explain that throughout the world, multilingual signs usually include English on the signs which they suggest is usually attributed to positive connotations associated with the English language. Although Jimaima (2016) concurs with this perspective about the use of English on signs in Zambia, anthother perspective by Banda and Mokwena (2018) suggests that this view of English is not necessarily universal, particular in Africa since their study shows that English competes with the other local languages in the LL. The signs discussed in this section reveal that culture can be used to frame public spaces thereby attracting customers, and that the commodification of material cultures could also be used to appropriate space (Leeman and Modan 2010:186-188). Thus, space should not be viewed merely as objects and boundaries, instead, space should be considered in terms of languages as mobile semiotic resources and in terms of interactional practices apparent in a community. This entails consideration of the combination of languages, artifacts, cultural symbols, social interactions and the sociocultural compositions of communities emplaced as material culture of multilingualism (c.f. Aronin and Ơ Laoire 2012:2; Banda and Jimaima 2015, 2017).

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Moving on to KwaZulu-Natal, the results show that 34 signs are included in the study which account for 11% of the sample population. Of these signs, 91.2% were monolingual English, the rest of the signs comprise bilingual and multilingual combinations, respectively. The bilingual signs include 2.9% English-Afrikaans signs and 5.9% English-Zulu signs, respectively. Thus, the results reveal that the LL in KwaZulu-Natal has limited incidence of bilingual and multilingual signs compared to that of the Western Cape. Figure 4.7 depicts a bilingual English-isiZulu sign, 'Krispy nKukhu' that was displayed at a fast foods business at Durban station in KwaZulu-Natal.

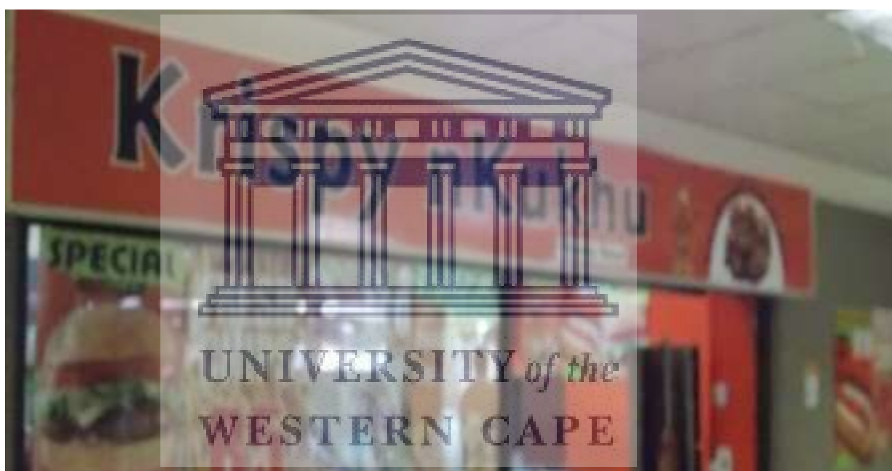

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Figure 4.7: *Bilingual English-isiZulu shopfront at Durban station*

The term 'Krispy nKukhu' on the sign translates to 'Crispy Chicken' in English. The isiZulu word 'nkukhu' is a well-known word which means 'chicken' that is used in most other African languages also. In the context of the sign, it is the name of a well-known food franchise brand in the area that sells grilled and fried chicken. According to their website, the owners of the store claim to embrace 'Kasi' (township) flavours and lifestyle in their menu, offering food and flavours that are

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inspired by the various cultural traditions emanating from the many Black townships in the area. Essentially, ‘Krispy nKukhu’ is a fast food franchise brand that originated from the local Black townships offering their customers authentic township taste. Regarding the name of the business, the authors of the sign deliberately spelt the word ‘Crispy’ incorrectly, as starting with a ‘K’, probably for the effects of both alliteration and onomatopoeia in the pronunciation of the name of the business in reference to the crispy fried chicken that is sold there.

Drawing on Banda and Mokwena (2018) who illustrate how indigenous African languages and localised English are entangled as commodities, the sign in Figure 4.7 can be seen as one such example. Also, the bilingual English-isiZulu text on the sign corroborates their assertion that new forms of commodification do not necessarily involve ‘standard’ English. In fact, the text on the sign illustrates that these new forms of commodification are not reserved for modern, urbanised landscapes which are intended solely for consumption by the wealthy or tourists. Instead, the text on the sign in Figure 4.7 shows how rural and traditional modes of production are also capable of influencing commodification in the LL in terms of their various offerings (Banda and Mokwena 2018). Thus, as the authors argue, local languages are also commodified and the symbolic value of English as the absolute language of commodification is not necessarily universal, as seen in Figure 4.7. Furthermore, Banda and Mokwena (2018) argue that English competes with the other local languages which can be seen on the sign. Although the English text compliments the isiZulu, the two languages compete for space on the sign and also for the attention of readers of the sign. The sign corrobates the assertion that the local languages are valuable commodities in the LL since the presence of English and isiZulu on the sign serve as languages of marketisation. In addition, the text on the sign shows that

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English is often localised to assume Bantu language morphophonology and that it is also often blended with the local languages for aesthetic and marketisation purposes in commercial advertising (Banda and Mokwena 2018). Moreover, the sign confirms the assertion that the commodification of languages and the accompanying hybridised forms entail consideration of the semiotic choices of the local authorship of signs. It also entails consideration of the influence of local communities' languaging practices in the LL. Thus, the sign in Figure 4.7 supports the argument that local languages probably share a similar commodity status with English in the LL. Therefore, local languages and localised English become signs of commodification in the LL which is achieved through processes of "Africanisation and multilingual linguistic dispensation economic practices in place"; "mystification and exotification of discourses as marketisation tools"; "and the use of local languaging practices to attract local customers" (Banda and Mowkena 2018:30).

4.3 Languages used on official and private signs

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In Chapter 3 the reasons for the necessity to distinguish between official and private signs in the LL were explained (Backhaus 2005:109). Moreover, Landry and Bourhis (1997:26) clarify that official signs are essentially public signs that are used by the government and may include road signs, street names and those signs at railway stations, for example. Private signs on the other hand, may include commercial signs, such as advertising signs, billboards and shopfronts (*ibid*). Scollon and Scollon (2003) present similar distinctions between municipal and commercial discourses whereas Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2004) classify official and private signs in their study of the different languages that are used on signs in the public space. As a reminder, the signs that form part of the study are grouped as either official signs or private signs. In the subsequent sections, the social structuring of the

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languages in the LL of the railways is presented in terms of the language variations on the official and private signs, respectively. Since the research sites included in the study are official government controlled sites, it was presumed that the signs displayed in these areas would comprise mostly of official signs.

As explained in Chapter 1, South Africa has comprehensive legislation pertaining to the use of the official languages in the public domain. The researcher therefore expected to find that the signs at the core railway stations in the various provinces that were included in the study would reflect the official government policies in terms of promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism in South Africa. However, the results reveal interesting insights about the actual linguistic situation in the LL of the railways. Against this backdrop, the results of the languages displayed on the official and private signs in the combined research sites are summarised in Table 4.3. The results in Table 4.3 show that various languages are used on the official and private signs at the railways. These languages are grouped in terms of monolingual, bilingual and multilingual sign combinations, respectively.

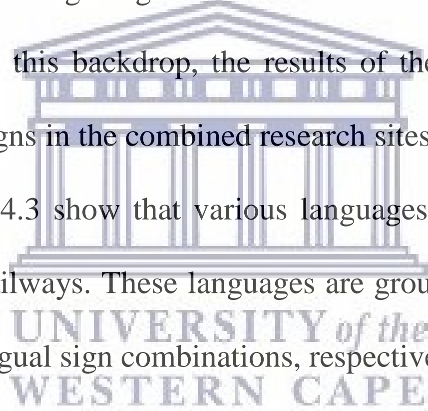

Table 4.3: *Languages used on official and private signs*

Languages	Official	%	Private	%
Monolingual	**136**	**43.7%**	**130**	**41.8%**
English	136	43.7%	129	41.5%
Afrikaans	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Portuguese	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Bilingual	**22**	**7.1%**	**20**	**6.4%**
English, Afrikaans	12	3.9%	2	0.6%
English, Arabic	0	0.0%	5	0.3%
English, isiXhosa	10	0.0%	5	1.0%
English, isiZulu	0	0.0%	3	1.0%
English, Spanish	0	0.0%	3	1.0%
English, Urdu	0	0.0%	1	0.3
Multilingual	**3**	**1.0%**	**0**	**0.0**
English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa	3	1.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**161**	**51.8%**	**150**	**48.2%**

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As a reminder, the sample comprised 161 official signs and 150 private signs, respectively. The official signs accounted for 52% of the sample whereas the private signs accounted for about 48%. Most of the official signs were monolingual English which accounted for 43.7% of the signs in this domain. Furthermore, 3.9% bilingual English-Afrikaans signs were found. Merely three multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa signs were found which accounted for 1.0% of the sample. In a similar trend to the official signs, most of the private signs were monolingual English. Moreover, the proportion of these signs accounted for 41.8% in this domain. Interestingly, 1 monolingual Afrikaans sign and 1 Portuguese private sign were found, respectively. In terms of the bilingual sign combinations, 0.6% was English-Afrikaans. In addition, there were 2.0% English-Afrikaans signs and 1.0% English-isiXhosa, English-isiZulu, English-Arabic, English-Spanish and English-Urdu signs, respectively.

4.4 Languages used on official sign categories

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In this section the data tables show the analysis of the languages on the official and private signs in the various categories of signs, respectively. Firstly, the results of the official sign categories is presented, followed by the results for the private sign categories. As explained in Chapter 3, the official signs were grouped into three main categories which included identification signs, information signs, and regulatory signs. The results for the official sign categories are shown in Table 4.4.

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Table 4.4: *Languages used on official sign categories*

Languages	Identification	Information	Regulatory
English	42	76	18
English, Afrikaans	5	6	1
English, isiXhosa	2	1	7
English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa	0	1	2
Total	**49**	**84**	**28**

More than half of the official signs displayed rail-related information on the signs which were addressed to commuters. Examples of some of the different types of information that was displayed on the signs included train time schedules, commuter safety information, railway maps and train directional information. The information signs comprised 84 signs in total, of which 76 signs were monolingual English signs. Essentially, the identification signs served to demarcate various railways infrastructure, commuter facilities and other amenities, for example. Of the total number of 49 identification signs, 42 signs were monolingual English. The main function of regulatory signs is to communicate either warning messages about potential dangers to commuters or to prohibit inappropriate or unlawful conduct by commuters along the railways. In total, there were 28 regulatory signs that were found, of which more than half were monolingual English. The results in the data table show that a limited number of bilingual and multilingual sign combinations were found. More specifically, English-Afrikaans bilingual sign combinations comprised 6 information signs, 5 identification signs and 1 regulatory sign. The bilingual English-isiXhosa sign combinations included 7 regulatory signs, 2 identification signs and 1 information sign. There was a limited incidence of multilingual signs in the research sites. More specifically, merely 2 multilingual regulatory signs and 1 multilingual information sign was found in the research sites which displayed English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa language combinations on the signs.

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4.5 Languages on official signs in the provinces

The quantitative results for the official sign categories in the respective provinces are presented next. Firstly, the results for the Eastern Cape are given, followed by Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and lastly, the Western Cape.

Table 4.5: *Languages on official signs in the Eastern Cape*

Languages	Identification	Information	Regulatory
English	7	9	2
English, Afrikaans	2	1	0
English, isiXhosa	1	1	7
English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa	0	0	2
Total	**10**	**11**	**11**

Table 4.5 presents the results of the official sign categories in the Eastern Cape. The data table reveals that more than half of the 32 official signs in this area were monolingual English. Of these, 9 were information signs, along with 7 identification signs and 2 regulatory signs. Bilingual sign combinations included 3 signs that were found which comprised 2 English-Afrikaans identification signs and 1 informationsign, respectively. There were 7 English-isiXhosa regulatory signs, and 1 information and identification sign respectively. In addition, 2 multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa regulatory signs were found.

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Figure 4.8: *Bilingual English-isiXhosa regulatory sign at Port Elizabeth station*

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In Figure 4.8, the verbatim isiXhosa translation of the text on the sign is "To cross the railway line is not allowed. Those who cross the railway line will be prosecuted. Use the place allowed only". Essentially, the isiXhosa text conveys the same message as the English text on the sign which Reh (2004) calls duplicating writing, where a translation of the entire message is given in another language. In keeping with Reh (2004), the arrangement of languages and scripts on multilingual signs can also be used to determine code preference. In this particular sign, the preferred code is perceived to be English since it is positioned above the isiXhosa text, and the sign is read from left to right (Scollon and Scollon 2003).

Table 4.6: *Languages used on official signs in Gauteng*

Languages	Identification	Information	Regulatory
English	17	49	12
English, Afrikaans	3	2	1
English, isiZulu	0	0	1
Total	**20**	**51**	**14**

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Table 4.6 shows the results of the official sign categories in Gauteng. The data table shows that of the 85 official signs that were found in Gauteng, 78 signs were monolingual English. Moreover, 49 of these signs were information signs, followed by 17 identification signs and 12 regulatory signs. The bilingual sign combinations included 3 English-Afrikaans identification signs, 2 information signs and 1 regulatory sign. Lastly, 1 bilingual English-isiZulu regulatory sign was found.

Figure 4.9: *Bilingual English-isiZulu regulatory sign at Pretoria station*

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The sign in Figure 4.9 is a more recent version of the same sign in Figure 4.8 which was found at Pretoria station, in Gauteng Province. However, instead of isiXhosa, an isiZulu translation of the English text is given; “To cross tracks of a train is not allowed. Use of crossing allowed only.” This translation omits the English phrase “Trespassers will be prosecuted”. Thus, the isiZulu text on this sign is an example of what Reh (2004) calls fragmentary writing since a translation is given of selected parts of the text.

Table 4.7 shows the results of the official sign categories in KwaZulu-Natal. The data table reveals that 19 of the 20 official signs were monolingual English, across the three sign categories. More specifically, these signs comprised 9 identification

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signs, 8 information signs and 3 regulatory signs. Also, 2 bilingual signs were found, comprising of 1 English-Afrikaans and English-isiZulu sign, respectively.

Table 4.7: *Languages used on official signs in KwaZulu-Natal*

Languages	Identification	Information	Regulatory
English	9	8	2
English, Afrikaans	0	1	0
English, isiZulu	0	0	1
Total	**9**	**9**	**3**

An example of a bilingual English-isiZulu sign is given in Figure 4.10 where the isiZulu translation reads "The following is not allowed; People not wearing shoes, Prams, Trolleys, Goods". In a similar vein to the previous sign in Figure 4.10, the sign in Figure 4.10 is another example of fragmentary writing (Reh 2004). However, the difference in this sign is the inclusion of the isiZulu text "The following is not allowed; People not wearing shoes" which does not appear in the English text on the sign. Essentially, this text is added to give meaning to the rest of the translation of the English text on the sign. The bilingual English-isiZulu sign can be seen in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: *Bilingual English-isiZulu regulatory sign at Durban station*

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Table 4.8 displays the results of the official sign categories in the Western Cape. As can be seen in the data table, most of the signs were monolingual English. Moreover, the monolingual English signs included 10 information signs, 9 identification signs and 2 regulatory signs. In addition, 2 bilingual English-Afrikaans information signs were included, along with 1 multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa information sign.

Table 4.8: *Languages used on official signs in the Western Cape*

Languages	Identification	Information	Regulatory
English	9	10	2
English, Afrikaans	0	2	0
English, Afrikaans, isiXhosa	0	1	0
Total	**9**	**13**	**2**

4.6 Languages used on private signs

Similarly to the official signs, the private signs were also grouped into three categories which included advertising signs, billboards and shopfronts. The results of the languages used on the private sign categories are given in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: *Languages used on private signs*

Languages	Advertising	Billboard	Shopfront
English	24	33	72
Afrikaans	0	1	0
English, Afrikaans	1	1	0
English, isiXhosa	0	0	5
English, Zulu	2	0	1
English, Arabic	0	1	4
English, Spanish	0	0	3
Portuguese	0	0	1
English, Urdu	0	0	1
Total	**27**	**36**	**87**

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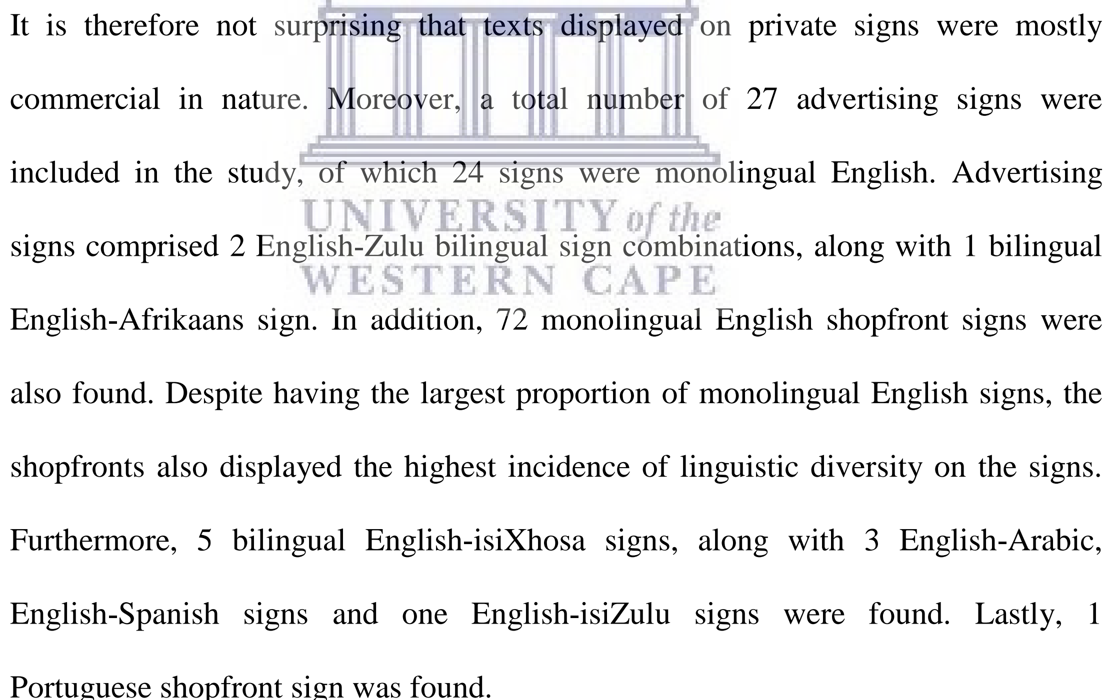
Since 2010 many railway stations in South Africa were given a facelift. The stations that are included in the current study have become nodes where numerous modes of transport and people come together. A mass influx of people converges at these stations on a daily basis. In terms of commercial advertising, these commuters are a captive audience. Public railway sites are therefore regarded as a perfect fit for advertisers wishing to reach rail commuters. Considering that most commuters travel twice a day in these high dwell time environments, railway sites are ideal in terms of providing opportunities for focussed commercial messages. Furthermore, the amount of time commuters spend on platforms and in trains on a daily basis, enable brands to engage meaningfully to maximise their brand exposure with this highly sought after market segment (PRASA 2011; 2012).

It is therefore not surprising that texts displayed on private signs were mostly commercial in nature. Moreover, a total number of 27 advertising signs were included in the study, of which 24 signs were monolingual English. Advertising signs comprised 2 English-Zulu bilingual sign combinations, along with 1 bilingual English-Afrikaans sign. In addition, 72 monolingual English shopfront signs were also found. Despite having the largest proportion of monolingual English signs, the shopfronts also displayed the highest incidence of linguistic diversity on the signs. Furthermore, 5 bilingual English-isiXhosa signs, along with 3 English-Arabic, English-Spanish signs and one English-isiZulu signs were found. Lastly, 1 Portuguese shopfront sign was found.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4.7 Languages used on private signs within the provinces

The results of the private sign categories in the individual provinces are presented in this section. Similarly to the official signs, the results for the private signs are

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presented firstly, for the Eastern Cape, followed by Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and then lastly, the Western Cape.

Table 4.10: *Languages used on private signs in the Eastern Cape*

Languages	Advertising	Billboard	Shopfront
English	4	1	1
Total	**4**	**1**	**1**

Table 4.10 shows the results for private signs in the Eastern Cape. Essentially, 6 monolingual English private signs were included in this area. Of these signs, 4 were advertising signs. In addition, 1 billboard and 1 shopfront sign was found. Figure 4.11 shows an example of a monolingual English billboard.

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Figure 4.11: *Monolingual English billboard at Port Elizabeth station*

Table 4.11 presents the results of the private sign categories for Gauteng Province.

Table 4.11: *Languages used on private signs in Gauteng*

Languages	Advertising	Billboard	Shopfront
English	9	23	8
English, Afrikaans	1	1	0
English, Zulu	1	0	0
English, Arabic	0	1	0
Portuguese	0	0	1
Total	**11**	**25**	**9**

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The data shows that of the 45 private signs that were found in Gauteng, 40 signs were monolingual English. These monolingual English signs comprised 23 billboards, 9 advertising signs and 8 shopfront signs. Furthermore, the private signs included 5 bilingual language combinations across the three categories of signs. More specifically, bilingual signs included 1 advertising sign and 1 billboard which were both English-Afrikaans signs. In addition, 1 bilingual English-isiZulu advertising sign, English-Arabic billboard, and 1 monolingual Portuguese shopfront sign were also found. An example of a bilingual English-Arabic billboard that was found displayed at Pretoria station can be seen in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12: *Bilingual English-Arabic billboard at Pretoria station*

Table 4.12 displays the results of the private sign categories in KwaZulu-Natal.

Table 4.12: *Languages used on private signs in KwaZulu-Natal*

Languages	Advertising	Billboard	Shopfront
English	3	6	3
English, Zulu	1	0	1
Total	**4**	**6**	**4**

The data shows that of the 14 private signs that were found, twelve were monolingual English. The monolingual English signs comprised 6 billboards, 3

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advertising signs and shopfronts, respectively. Only 2 bilingual signs were included, comprising of an English-Zulu advertising sign and shopfront, respectively. An example of a bilingual English-isiZulu advertising sign is shown in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13: *Bilingual English-isiZulu advertising sign at Durban station*

Table 4.13 shows the results of the private sign categories in the Western Cape. The data reveals that 61 of the 75 signs were monolingual English, with only 1 monolingual Afrikaans billboard. The monolingual English signs comprised 50 shopfront signs, followed by 8 advertising signs and 3 billboards, respectively.

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Table 4.13: *Languages used on private signs in the Western Cape*

Languages	Advertising	Billboard	Shopfront
English	8	3	50
Afrikaans	0	1	0
English, isiXhosa	0	0	5
English, Arabic	0	0	4
English, Spanish	0	0	3
English, Urdu			
Total	**8**	**4**	**63**

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Interestingly, the shopfront signs included 4 bilingual sign combinations, comprising of 5 English-isiXhosa signs, 4 English-Arabic signs, along with 3 English-Spanish signs.

Figure 4.14: *Bilingual English-isiXhosa advertising sign at Bellville station*

The sign in Figure 4.14 is an example of a bilingual English-isiXhosa sign that was found at Bellville station in the Western Cape. In this sign, the English text appears at the top of the sign and thus takes the primary position on the sign (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006; Scollon and Scollon 2003). This text indexes the name of the shop which is printed in black and white, on a yellow background. Furthermore, the English text is accompanied by multimodal images which include a bell, stars, lawnmowers and a telephone, followed by the contact telephone number of the shop. Moreover, the images of the bell and the stars on the sign are examples of Scollon and Scollon's (2003:211) indexicality since they evidently serve to index the name of the shop 'Bellstar'. This is also the name of the commercial precinct where the shop is located, namely; Bellstar Junction which is adjacent to Bellville station. As mentioned previously in Chapter 1, Bellville station is one of PRASA's core railway

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stations and it is the second busiest railway station in the Western Cape in terms of daily commuter volumes. In addition, it is also one of the busiest intermodal transport hubs in the region, accommodating both local and national bus, minibus taxi and rail services (PRASA 2011; 2012). With reference to the English text on the sign in Figure 4.14, the information is clear and unambiguous.

The isiXhosa text appears below the English text on the sign and translates to 'The shop of home-goers at Bellville station', followed by 'The shop of home-goers thanks you for the support and cooperation that you have done all year. There is much we looking at from your support. May God bless you and give you peace. Thank you!! Don't give up because God will always show you mercy!!!' This message in isiXhosa is aimed at readers who speak and know the language. In addition, as pointed out by Williams and Lanza (2016), it addresses a readership that recognises the cultural and historical information that are entextualised in the sign. Furthermore, the message is aimed isiXhosa commuters, whom the sign specifically identifies as 'yamagoduka' ('home-goers') who travel between their places of work in the cities and their rural homes in the former apartheid-era 'homelands' which was discussed previously in Chapter 1.

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Williams and Lanza (2016) further explain that the term 'home-goers' was coined by Black multilingual Nguni speakers during apartheid South Africa. Essentially, it refers to Black migrant workers who periodically travel between their rural homes and the cities for the purposes of work, vacation or for various cultural matters, such as funerals, initiation, and so on. Therefore, Williams and Lanza (2016) emphasise that the use of the term 'home-goers' in this sign serves as a present-day historical reference to Black South Africans who travel between and through multilingual

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urban spaces. Moreover, the emplacement of the sign in Bellville serves to entextualise the discourses of apartheid. In particular, the isiXhosa message on the sign serves as a reminder of the Group Areas Act of 1950 which led to the establishment of the rural homelands during apartheid South Africa, as pointed out in Williams and Lanza (2016).

4.8 Chapter summary

Chapter 4 presented the results pertaining to the social structuring of languages on signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa. The chapter provided answers to the first research question which entailed exploring the social structuring of languages in the LL of the public railways across four provinces in South Africa, and how the meaning of signs change across social and cultural boundaries in a transformed post-apartheid context. The main aim of the study was to present an ethnographic, multisemiotic study of the LL of the public railways in South Africa in space and time across regional and national boundaries. In addition, the focus of the study was to explore and to analyse the languages of texts on signs displayed in the various research sites. To provide answers to the first research question, the social structuring of languages in the LL was presented by means of descriptive statistics. Moreover, the data was presented and analysed using frequency distribution tables and bar charts which were compiled using Microsoft Excel software. This was followed by a synopsis of the languages used on signs in the individual provinces to assess their functional and symbolic purposes. Next, the languages used on the official and private signs were compared and contrasted in terms of their spatial and temporal contexts. Lastly, the languages on the various types of signs were discussed in terms of the linguistic and cultural diversity reflected on the signs. To give meaning to the descriptive statistical data, the results were supported with examples

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of digital images of interesting signs that were photographed in the individual research sites.

The results reveal that most of the signs that were found in the LL of the railways in South Africa are monolingual English. Many possible reasons could explain the dominance of English in the LL of the railways. For example, English may be used to address not only native speakers of the language, but also tourists from other countries or immigrants from other African countries and further afield. English may also serve as a lingua franca in multilingual environments and may be used for its perceived prestige or positive connotations but this view is not necessarily universial, particularly in Africa. Interestingly, most of the messages in English are probably addressed to non-native speakers of the language since Census (2011) data shows that in South Africa, the number of people with English as their mother-tongue is limited when compared to the other official languages. A notable number of the signs were bilingual which displayed combinations of English and another language on the signs. A number of these bilingual signs dispayed foreign languages on the signs, as seen in Figures 4.2 to 4.6. The use of these foreign languages on signs in the LL of the railways would probably not have been permitted during apartheid. In addition, the owners of these businesses would have been denied access to trade in these specific areas since these prime commercial sites at the railways were reserved for Whites and White-owned businesses during apartheid. Thus, the proliferation of foreign languages on private commercial signs at the railways could be attributed to the transformation of the LL in post-apartheid South Africa.

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Furthermore, the results reveal that there was generally a limited incidence of multilingual signs and merely three individual multilingual signs were found in the combined research sites. In terms of the producers of signs, most of the official signs were monolingual English with some bilingual and multilingual combinations, all of which included English, accompanied with transliterations in an/other language/s on the signs. The private signs followed a similar trend and the overall results of the study were mirrored within the individual provinces.

In Chapter 5, the results of the survey questionnaire are presented which explores how the LL of the railways in South Africa is spatially situated.

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Chapter 5: Spatialisation at the railways

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the results of the survey questionnaire and provides answers to the second research question which entailed determining which language serves as the base language of public announcements and other messages in the LL of the railways in South Africa. In addition, the results provide answers to the third research question on how place- and meaning-making at the railways are realised and negotiated through the languages in the LL. In this way, the study traces trajectories of multilingualism in the LL of the public railways across spatial and temporal boundaries. Following Blommaert and Maly (2013; 2014) the quantitative data is motivated as designed to capture commuters' differentiated experiences and consumption of LL. The survey questionnaire comprised nineteen questions in total and had two main parts. The first part reports on the demographic characteristics of respondents while the second part reports on how commuters perceived the languages that were used on the signs and for public announcements in the LL of the railways in South Africa. In addition, respondents were prompted to recommend improvements for a more inclusive LL in a post-apartheid South African context.

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For this research, about 1,000 railway commuters were invited to complete an electronic survey questionnaire. In the end, a total number of 105 commuters agreed to participate in the study and completed the survey questionnaires in full. As mentioned previously, the questionnaire comprised two main sections. The first section elicited demographic information about respondents, such as age, gender, race, the languages used and rail usage practices. This information was used to compile a sociolinguistic profile of the respondents. The second part of the

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questionnaire comprised a mix of closed and open-ended questions pertaining to commuter experiences and perceptions of the languages used on signs and for public announcements in the LL of the railways. In addition, commuters were afforded the opportunity to recommend improvements to the languages used on signs in the LL of the railways in terms of promoting linguistic and cultural diversity.

As a reminder, for the collection of data, the survey questionnaire was presented in English and was administered via electronic mail by the researcher to respondents residing in the various research sites. The approach used for the collection of data ensured that all the questions were answered in full which enabled comparability between the results, particularly across the individual provinces. Responses to the completed questionnaires were captured and analysed using Microsoft Excel software. Thereafter, the data was illustrated using frequency distribution tables and bar charts. This type of descriptive statistical approach for the analysis of data enabled the researcher to identify emerging trends and patterns of language use concerning commuter experiences and perceptions of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the LL of the public railways in South Africa.

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5.1 Characteristics of the respondents

Respondents to the survey questionnaire were spread across four provinces in South Africa which comprised the individual research sites, as previously discussed in Chapter 3. As part of their respective journeys, respondents alighted and disembarked at core railway stations within their respective provinces which encompassed the research sites for the study. As mentioned previously in Chapter 1, the specific research sites included Port Elizabeth station in the Eastern Cape,

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Johannesburg Park and Pretoria stations in Gauteng, Durban station in KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town and Bellville stations in the Western Cape.

The results of the survey questionnaire show that the Western Cape had the highest proportion of respondents which accounted for 53% of the sample population, followed by Gauteng with 31%, KwaZulu-Natal at 9%, and the balance of 7% of respondents were in the Eastern Cape. Some of the most densely populated urban centres in South Africa are located within these provinces, such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, respectively. Across these provinces, respondents resided in urban, built-up areas, giving them convenient access to the rail network across South Africa. Most of the respondents were female (57%) while 43% were male. The proportion of female respondents was higher in Gauteng and the Western Cape, with ratios of 70% and 57%, respectively. The opposite was true in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal where the proportion of male respondents was 57% and 78%, respectively. The results reveal that women were more likely than men to complete the survey questionnaire. In addition, the larger proportion of female respondents shows that women were more likely than men to use trains as their primary mode of transport in South Africa which corroborates the finding by (PRASA 2011; 2012).

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The age of respondents is relevant because age may be linked with language variation (Bourhis *et al.* 1981; Coupland 1997:34; Giles *et al.* 2000). To avoid bias and to ensure impartiality, rail commuters across different age groups were invited to complete the survey questionnaire. The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18-35 years at the time of the study. Respondents in this age group accounted for about 78% of the sample population. A similar scenario existed across

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the other provinces, where respondents in Gauteng were all within this age group, in KwaZulu-Natal it was 89%, in the Eastern Cape 78% and 62% in the Western Cape. Respondents aged between 35-64 years were minimal and had the lowest proportion of respondents by comparison. A possible reason for the majority of respondents being younger than 35 years of age could be that this group was probably more adept at using and responding to modern technology, such as the electronic email survey questionnaire. Also, this group probably used trains more often than the others.

Ethnicity is a social construct that indexes the identification with a particular group of people who share common traits, such as culture, language and religion, for example. However, Banda (2009:8) cautions that it is inadequate to describe a person's linguistic repertoire based solely on ethnicity. He explains that people do not necessarily use their ethnic or home languages across all situations. Thus, the results concerning the linguistic repertoires of respondents and their comments about the languages used in the LL of the railways concur with Banda's assertions. In terms of their ethnicity, most respondents were Black and accounted for 69% of the sample, followed by 23% Coloured, 7% White, and 1% were Indian respondents, respectively. Similarly, within the provinces the majority of respondents were Black. The same was true in the Western Cape despite the fact that Census (2011) data shows that the majority of the population in the province are Coloured.

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The sample population for this study comprises rail commuters who used trains at least once per week. Thus, the high number of respondents who used the railways on most days of the week was notable. Moreover, a proportion of about 18% of respondents commuted by rail every day of the week compared with 37% who commuted between 5-6 days per week. Nearly half of the respondents commuted

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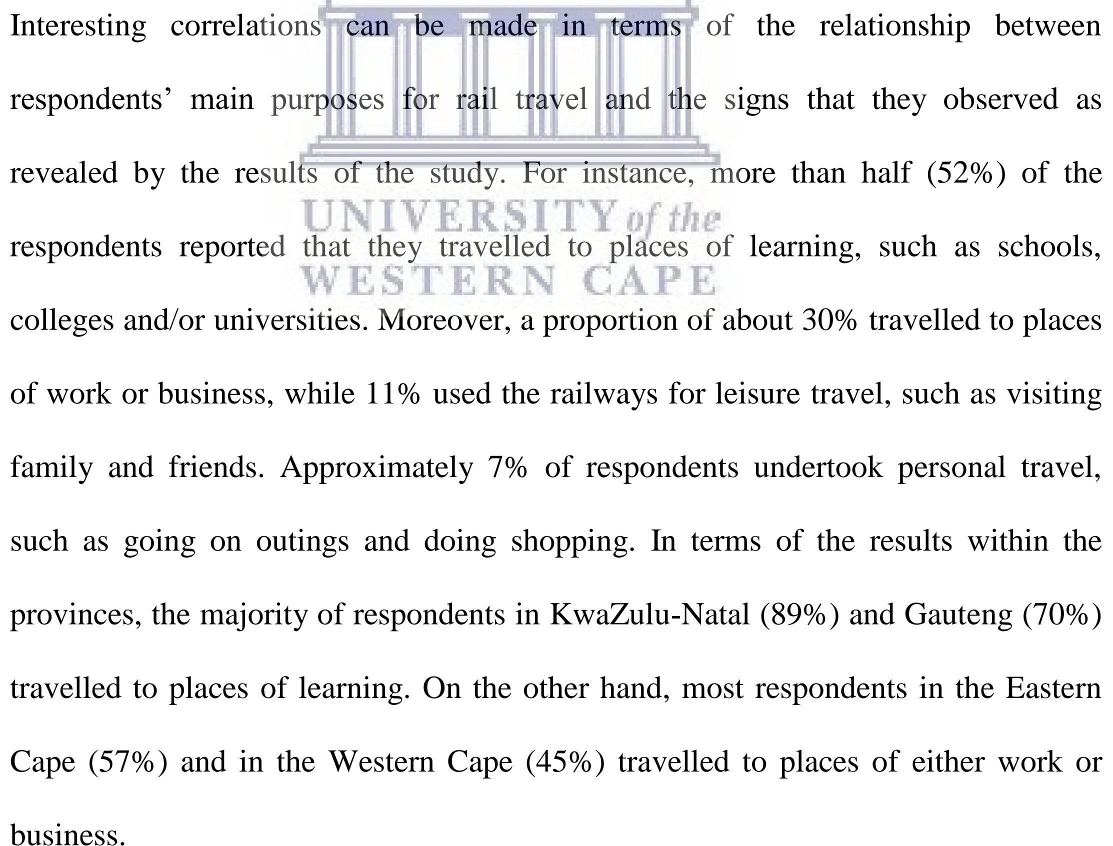
between 1-4 days per week. When considering rail usage within the provinces, more respondents in the Eastern Cape (43%) commuted by rail every day, followed by 29% of those who indicated 5-6 days per week. In Gauteng, about 39% commuted for merely 1-2 days per week whereas 36% used rail every day. In KwaZulu-Natal, two thirds (67%) commuted between 3-4 days while in the Western Cape more than half of the respondents (52%) travelled by rail 5-6 days per week, respectively. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that those who responded to the survey questionnaire had relevant knowledge and experience of the signs displayed in the LL of the railways within the respective research sites. In addition, the responses to the survey questionnaire would therefore be relevant and the results should be reliable within the context of the study.



Interesting correlations can be made in terms of the relationship between respondents' main purposes for rail travel and the signs that they observed as revealed by the results of the study. For instance, more than half (52%) of the respondents reported that they travelled to places of learning, such as schools, colleges and/or universities. Moreover, a proportion of about 30% travelled to places of work or business, while 11% used the railways for leisure travel, such as visiting family and friends. Approximately 7% of respondents undertook personal travel, such as going on outings and doing shopping. In terms of the results within the provinces, the majority of respondents in KwaZulu-Natal (89%) and Gauteng (70%) travelled to places of learning. On the other hand, most respondents in the Eastern Cape (57%) and in the Western Cape (45%) travelled to places of either work or business.

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In addition to their main reasons for travelling by rail, about two thirds of respondents commuted by rail for other purposes also. For example, other reasons that were given for using the railways included personal travel, travelling to work or business and visiting family and friends. Furthermore, across all provinces, about one third of respondents reported that they did not use the railways for any additional purpose, other than that for which it was reported to be their main reason for travel.

In terms of the linguistic repertoires of the respondents, nearly half of all respondents (47%) reported using isiXhosa as their first language. English was the first language of about 23% of respondents, while 12% were Afrikaans first-language speakers. IsiZulu was spoken by 11% of respondents compared with about 2% Sesotho first-language speakers. In addition, Sesotho sa Lebowa, Setswana, and Kinyarwanda/French and Portuguese were spoken as the first languages of about 1% of respondents, respectively. When considering respondents within the provinces, in the Eastern Cape, about 29% spoke isiXhosa, 2% spoke isiZulu and 1% used Setswana as their respective first languages. In Gauteng, English was the first language of about 3% of respondents whereas about 2% spoke Afrikaans. Approximately 1% of respondents spoke isiXhosa and isiZulu, respectively. In KwaZulu-Natal all respondents spoke isiZulu as a first language. In the Western Cape, a proportion of about 20% spoke English as a first language compared with 11% Afrikaans and 17% isiXhosa speakers, respectively. About 2% of the respondents spoke Sesotho and 1% spoke Sesotho sa Lebowa, Portuguese and *Khoekhoegowab*, respectively. Interestingly, Nama is a Khoekhoe language variety which is spoken mainly in Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and Angola. For pragmatic reasons and to cater for a Damara/Nama union, Nama became known as Khoekhoegowab in Namibia (Fredericks 2010:3). Furthermore, English was used by

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about 67% of commuters in addition to their first languages. Afrikaans was used by 46%, 11% used isiXhosa and 10% used isiZulu, in addition to their respective first languages. About 6% of commuters used Setswana, 4% spoke Sesotho and 2% used siSwati in addition to their respective first languages. A proportion of about 1% of the respondents used isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Lebowa, Tshivenda and Xitsonga in addition to their respective first languages.

The linguistic repertoires of respondents are noteworthy because it reflects Banda's (1996; 1999; 2009) assertion that multilingualism and multiculturalism are common in discourse practices across domains and modalities throughout Africa. In addition, the language variation noted among the respondents allows them to locate themselves within multilingual contexts. Thus, the results of the survey questionnaire reveal that this is particularly true in the LL of the railways of South Africa. Furthermore, the linguistic repertoires of some respondents include several languages and language varieties from different cultures in Southern Africa. In keeping with Banda (2009:8) these hybrid linguistic repertoires should be interpreted as linguistic dispensation instead of fragments of different linguistic systems.

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5.2 Languages used for public railway announcements

The diverse group of multilinguals included in this study experienced social spaces differently, particularly their changing linguistic surroundings. Therefore, respondents were prompted to reflect on their experiences of the languages used on signs at the railways in South Africa.

Table 5.1 reports on the findings pertaining to the languages used for public railway announcements in the individual research sites at the time of the study.

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Table 5.1: The languages used for public railway announcements

Language	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	Kwazulu-Natal	Western Cape
English	5	18	7	30
isiXhosa	0	1	0	1
Afrikaans, English	0	2	0	5
Afrikaans, isiXhosa	0	1	0	0
English, isiXhosa	0	5	0	6
English, isiZulu	0	0	1	0
Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa	0	6	0	14
Afrikaans, English, isiZulu	0	1	0	0
English, isiZulu, Xitsonga	0	0	1	0
Afrikaans, English, isiZulu, Sesotho	1	0	0	0
Afrikaans, English, Sesotho, Setswana	1	0	0	0
Grand Total	**7**	**33**	**9**	**56**

Most respondents (60) reported that they perceived public railway announcements to be predominantly monolingual English whereas 11 respondents reported hearing bilingual English-isiXhosa announcements and 7 indicated that bilingual English-Afrikaans announcements were also heard. Many respondents (20) indicated that some announcements were multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa and some reported that other official languages were also used in combination with English. For example, respondents noted that at times English public railway announcements were accompanied by isiZulu, Xitsonga, Sesotho or Setswana translations, respectively.

As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, resemiotisation extends multimodality in that it entails consideration of how texts make meaning across different contexts and modes of communication as pointed out by Iedema (2003:41). In addition, O'Halloran (2011) explains that resemiotisation involves multimodal discourses which move between various resources and across different contexts. Resemiotisation is an important tool to study the LL of the railway sites because as

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part of PRASA's infrastructural upgrades since 2009, train schedules and other messages, both official and private, were largely transformed from being displayed on static, manually updated notice boards to automated, multimedia, digital screens and signs. The sign in Figure 5.1 below is an example of such a sign. Essentially, it is a billboard-sized digital information sign which is categorised as a monolingual English sign in the current study. Although the sign displays multilingual place names, the information on the sign is given in English. (The current study does not entail consideration of place names for pragmatic reasons). The bright orange digital text is illuminated against a black background which makes is clearly visible to readers on the ground below. Commuters are thus able to conveniently read details about train schedules departing from Cape Town station. This sign is a good example of how texts in the LL are resemiotised from one mode to another, across contexts, over time and space and was perceived by some respondents. Although other languages of place names appear on the signs, it is used in an English text therefore the message on the sign is interpreted as English.

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Figure 5.1: *Monolingual English sign at Cape Town station*

5.3 Languages used in trains and on railway infrastructure

The findings in Table 5.2 report on which languages were used in trains and on railway infrastructure in the individual research sites.

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Table 5.2: *Languages used in trains and on railway infrastructure*

Row Labels	Eastern Cape	Gauteng	Kwazulu-Natal	Western Cape
English	5	12	6	21
Afrikaans	0	2	0	0
isiXhosa	0	0	0	1
Sesotho	0	0	0	1
Afrikaans, English	0	5	1	6
English, isiXhosa	0	4	0	7
English, isiZulu	0	0	1	0
Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa	0	1	0	0
seSotho sa Lebowa, Sesotho	1	0	0	0
Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa	0	8	0	20
Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa, isiZulu	0	1	1	0
Afrikaans, English, isiZulu, Setswana	1	0	0	0
Grand Total	**7**	**33**	**9**	**56**

In a similar vein to the previous question, most respondents (44) reported that signs in trains and at railway stations were predominantly monolingual English. Some (12) reported seeing bilingual English-Afrikaans signs, whereas 11 noted the presence of bilingual English-isiXhosa signs as well. A total of 28 respondents indicated that they observed multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa signs at the railways. Furthermore, a number of respondents reported seeing other official languages used on signs, such as isiZulu, Sesotho sa Lebowa, Sesotho and Setswana, respectively. The sign in Figure 5.2 is an example of a bilingual English-isiXhosa sign that the researcher observed inside a train in Port Elizabeth. The use of languages on signs are defined in the language zoning but are not used as such in the LL as reflected by the results. The same applied during apartheid. As people move from place to place their languages move with them.

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Figure 5.2: *Bilingual English-isiXhosa regulatory sign inside a train in Port Elizabeth*

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5.4 Languages used on signs and for public announcements

With regards to whether the languages of respondents were used on signs and for public railway announcements, the findings in Chart 5.1 reveal that approximately two thirds (67) of respondents reported that their languages were in fact used on railway signs and for public announcements whereas about one third (38) disagreed. The data within the provinces was generally consistent with the overall results of the study which revealed that most respondents indicated that their languages were used on railway signs and for public announcements. The exception was KwaZulu-Natal, where respondents felt that their languages were omitted from signs and public announcements at the railways. These results are not reflected in the social structuring of the LL as discussed in Chaper 4 which shows that most signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa are monolingual English. Thus, the results in Chapter 4 contradrict the assertion by commuters that their languages are catered for on signs in the LL of the railways.

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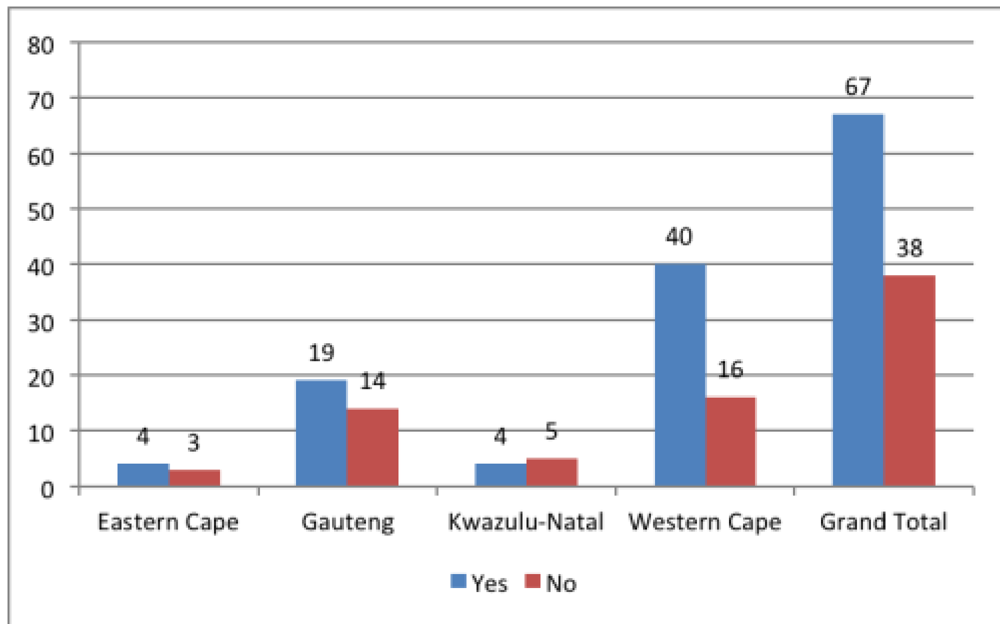

Chart 5.1: Languages used on signs and for public announcements

Chart 5.2 reports on the findings concerning how commuters felt about whether or not their languages were used on signs and for public announcements.

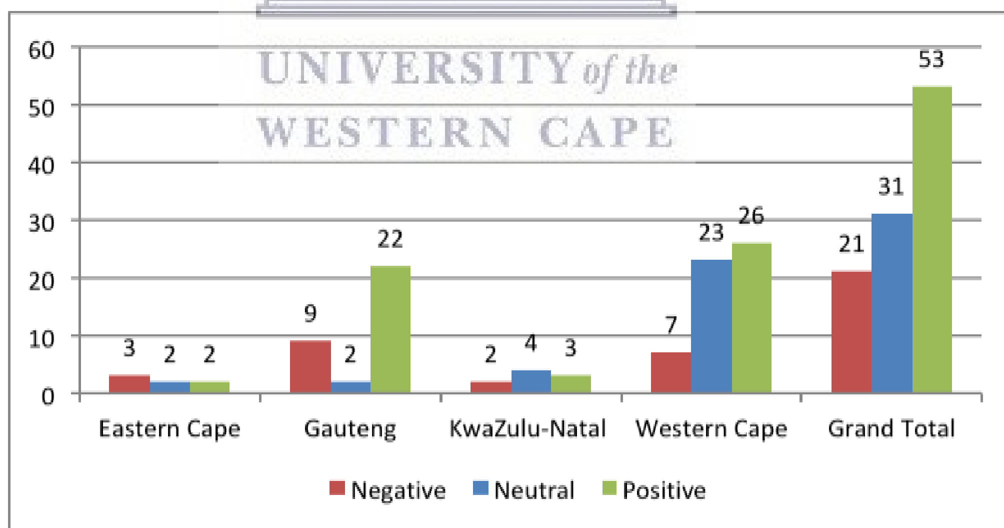

Chart 5.2: How commuters felt about the languages used on signs and for public railway announcements

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For ease of reference, responses were coded as ‘Negative’, ‘Neutral’ or ‘Positive’ to denote how commuters felt about the languages used in the LL. Generally, the findings reveal that most respondents (53) were positive about the use of their languages on signs and for public announcements at the railways. A similar trend was noted in Gauteng and in the Western Cape. The findings in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal were marginal.

5.5 Cultural inclusion/exclusion in the languages used on signs

The findings in Chart 5.3 report on whether the languages used on signs and for public railway announcements included all cultural groups in South Africa.

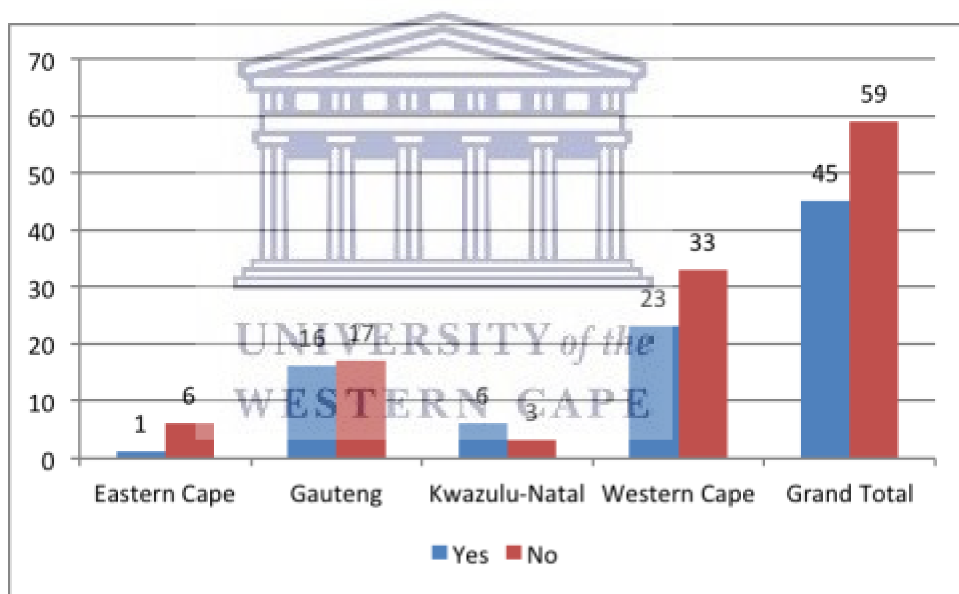

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Chart 5.3: Cultural inclusion/exclusion in the LL

Most respondents (59) indicated that certain cultural groups were excluded by the languages used on signs and for public announcements at the railways. On the other hand, 45 respondents indicated that they felt included. These results were mirrored by the results within the respective provinces, with the exception of KwaZulu-Natal, where responses were contrasted. Furthermore, respondents were prompted to give

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reasons for their answers. The majority of respondents attributed the linguistic and cultural exclusion to the ubiquitous presence of English in the LL of the public railways in South Africa.

As an extension to the previous question, respondents were asked to indicate which cultural groups were excluded from the LL of the railways. Overall, more than half (60) of the total number of respondents indicated that African languages and cultures were generally excluded from the LL of the public railways in South Africa. The same result was echoed in the individual provinces also.

5.8 Towards a more culturally inclusive LL

In terms of the languages used on signs and for public announcements at the railways, respondents were prompted to suggest improvements towards a more culturally inclusive LL. Overall, most respondents concurred that the languages used on signs should reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of South Africa as enshrined in the Constitution (RSA 1996). This finding was echoed within the individual provinces also.

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5.9 Linguistic hegemony in the LL of the railways

As part of exploring linguistic hegemony in the LL, respondents were prompted to indicate whether they thought that there was a dominant language used on signs. The findings are illustrated in Chart 5.4.

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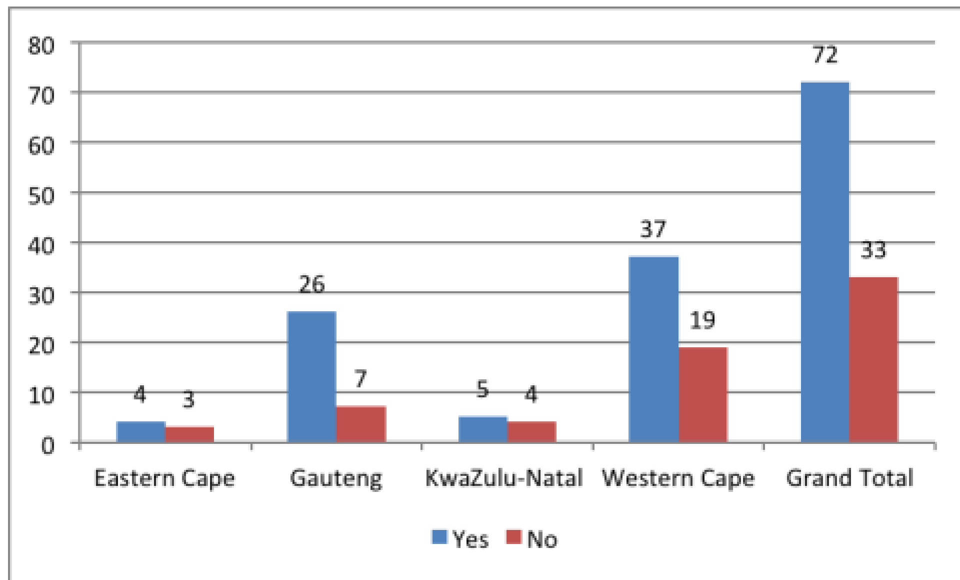
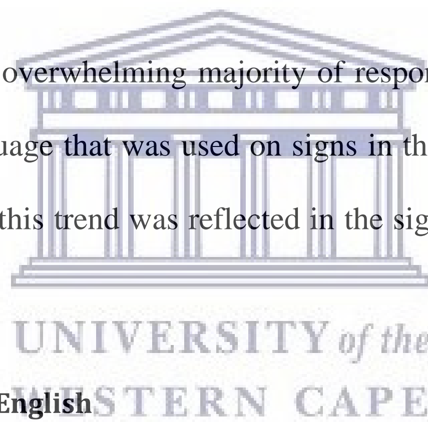


Chart 5.4: Linguistic hegemony in the LL of the railways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As was expected, an overwhelming majority of respondents (72) identified English as the dominant language that was used on signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa. Accordingly, this trend was reflected in the signs in the individual provinces also.

5.10 Alternatives to English

Lastly, Chart 5.5 reveals the findings in terms of whether or not respondents thought that other languages should be used on the signs displayed in the LL of the railways of South Africa as alternatives to English. The findings reveal that most respondents (83) indicated that English should not be substituted with another language because in their view, it served as a lingua franca in South Africa. Furthermore, the findings in Chart 5.5 reveal a similar trend in the individual provinces in that English was regarded as the official language of government communication and business.

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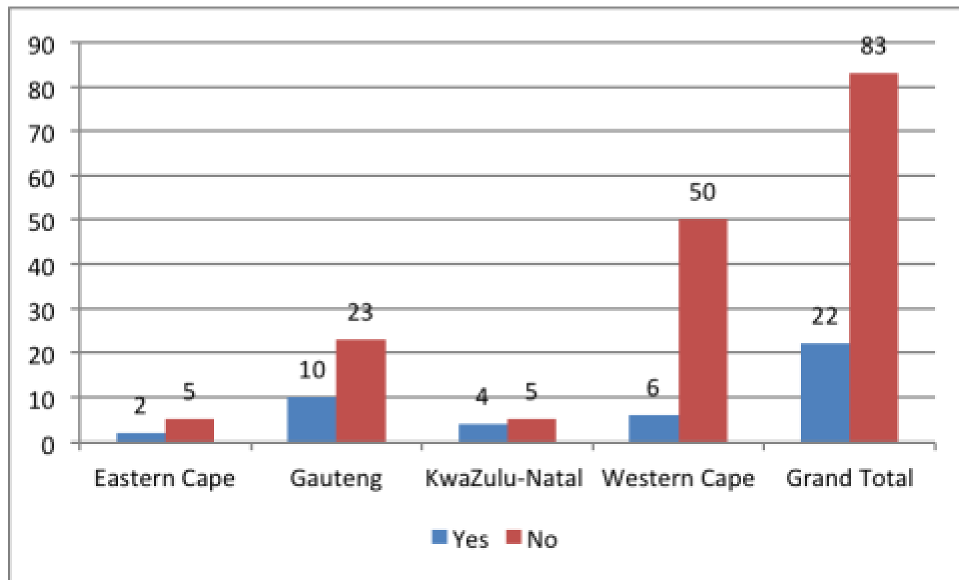

Chart 5.5: Substitution of English in the LL of the railways

5.11 Chapter summary

Chapter 5 reported on the results of the survey questionnaire which explored how commuters experience and perceive the languages used on signs and for public announcements in the LL of the railways across four provinces in South Africa. In addition, commuters were afforded the opportunity to recommend improvements for a more linguistically and culturally diverse LL. The results provide answers to the second research question which was to determine which language serves as the base language of public announcements and other messages in the LL of the railways. In addition, the results provide answers to the third research question which was to explore how place- and meaning-making at the railways are realised and negotiated through the languages in the LL. Essentially, the results reveal that public railway announcements are predominantly monolingual English. Although some announcements are bilingual English-isiXhosa and English-Afrikaans, the incidence of multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa announcements is limited. Respondents reported that at times, other official languages were used in combination with

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English, such as isiZulu, Xitsonga, Sesotho or Setswana. Most respondents reported that their first languages were used on signs and for public announcements in the LL of the railways while some indicated that certain cultural groups were excluded from the LL. More specifically, some of the Black languages which have official status in the Constitution (RSA 1996) were generally absent from the LL. Many respondents attributed this linguistic and cultural exclusion in the LL to the ubiquitous presence of English. To improve this situation, it was suggested that the languages used on signs and for public announcements at the railways should reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the broader South African population as enshrined in the Constitution (RSA 1996).

The next chapter reports on the interview findings which explores the languages used on signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa over time.

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Chapter 6: Reconstructing the LL over time

6.0 Introduction

To supplement the results of the quantitative research and to fill the gaps left by the results of the survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a cross-section comprising twelve longstanding railway commuters, one of whom was a retired, senior railway official. Chapter 6 provides further answers to the third research question which was discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter also provides answers to the fourth research question which was to evaluate the dialogicality of the linguistic landscape of the public railways across space and time. The focus of the chapter is on the reconstruction of the LL over time. Answers are also provided to the fifth research question which was to assess the influence of globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. As a point of departure, the key interview findings are presented using a thematic content analysis approach.

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6.1 Paying attention to the signs

In determining whether the participants paid any attention to the signs displayed at railway stations and in trains, most of the participants reported that they had a keen awareness of the different types of signs that were displayed at the railways. For instance, one participant enthusiastically confirmed that she particularly paid attention to commercial advertising signs and commented *"Obviously, that's where I look for sales"*. Other participants reported that they observed that during apartheid, the signs at the railways were mostly bilingual English-Afrikaans and that the other local languages were largely omitted from the LL as indicated; *"the signs are always in English and Afrikaans; there were never any Xhosa signs"*. This view was

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supported by another participant who asserted that *"Afrikaans was definitely not the dominant language on signs. It was always bilingual. The policy was bilingualis"*. An example of a sign which supports this comment by participants can be seen in Figure 6.1 which shows a bilingual Afrikaans-English sign that was displayed in the LL of the railways during apartheid. This sign was downloaded from the Internet for illustration purposes and was not displayed in any of the research sites at the time of the study. The Afrikaans text takes the primary position on the sign, and the messages "Gewone Kaartjies" and "Net Blankes" are accompanied with verbatim, duplicated messages translated in English; "Ordinary Tickets" and "Whites Only" (Sollon and Scollon 2003; Reh 2004).

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Figure 6.1: *Apartheid-era bilingual Afrikaans-English sign (Getty Images 2015)*

The interview findings reveal that although today, some of the local Black languages are used in the LL, official railway signs and announcements, and many of the private commericial signs in the LL of the railways are perceived to be predominantly in English. Furthermore, the findings reveal that while some railway staff spoke Afrikaans occasionally, they mostly speak English when interacting with commuters.

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6.2 Remebering apartheid signs and contesting perceptions on the transformed LL

With regards to what participants initially thought about the changes in the languages used on signs at the railways in post-apartheid South Africa, some commented that the signs reflected a more diverse society both linguistically and culturally; *"I see more diverse signs now, it's a good thing. It reflects that we live in a more diverse society"*. This finding is applicable only to certain areas in South Africa. For example, the signs that were discussed in Chapter 4, Figures 4.2-4.6 reflect this diversity at Cape Town and Belville stations in the Western Cape. This diversity is not necessarily reflected in the LL of the railways in the other provinces.

One participant observed that certain messages on the signs were deliberately aimed at certain groups of people; *"I feel that most of the signs along the railways are directed at the lower economic groups and classes"*. Therefore, it is evident that the messages in the LL of the railways serve to target specific audiences. In addition, the participant was critical of the textual content on some of the signs and argued that certain messages were often misleading which could have harmful consequences for the intended readership; *"For example, signs about 'sugar gives you energy'. That's directed at the lower classes. These signs advertise unhealthy things"*. Thus, it becomes evident that messages in the public space influence different groups of people differently. For instance, a participant suggested that poor people acted upon certain messages on signs whereas wealthier people were more likely to ignore those same messages; *"Well-off people don't use those products because they are more health conscious. Poor people are influenced by those types of signs"*.

Banda and Jimaima (2015:644) contend that signs do not need to be written neither do they have to be emplaced materially in the LL for them to be salient to the local

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people. Thus, Banda and Jimaima explain that people, particularly in the rural areas in African countries, remember signs by means of what is known as "oral remediation of semiotic landscapes" or "oral linguascaping" (2015:644). Thus, signs do not have to be physically present for people to act upon them. Simply put, Banda and Jimaima suggest that people remember signs through the "narration of place through realigning semiotic material such as trees, hills, bush paths, physical objects" (Banda and Jimaima (2015:644). In this vein, a participant vividly recollected the racist nature of texts displayed on official signs at the railways during apartheid; *"That time, for me it was racist"*. The participant further explained that the signs at the railways demarcated access to spaces and places according to racial groups; *"You couldn't sit where there was a seat. You had to sit where there was a sign"*. This sentiment was echoed by the other participants also, who confirmed that during apartheid, official signs at the railways primarily served to enforce racial segregation; *"At that point it was not a question of language; it was a question of racial segregation"*. One participant in particular explained that *"it was not Afrikaans that caused oppression; it was [the] people who used Afrikaans"*. The participant elaborated that *"the then National Party and its voters comprised mostly Afrikaans-speaking people while the Progressive Party and others were mainly English speaking. Whatever, it's not the language, it's the people. Don't hate the language, hate the oppressor"*. Another participant remembered the frustrations of travelling by rail during the apartheid era; *"'Whites only' here, 'Coloureds', no - it was 'Non-Whites', the sign was 'Non-Whites' was over there. Some of the signs was 'Europeans', it was 'Europeans' and 'Non-Europeans'"*. A participant explained that; *"There was a very full carriage and you had to sit there because there was a sign there"*.

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Figure 6.2: *Whites-only bench during apartheid (Getty Images, 2015)*

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Figure 6.2 shows an image that portrays a typical apartheid-era scenario. In the image depicted, what appears to be a teen-aged White boy in his school uniform is seated on a bench at a railway station. With his school bag next to him on the bench, he gazes at two older Black women walking by, presumably to the Non-Whites part of the station. The boy is probably waiting for the train on his way home from school in the afternoon. Both women in the image are dressed in similar neat clothing, wearing dark grey-black skirts and tops, with formal white shoes. One woman is wearing a dark brown beret on her head while the other is clutching two white plastic shopping bags which seem to contain bread and other groceries, judging by the shape. On the face of it, these two women have completed their work for the day in a White suburb, and are embarking on their journey back home to the township via the railways with some food for their families. As Banda and Jimaima (2015, 2017) suggest, signs do not have to be visible to be salient because people draw on memory, and sociocultural and historical knowledge to re-imagine space. Since there

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is no visible apartheid signage in Figure 6.2, the women walking past the bench are probably aware of the fact that the space they are in is reserved for Whites. They are therefore not permitted to sit on the bench next to the White boy although there is suffience room for the both of them to be seated there comfortably.

Figure 6.3: *Apartheid-era monolingual English sign alongside a bilingual Afrikaans-English sign (Getty Images, 2015)*

Figure 6.3 depicts two examples of signs displayed during apartheid which are no longer present in the LL today. As some participants recollected, during apartheid, these types of signs at the railways were purposive in that they functioned to communicate specific, relevant information to commuters; "It was conveniently put and informative, irrespective of what language it was". Furthermore, participants noted the general absence of Black languages on signs during apartheid; "At the time there was no Xhosa". In this way, participants are also reconstructing the apartheid signs that were in place in the process of narrations of current space. With reference to Figure 6.3, in terms of the materiality of signs, the text on the sign on the left reads "Non-European Females" while the one on the right reads "Vroue" and "Blankes" which is accompanied with English translations "Females" and "Whites". The sign on the left appears to be embossed in metal while the sign on the sign is printed or painted on metal. Since metal is a durable, longlasting material, signs displayed on metal could be considered to be permanent signs (Scollon and Scollon

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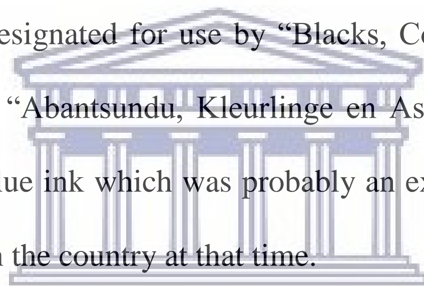
2003; Backhaus 2009; Edelman 2010). Thus, one could deduce that the White minority government probably believed that apartheid would never come to an end. They therefore created signs using durable, permanent materials, thereby emplacing these racist messages on permanent signs in the LL of the railways. In Figure 6.3, the sign on the left uses the word “European” in reference to Whites thereby denoting their European ancesteral heritage. Another possible reason for this is that sometimes during apartheid the lines were blurred. For instance, at times Black people were called “Africans”, “Bantu” or “Abansundu” while people of mixed race were called “Coloured” and Indians were called “Asian”. An example of an apartheid-era sign depicting these racial categories can be seen on the sign in Figure 6.4 which shows an ablution facility designated for use by “Blacks, Coloureds and Asians” with an Afrikaans translation “Abantsundu, Kleurlinge en Asiërs”. The sign appears to be crossed-out in dark blue ink which was probably an expression of the growing anti-apartheid sentiment in the country at that time.



Sometimes Blacks, Coloureds and Indians were simply referred to as “Non-Whites”. The sign in Figure 6.3 shows that Whites were sometimes also called “Europeans”. Thus, it is clear that the apartheid government had an irrational system of deciding race. For instance, whether the moons of a person’s fingernails were a bit more mauve than white, the former indicating a hint of Black lineage. In addition, there was the “pencil test” which detetmined a person’s race based on whether a pencil would stay in one’s hair or not. The former indicative of afro-textured hair and the person was therefore considered Black. If the pencil slid easily through one’s hair, a person could be considered White. Under such absurd rules during apartheid, Chinese people were classified as Coloured despite their straight hair whereas the Japanese were considered White because of their mauve finger nails. Similarly,

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Blacks who wanted to be reclassified as Coloured were permitted to undergo the "pencil test" and could in this way become Coloured if they passed the test. Many people changed their race in this manner. Sometimes it was not voluntarily done, and led to families being forcibly separated by the government. In extreme cases, even children were separated from their parents during apartheid if one parent was deemed not to belong to the same race, as it is not unusual to find siblings ranging in shades from black to fair, with blonde hair in Coloured communities. A good example is the well-known case of Sandra Laing, a South African woman who was born from a family classified as White. She was classified as White at birth and later Coloured by authorities during apartheid because of her skin colour and hair texture despite being the child of three generations of ancestors who had been considered White (Ferris 2015).

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Figure 6.4: *Apartheid-era bilingual English-Afrikaans- sign (Getty Images, 2015)*

Some participants emphasised that English and Afrikaans were predominantly used on signs at the railways during apartheid; *"mostly two languages used on railway stations, English and Afrikaans".* Also, participants perceived that Black people were generally excluded from the LL since the languages used on the signs were mostly addressed to an English and Afrikaans audience; *"If you get to see them, you*

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find that they don't accommodate for other races, they only accommodate for English and Afrikaans". An example of a bilingual English-Afrikaans "Whites Only", "Net Blankes" segregation sign displayed on a train during apartheid can be seen in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.5: *Apartheid-era bilingual English-Afrikaans sign on train carriage (Getty Images, 2015)*

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Participants observed the different social class distinctions that were introduced at the railways towards the end of apartheid years; *"The Cape Town station, as you know it, wasn't like that before. It was for third-class"*. Some participants emphasised this observation and pointed out that *"From the time the segregation signs and notices were removed, general notices, for example, ticket offices, were still in English and Afrikaans"*.

When commenting on their perceptions of the changes in the LL of the railways in post-apartheid South Africa, participants observed that the Afrikaans language was systematically removed from the LL; *"presently Afrikaans is no longer used in any government sign posts"*. Others observed the appearance of multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa signs in the LL and commented that the *"languages used mainly are English, Afrikaans and Xhosa"*. Some participants noted that warning signs in

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particular, addressed a diverse audience in that were multilingual; "*warning signs are universal*". These types of multilingual signs are linguistically and culturally inclusive and were generally viewed positively by participants; *"It is good that they use the three most popular languages in South Africa, English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans as it accommodates all commuters"*.

Figure 6.6: *Multilingual English-Afrikaams-isiXhosa warning sign*

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Figure 6.6 shows an official multilingual sign displaying the words "Danger" in English at the top of the sign, followed by translations in Afrikaans "Gevaar" and isiXhosa "Ingozi", respectively. All these texts are written in the same colour and font size. The three different languages are aligned in the centre of the sign, from top to bottom, followed by the universal symbol for high voltage electricity. The placement of the languages on the sign serves to indicate the dominant language or the preferred code in western contexts (Scollon and Scollon 2003). In this case, the preferred code or dominant language is English since it appears at the top of the sign which is the primary position, followed by Afrikaans in the secondary position and then lastly, isiXhosa. Most participants noted the hegemony of English in the LL which serves as the lingua franca, *"[English] accommodates the majority of the*

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people". In this way, the use of English on signs in the LL of the railways could therefore also be considered to be inclusive.

Figure 6.7 shows another example of a bilingual English-Afrikaans sign on a bench at a railway station in South Africa during apartheid. In the image, it can be clearly seen that although the bench is unoccupied, a Black woman, who is probably on her way to work in a White area, would rather stand against a cold brick wall while waiting for the next train, instead of sitting on a bench reserved for Whites. The image was probably taken on a cold morning since she is dressed warmly in a winter dress, wearing boots on her feet and a warm cap on her head. The bench is empty because the Whites are probably inside a sheltered area of the station where she cannot go. Clearly, she is in a White area and she cannot get in where the Whites are. Thus, she stands outside in the cold next to an empty bench that is reserved for Whites.

Figure 6.7: *Apartheid-era bilingual English-Afrikaans sign on a station bench (Getty Images, 2015)*

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6.3 Presence of mother-tongue

Concerning how participants felt about seeing signs in their respective mother-tongues in the LL, one participant noted that she expected to see her first language used on signs in the LL of the railways and commented; *"I expect to see signs in my first language"*. This expectation could be linked to the hegemony of English across various domains in the LL as discussed in the previous section but it mainly applies to English first-language speakers since many of the languages spoken by other commuters are largely neglected in the LL. Some mother-tongue speakers of other languages on the signs felt a sense of value and recognition in that some messages in the LL were addressed to them and indicated that they felt "*privileged, to be able to read the sign in my language"*. Others indicated; *"you get recognised in your mother-tongue"* while some said *"you feel comfortable, the message is aimed at you"*. For others, seeing signs in their respective mother-tongues in the LL evoked feelings of pride and acknowledgement; *"I feel proud and very important"* and other said *"I feel so delighted, excited, happy"*.

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These excitements show how rare it is to find indigenous African languages on signs in the LL of the railways. Thus, Black commuters marvel at the few they find. During apartheid, African languages and cultures were not allowed in the LL of the railways where Whites were. However, in post-apartheid, under the new dispensation, people are allowed to appropriate these spaces with their cultures and languages. They do not have to adhere to the local language policies and can use their own languages on signs in the LL whereas they would not have been allowed in this space during apartheid. This appropriation of space has led to a transformation

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of space although the space is not necessarily owned by the people who appropriated it.

6.4 Transformation of the LL over time

In terms of whether participants noticed any changes in the languages used on signs over time, most confirmed that in post-apartheid South Africa, the languages used on signs in the LL of the railways had notably changed. Participants noted the dominance of English in the LL; *"99% is English which is government policy".* Many participants emphasised the hegemony of English; *"all government departments use English and corporates are latching on to that. I don't really have a problem with that. English has become the official language of government and business."* Some pointed out that during apartheid *"you saw a lot of Afrikaans"* whereas in the post-apartheid LL participants observed the dissipation of Afrikaans and the inclusion of Black languages; *"I noticed more is the English and Xhosa. I think they pushed the Afrikaans out".* Participants emphasised the general absence of Black languages in the LL of the railways during apartheid. However, they pointed out that some of these languages were included on signs in the post-apartheid LL; "*Xhosa has been added, they've added Xhosa to it which is a good thing"* and *"Now you see more Xhosa. Especially at your main stations where there are taxi ranks. There you see lots of different languages"*. Others corroborated these sentiments and indicated *"Yes, more languages get used, for example, Zulu, Xhosa, in relation to only English and Afrikaans signs used in the past".*

Figure 6.8 shows a multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa sign displayed at Pretoria station in Gauteng. The sign shows duplicating multilingualism (Reh 2004)

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since the English message "Keys to the safe are not kept on the premises" is duplicated verbatim in the Afrikaans and isiXhosa translations.

Figure 6.8: *Multilingual English-Afrikaans-isiZulu sign at Pretoria station*

6.5 Multilingual appropriation of space

When exploring participants' initial responses to changes in the languages used on signs at the railways, most welcomed the changes they observed in the LL and indicated that they were *"Happy, elated excited"*. Interestingly, one participant suggested that the changes in the LL could be interpreted metaphorically in that *"it was an outward display of changes that was going on in people's minds. Like it was a display of what was going on in the country"*. Participants were generally positive about the changes in the languages used on signs in the LL but expressed concern that racial tensions still existed in South African society; *"I was happy that it changed but I still felt that there was very much still apartheid"*. For some, although apartheid had formally ended in 1994 and the signs in the LL have changed, the attitudes and behaviour of many people in South Africa have still not changed; *"the*

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signs changed but the people didn't change". For this interviewee, the changes in the LL since 1994 have been cosmetic as the spatial divide still exists. In other words, the old signs may as well be there. I develop this argument further below.

Many participants welcomed the changes in the languages used on signs at the railways although some thought it was long overdue; *"Well, it was an improvement. To me it was late. It should have been done a long time ago".* Others considered the removal of the apartheid signs to be *"a forerunner of what was ultimately to happen and the removal of segregation after 1994".* Participants observed that *"There were no sign boards segregating people anymore".* However, some noted that apartheid had not yet ended in the minds of some people; *"The coaches had previously been reserved by Whites were still occupied by Whites. But they were no longer reserved for Whites only."* Interestingly, railway commuters were initially confused and unsure how to respond to this new LL, in that many people still stand in the same places and space where they stood before, where the apartheid signs had told them to stand. Participants noted; *"The position on the station platform where people used to stand waiting for the trains to stop was still used by people standing where they had become accustomed to wait"*. Others indicated; *"It was in people's minds and that changed over time, for the better."*

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The Parade Concourse commercial hub at Cape Town station that is depicted in Figures 6.9 and 6.10 provide evidence to corroborate the assertions of the interview participants about how commuters respond to the transformed, and for some, still untransformed apartheid-era spaces at the railways.

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Figure 6.9: *Parade Concourse at Cape Town station – previously "Third-Class"*

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Figure 6.10: *Another view of Parade Concourse at Cape Town station*

Figure 6.10 shows a food franchise outlet called "Pie Way". This particular business sells fast-food pastries, such as meat pies and sausage rolls. Although Pie Way is a well-known fast foods outlet in the area, commuters are not drawn to it because the people feel uncomfortable in this space. The main reason that people feel uncomfortable here is because they remember that this space was an apartheid-era, third class space. In addition, the material culture of this space has changed and the food and commodities sold here today is different from their lived experiences. Thus, although there is no sign saying "No Blacks Allowed", the material culture in place does not relate to them. (I shall return to and develop this argument further

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below). For this reason, they move through these spaces to the area at the taxi rank which sells commodities which they are familiar with in their cultures. Thus, Figure 6.17 further on in this chapter, shows that the informal traders located outside the station concourse near the taxi rank, have become more formalised but they still sell commodities that are familiar to the people who use these spaces. The spaces depicted in Figures 6.9 and 6.10 were formerly designated for use by Black and Coloured commuters only. Thereafter, it became known as 'third-class' spaces that were used solely by third-class ticket holders. Evidently, these spaces are that of a commercial hub for commuters travelling in and out of the city of Cape Town, where various local and global commodity brands are advertised and sold. Kelly-Holmes (2010; 2014) contends that the branding of commodities and places in the LL can be attributed to the influence of globalisation and consequently, spaces are designed according to the identities which people desire to portray within those particular spaces. It is therefore possible to differentiate between particular places by merely observing the semiotic resources within these places, such as branding and other signs in the LL.

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In this vein, the iconic signs of place, such as the commodities sold and the other accompanying artifacts form part of the perceived personification of the identity of place which entails the articulation of territory. Territorial articulation is linked to spatialisation which entails consideration of 'conceived space' which includes commercial advertisements, 'perceived space' which is the physical space and lastly, 'lived space' which is produced through either the experiences or interactions of both the conceived and perceived space (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010:8). Furthermore, in terms of Peck and Banda's (2014) and Noy's (2011) mobility and

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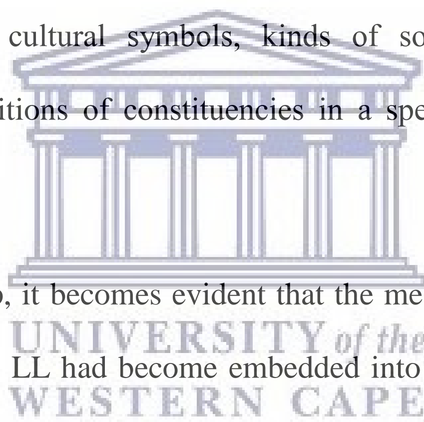
pliability of space, the spaces depicted in Figures 6.9 and 6.10 offer examples of how the spaces at the railways are constantly being reconfigured and recontextualised based on the semiotic resources visible in the LL. Since semiotic resources are socioculturally and historically dependent, they are constantly being replaced, enhanced or transformed by social actors within these spaces. As Peck and Banda (2014:1) observe, "it is the people within space who carve out new social practices in their appropriated space". Thus, the spaces in Figure 6.9 and 6.10 are viewed not just in terms of the objects and boundaries within it. Instead, the space encompasses language and interactional practices apparent to railwy commuters who use these spaces. Seen in this way, space therefore entails a combination of "language, artifacts, cultural symbols, kinds of social interaction, as well as sociocultural compositions of constituencies in a specific area" (Peck and Banda 2014: 4).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Against this backdrop, it becomes evident that the messages that were displayed on signs in the apartheid LL had become embedded into the minds of the people who read those signs over time. Consequently, long after the signs were removed, today, many people still act upon the messages that they were accustomed to reading in the LL of the railways during apartheid. Thus, they still obey the signs as if they were still physically emplaced in the LL. In addition, a very important post-apartheid development was the formal introduction of 'class' which replaced apartheid racial segregation on trains as observed by participants; *"Only if passengers had the wrong ticket for the particular class, they were requested to move to the appropriate coach. But it was no longer about segregation… classes were introduced, these were first-, second- and third-class. I thought this was more derogatory than the racial discriminating boards"*. Despite the negative observations and perceptions that

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participants had about the LL of the railways, there were those who held a more optimistic outlook about the future of South Africa; *"we are slowly becoming a diverse society and country"* while other noted; *"things are changing and other languages are being considered"*.

6.6 Commodification of languages

Upon enquiring whether participants bought goods from shops or vendors that advertise in languages other than English, most indicated that their purchasing decisions were not necessarily influenced by the presence of English on the signs. Instead, participants explained that their purchasing decisions were more likely to entail consideration of other influencing factors, such as discounted prices, quality and value for money; *"Yes, if it's on sale, yes"*. Others said; *"You know me and sales? If it's on sale and it's a quality product I don't care about the language, I'll shop there"*. Most participants confirmed that they bought goods from shops and vendors who advertised in languages other than English. They explained that for commercial purposes, the language used by vendors was not a determining factor. One participant explained that she was undeterred by the languages used by vendors and confirmed that she bought goods from foreign nationals whose signs were written in their own languages; *"Yes I do, mostly the Arab shops and the Chinese shops, they got their languages on the signs"*.

Conversely, one participant maintained that despite the fact that English was used, he did not support Chinese vendors in particular, citing a lack of trust; *"I wouldn't usually buy from a Chinese shop but their signs are in English anyway. I don't buy from the Chinese"*. Another participant commented; *"not all street vendors are trustworthy and I don't always know what they are selling"*. Other participants who

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did not support vendors using languages other than English explained; *"I wouldn't be able to communicate with a vendor if the advert is in another language. It would also be hard to understand the advert if it is not in English"*. Another participant indicated; *"I won't be able to identify the different types of goods offered by them"* and another said; *"we cannot relate or understand"*. It is therefore evident that although English does not necessarily influence purchasing decisions in the LL, it does serve an important role of lingua franca, bridging the gap between diverse linguistic and cultural groups across South Africa.

Thus, "commodifying processes are highly inventive and specifically embedded in the local-global trajectories of the market economy" (Kitiarsa 2006:1) since the commodification of space, languages and cultures involve a mutual trade-off between these elements and the commodities being sold, as can been seen in the LL of the railways. Furthermore, Leeman and Modan (2010:186, 188) explain that "the commodification of culture and marketing of places, goods and services is mutually reinforcing and it takes place at multiple scales" and that "culture is used not only to frame public space and to attract consumers of goods and services, but also to legitimate the appropriation of that space by private and commercial interest" (*ibid*). Furthermore, the findings reveal that English competes with other languages in the LL for the attention of the readers of signs, particularly the local Black languages. In addition, these local Black languages are valuable commodities in the LL since they also serve as languages of marketisation, especially when emplaced alongside English on signs (Banda and Mafofo 2015; Banda and Mokwena 2018).

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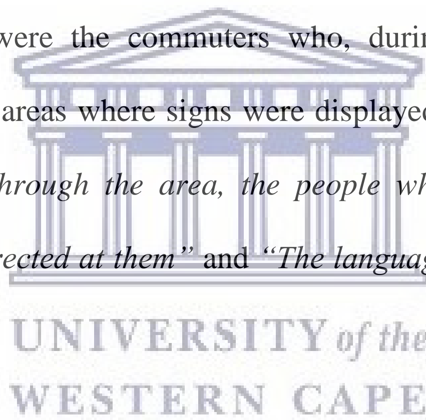
6.7 Social identities reflected in the LL

Upon evaluating participant responses in terms of what they thought the languages on signs say about the people in the area, most indicated that the languages used on the signs did not necessarily index the people who lived in the areas where the signs were displayed; *"I don't think the signs speak to the people who live there"*, *"I think it actually says nothing about the people who actually live in the area"* and *"I don't think it's restricted to the people in the area"*. On the other hand, one participant thought that the languages used on the signs in the LL did in fact index the people who lived in the area; "*You think that this is where the Xhosas live if signs are written in Xhosa"*. Some participants argued that the intended readership of signs along the railways were the commuters who, during their respective journeys, travelled through the areas where signs were displayed; *"The signs are speaking to the people passing through the area, the people who work there or who travel through there. It's directed at them"* and *"The languages are for the people passing through"*.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One participant considered an area with English signs in the LL more prestigious than an area displaying Afrikaans signs, she links the use of English with a higher social class whereas Afrikaans indexed poverty; *"Ok if it's English, then I know it's a more upper, if it's Afrikaans then you know it's a poor area"*. Others perceived English as the lingua franca in the LL; *"Most of the signs are in English which would mean that the people who live there are a mixed-race and English is the universal language"*, *"They are multiracial and speak different languages"* and *"Most of the people in the area use that language"*.

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6.8 Language dominance in the LL

By examining which languages were the most important in their area, most participants observed that English was not only the dominant language on signs in the LL of the public railways but that it also served as the lingua franca; *"We grew up brainwashed that English is the lingua franca"* and *"my first language is the same as that of the majority of people who can read, read English"*. In addition, some emphasised the hegemony of English in society at large; *"it was also the preferred medium of instruction at school"* and *"We were taught at school that English was the dominant language"*. Some participants explained that during apartheid it was unusual to see any of the Black South African languages in the LL *"because they were considered inferior"*. Moreover, to some participants, English was synonymous with power, prestige and status. For others, English served as an important indicator of social class, self-positioning and identity; *"I feel more comfortable with the English because in South Africa you're a higher class when you speak English"* and *"Where I stay, it's English and my thing is I think I live in a middle-class area, I'm a middle-class person"*.

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Thus, the findings in this section corroborate the view that "English enjoys an unrivalled prestige" in the LL of the railways in South Africa (Jimaima 2016:4). Figure 6.8 offers a commuter-perspective of the hegemony of the English language that is used predominantly on official railway signs. This particular image was captured at Johannesburg Park station which is the largest and also the busiest railway station not only in South Africa, but also on the African continent (PRASA 2018).

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Figure 6.11: Monolingual English signs at Johannesburg Park station

6.9 Sense of belonging to a place

With regards to how the languages used on signs in the LL affected participants' connection to a place, some participants felt a deep sense of belonging to a place which they directly attributed to the languages used on the signs; *"I feel at home, feel comfortable"* while others contended that the languages used on signs did not affect their sense of belonging to any particular place at all; *"I don't consider myself as belonging to a particular place"*.

Although the interviewees comprised diverse groups of people, many were from similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Despite some of these similarities, participants generally felt that the only thing they had in common with other people who also used the railways was the fact that they were all commuters; *"The only thing we have in common is that we are commuters, so I don't feel any sense of belonging there"*. Some of the other participants associated the languages used on the signs with social class, self-positioning and identity; *"I know when I'm with my English friends, I know I'm in an upper class area. When I'm with my Afrikaans*

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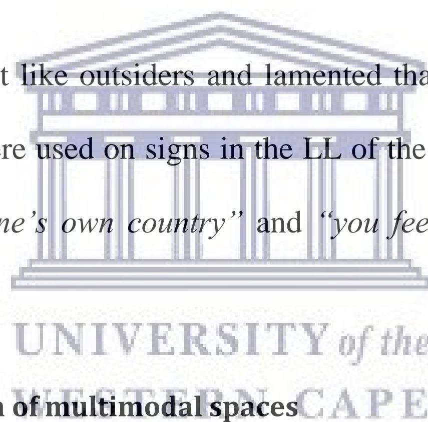
friends, I know I'm in a poor area". Some participants argued that people who spoke a particular language should not necessarily be associated with a sense of belonging to that particular place; *"Because my first language is English, when I go to Cape Town I don't say I'm going to an English place neither am I going to an Afrikaans place".* However, some participants noted the potential to feel excluded or misunderstood by the languages that were used on the signs in the LL; *"If you don't understand the language, then you don't find that sense of belonging, you feel left out"* and *"If you cannot speak in a tongue that is understood by all in a particular place, even though you are a citizen or local you will feel excluded or misunderstood".*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Some participants felt like outsiders and lamented that they also felt prejudiced by the languages that were used on signs in the LL of the railways; *"One feels lost and like a foreigner in one's own country"* and *"you feel excluded and discriminated against".*

6.10 Reconfiguration of multimodal spaces

Banda and Jimaima (2015, 2017) have suggested that signage does not have to visible to be salient, as people can draw on memory, and sociocultural and historical knowledge to re-imagine space. In terms of whether the trains or railway stations held any special meaning or memories for participants, one participant said that she enjoyed travelling by train as it was a relaxing experience for her; *"Look, I like trains, being on the train is relaxing for me in general".* Others sadly recollected the enforced racial segregation at the railways in apartheid South Africa; *"During apartheid, I felt unhappy that I couldn't sit there with the White people".* Participants vividly remembered the signs in the LL of the railways during the

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apartheid era, and how those signs primarily served to enforce racial segregation; *"It's still very fresh in my mind. It will take a long time to get out of my mind, maybe with the next generation. I will never forget apartheid"* and *"You could only sit on a certain section because of the signs and apartheid".*

Some participants remembered the introduction of signs about 'class' distinctions which were introduced at the railways after apartheid ended; *"It reminds us of the apartheid era, the fact that they still have 'first' and 'third-class'".* In addition to the social class distinctions at the railways, participants recalled that the amenities that were reserved for Whites, such as comfortable seating, clean ablution facilities and convenience shops, were much better maintained than those that were designated for use by Black and Coloured commuters, as one participant explained; *"It was third-class where we Coloureds used to sit. That time you get into the first class with the Whites, the train looked like a lounge".* Participants pointed out that after the demise of apartheid, the social class distinctions that were introduced at the railways remain in place to this present day; *"Now you can sit anywhere but the trains are third-class".* The sign in Figure 6.12 shows a "Metro Plus" train carriage which is known to commuters as "First Class" whereas Figure 6.13 shows a "Metro" carriage which is known as "Third Class".

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Figure 6.12: *Metro-Plus (First-class) sign on a train*

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Figure 6.13: Metro (Third-class) sign on a train

Some participants remembered the removal of the apartheid signs and had special memories about the time when the enforced racial segregation at the railways officially ended; *"Yes, it has special meaning where people [were] divided in the past, we are now all able to sit in any carriage of your choice and I'm not discriminated against".*

Figure 6.14: Removal of railway apartheid signs (Cape Times, 1990)

Figure 6.14 depicts a cart containing some of the original apartheid-era segregation boards that were removed from trains in 1990. One of the commuters interviewed who was a former senior railway official, explained that the government started to gradually remove apartheid signs at the railways as early as 1986 *"It was actually*

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before 1990; 1986, if I remember correctly. What happened was that government was undoubtedly feeling pressure from within and outside of South Africa. At the time, other than Johannesburg, Cape Town was the biggest station with the most people on suburban trains. A large number of Coloureds, Blacks and Whites used and still use trains. So, it was a good place to start removing the signs".

Furthermore, the participant explained that even after the apartheid signs were removed, many commuters obeyed the apartheid signs as if they were still physical emplaced in the LL, *"The position on the station platform where people used to stand waiting for the trains to stop was still used by people standing where they had become accustomed to wait. It was about position. People were so accustomed to where they stood that it actually became second nature to them. It was also a question of where to get onto the train. It was in people's minds and that changed over time, for the better".* He also confirmed the introduction of the class destictions that replaced railway apartheid, *"But it was no longer about segregation; it became an economies of scale thing where classes were introduced. These were first, second and third class".*

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Generally, the desegregation of the railways was positively received by the people at the time as indicated by the participant *"All of my staff embraced the removal of the segregation signs from the trains".* The desegregation of the railways was also considered to be a forerunner of what was to happen in 1994 with the establishment of the new, democratic South Africa. Furthermore, the partcipant clarified *"As indicated previously, there was no resistance from my staff and the railway authorities at large. The commuters displayed surprise when they began to realize that the segregation boards had been removed from the trains. There were no*

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ructions." Figure 6.15 shows an image that was published on the front page of the Cape Times, a leading newspaper in Cape Town, in 1990.

Figure 6.15: *The end of railway apartheid (Jim Freeman, Cape Times 1990)*

With reference to the photograph depicted in Figure 6.15, four seemingly happy female commuters are seen smiling while they are all seated in a shared space in a train. The two women on the right of the picture are White whereas the women on left are Coloured and Asian, respectively. This image is significant since it records a moment in time on the day railway apartheid ended in Cape Town, South Africa. This diverse group of people depicted in the image appear satisfied with sharing this space in a train that was previously reserved for Whites.

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Figure 6.16 depicts what was previously known as an apartheid-era space that was reserved for non-White commuters (Blacks, Coloureds and Indians/Asians). Over time, this space has been reconfigured into a multicultural, multimodal space.

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Figure 6.16: *Parade Concourse at Cape Town station – previously 'non-Whites' and 'third-class' space*

During apartheid, this space was a thoroughfare for non-White commuters disembarking and alighting trains into and out of the city of Cape Town, mainly for work purposes. Shortly after railway apartheid ended in 1990, this space became designated for use by third-class ticket holders. Although railway apartheid ended in 1990, apartheid in South Africa only formally ended in 1994. A few years later, this space was closed off by railway officials since it had become neglected and derelict. It remained unused for a number of years. During recent years, this space has been redeveloped into a vibrant commercial hub and was formally reopened in 2015. Unlike during the past, when this space was designated for use by Blacks and thereafter third-class commuters, it could now be used by all commuters, irrespective of skin colour or social class. However, as the interview findings reveal, commuters still remember the apartheid signs which segregated people to the places and spaces that were designated to them according to their respective race groups.

Thus, instead of attracting large numbers of commuters to this transformed, commercial space, railway authorities have actually prevented people from using it

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because the semiotic artifacts emplaced in this space do not speak to the commuters passing through it. In addition, despite the gentrification of this space, its symbolic value as an apartheid-era space persists to this present-day. Although there are some commuters who not only pass through but also engage with businesses in this space, most prefer not to, primarily because of its apartheid historical context. Various other reasons could also explain this situation. For instance, in the new South African dispensation, the previously known 'Whites-only' and 'First-class' thoroughfares are now open to be used by all commuters, irrespective of race or social class. This route is a much shorter distance to walk from the station into the city centre and back, as opposed to using the revamped former third-class thoroughfare.

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Figure 6.17: *Informal traders and commuters on Cape Town station deck – previously 'non-Whites' and 'third-class' space*

Commuters prefer to spend their time and money in the spaces depicted Figure 6.17 which shows where the informal traders are located outside Cape Town station. Local government authorities have tried to formalise these informal traders at the station and have succeeded to some extent. For instance, traders have been provided

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with uniform, white containers to use as their shop space for which they have to pay a small monthly rental fee to the local government. These informal traders attract large groups of predominantly Black commuters since they cater mostly for township cuisine. In this way, they draw commuters away from the gentrified space depicted in Figure 6.16 which many see as a reformulated apartheid space catering for Whites and a few Black and Coloured clientele who have joined the rank of upper class.

Drawing on Peck and Banda's (2014) and Noy's (2011) mobility and pliability of space, it is evident that the railway spaces and places are constantly being reconfigured and recontextualised, based on the semiotic resources that are visible to commuters in the LL. Since semiotic resources are socioculturally and historically dependent, they are constantly being replaced, enhanced or transformed by social actors within these spaces. Thus, as Peck and Banda (2014:1) observe, "it is the people within space who carve out new social practices in their appropriated space". In following Scollon and Scollon (2003), Peck and Banda (2014) view space not just as objects and boundaries, instead, space encompasses language and interactional practices apparent in a community. Space could therefore be conceptualised as a combination of "language, artifacts, cultural symbols, kinds of social interaction, as well as sociocultural composition of constituencies in a specific area" (Peck and Banda 2014: 4). As Leeman and Modan (2010) caution, space should be considered as subjective representations rather than objective physical spaces since the readers of signs may not always interpret the author's subjective or objective representations. Evidence to support this view can be found in commuters' responses to the reconfigured spaces depicted in Figures 6.16 and 6.17.

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6.11 Chapter summary

Chapter 6 presented a discussion on the semi-structured interviews that were conducted by the researcher with a cross-section of twelve longstanding railway commuters. The main aim of the interviews was to supplement the results of the third research question which was presented in the previous chapter. Moreover, the interview findings provide answers to the fourth research question which was to evaluate the dialogicality of the linguistic landscape of the public railways across space and time. The key interview findings were presented using a thematic content analysis approach.

To summarise the key findings that were discussed in this chapter, most participants reported a keen awareness of the signs that were displayed at the railways, particularly those that were categorised as commercial advertising signs. During the course of the interviews, participants discussed their individual perceptions of the LL of the public railways in South Africa in terms of the languages used on the various types of signs and their individual functions. Moreover, participants described their initial reactions and perceptions to observing changes in the languages used on signs at the railways in post-apartheid South Africa, and explained how these changes were interpreted. In response to the commercial signs that were displayed in the LL, some participants described how the languages used on these types of signs influenced their purchasing decisions. Although the languages used on signs influenced the purchasing decisions of some participants, others were motivated by quality and value for money instead. In addition, some participants were not comfortable buying from vendors who advertised goods in languages other than English, particularly from the Chinese. Participants cited a general lack of trust in the products, and not understanding the languages that were used for advertising for

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their decisions. Some participants cautioned that the signs in the LL influenced different people differently. For instance, one participant argued that poor people were more likely to be influenced by some of the messages on the signs in the LL than wealthier people, due to their lack of knowledge about some of the advertised commodities.

Some participants recollected that during apartheid, railway signs were mostly bilingual English and Afrikaans, and that Black languages were generally omitted from the LL. Many participants observed that in post-apartheid South Africa, signs in the LL of the railways reflected a more linguistically and culturally diverse society. Participants were largely positive about observing multilingual signs which displayed combinations of English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa in the LL since it accommodates most commuters in South Africa. Many participants acknowledged the hegemony of English in the LL. Some argued that the use of English indexes prestige, status and social class while others noted the gradual disappearance of Afrikaans since the end of apartheid. While some participants argued for a more inclusive LL of the railways in terms of the languages used on signs, others were satisfied with English as the preferred lingua franca. In addition, some participants described what they thought and how they felt about observing the visibility/absence of their respective mother-tongues in the LL of the railways. Many participants felt that the signs in their respective mother-tongues were easy to read and to understand and that those signs were specifically directed at them.

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Participants had diverging views on whether the languages used in the LL of the railways served to index specific social, ethnic or cultural identities. Participants also held diverging views about the influence of the languages used on the signs in terms

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of whether they connected people to particular places. For instance, some participants attributed their sense of belonging to a particular place directly to the languages that were used on the signs in the LL. However, others argued that the languages on the signs in fact merely addressed commuters passing through those areas, and did not necessarily index the people who lived in those areas. Participants commented about the introduction of social class distinctions at the railways which replaced the apartheid-era signs. Signs about social class distinctions at the railways were generally considered to be more derogatory than the apartheid-era signs about racial segregation. Most participants felt nostalgic about their experiences of the public railways. Some reminisced about positive experiences at the railways during their youth, such as travelling to the beach during their school vacations. Others recalled the racism that was reflected on the signs in the LL during apartheid which primarily functioned to segregate people among the different ethnic groups across South Africa. Lastly, many participants remembered with sadness and frustration the enforced racial segregation that was reflected on the signs displayed in the LL of the railways during apartheid. The interviews yielded meaningful insights about how commuters observed and perceived the signs that were displayed in the LL of the railways, not only during apartheid but also in terms of the changing LL in the post-apartheid South Africa.

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Some broad themes emerged during the interviews which relate to the power, prestige and status of the various languages that were used in the LL of the railways in South Africa. For instance, some of these themes entail consideration of social class, self-positioning and identity; the commodification of languages; language ideology; the hegemony of English; linguistic and cultural in/exclusion; and the mobility and hybridity of languages in the LL across social and cultural boundaries.

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A recurrent theme in all of the participants' responses to the LL, expressed how the LL reflected changes in the demographics and the languages that were used on signs at the railways throughout South Africa. Most participants attributed these changes in the LL to the demise of apartheid. Some of the participants linked the linguistic changes in the LL to the effects of globalisation and migration while other participants expressed perceptions of economic, linguistic, and cultural benefits to be gained from living in a multicultural, multilingual society such as South Africa.

Essentially, these results were anticipated, however, what was not expected were the multiple meanings and different ways the various individuals interpreted and responded to the LL of the public railways in South Africa. Furthermore, the data collected during the interviews demonstrates that the act of reading the LL is personal, dialogic, and influenced by wider discourses. While there were some patterns in the noticing of messages in texts on signs, each participant offered a unique perspective and interpretation of the languages that were used on the signs in the LL based on his or her own individual background and history. Also, the diverse self-positioning and responses to the LL reveal that the LL is not neutral. Instead, participants identified and positioned themselves in relation to the surrounding texts and the cultures and language groups associated with the texts on the signs. Consequently, the findings show that people have a complex and intimate relationship with public literacy which is both fluid and recursive.

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Chapter 7: Summary, contributions of the study and conclusion

7.0 Introduction

This final chapter summarises and recapitulates the study *"Multilingualism and linguistic landscapes across space and time in the public railway system in South Africa: A multisemiotic analysis"*. The chapter presents an overview of the main results and findings, and briefly outlines the conclusions drawn from the overall empirical study that was conducted. As a point of departure, a brief summary of the background of the study is given, which is followed by a synopsis of the answers to the guiding research questions. Lastly, the conclusion is presented. Through the quantitative and qualitative research methods employed, which entailed the analyses of signs photographed in the research sites, commuter responses to a survey questionnaire, semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of longstanding commuters and participant observations, the study achieved its objectives and answered the specific research questions.

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The main aim of the study was to present an ethnographic, multisemiotic analysis of the transformed LL of the public railways in post-apartheid South Africa in space and time. This was done to gain insights into the social structuring of languages and the mobility of linguistic and semiotic resources across regional and national boundaries. Thus, the study explored the languages that were used on the signs displayed at core railway stations across four provinces in South Africa. The spread of languages and other semiotic resources were assessed to account for trajectories of multilingualism and multiculturalism in South Africa since the end of apartheid. A further aim of the study was to explore the social and cultural transformation in

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post-apartheid South Africa as reflected in the languages used on signs in the LL of the public railways.

The guiding research objectives were to;

(i) Explore the social structuring of languages used in the LL of the public railways in South Africa in space and time, across regional and national boundaries since the end of apartheid.

(ii) Determine which language serves as the base language of public railway announcements and other messages in the LL.

(iii) Explore how place- and meaning-making at the railways are realised and negotiated through the languages used in the LL.

(iv) Evaluate the dialogicality of the LL of the public railways across space and time.

(v) Assess the influence of globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts in the LL.

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The specific research questions were;

(i) How is the social structuring of languages expressed in the LL of the public railways in South Africa?

(ii) Which language serves as the base language of public railway announcements and other messages in the LL?

(iii) How are place- and meaning-making at the railways realised and negotiated through the languages in the LL?

(iv) How is dialogicality articulated in the LL of the public railways?

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(v) How do globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts influence the LL?

7.2 Summary of the answers to the research questions

In answering the first research question, the results reveal that most of the signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa were monolingual English at the time of the study. Many possible reasons could explain this dominance of the English language in the LL. For example, English may be used to address not only native speakers of the language, but it could also be used to address visitors, tourists or immigrants from other African countries and further afield. The study confirms that English serves as a lingua franca in multilingual environments such as South Africa, and is widely used for its perceived symbolic status, prestige and positive connotations. Furthermore, the results confirm that most of the messages in English in the LL are probably addressed to non-native speakers of the language since Census (2011) reports that the number of people with English as their mother-tongue in South Africa is limited compared to those of the other official languages. A notable number of the signs in the LL of the railways were bilingual which mostly displayed combinations of English with other languages on the individual signs. Generally, there was a limited incidence of multilingual signs. For example, merely three unique multilingual signs were found in the combined research sites. Most of the official signs were monolingual English with some bilingual and multilingual combinations, all of which included English in combination with other languages on the individual signs. A similar trend was revealed in terms of the languages used on the private signs also. Overall, these results were somewhat similar within the individual provinces, although a greater incidence of linguistic and sociocultural

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diversity was noted in the languages used on the signs in the Western Cape in particular.

Although the results of the study endorse the view that "English enjoys an unrivalled prestige" in the LL of the railways in South Africa (Jimaima 2016:4) its symbolic value as the absolute language of commodification is not necessarily universal (Banda and Mokwena 2018). In fact, the results show that English competes with the other local languages, particularly the local Black languages, for the attention of the readers of signs, as pointed out in Banda and Mokwena (2018). Seen in this way, these local Black languages are valuable commodities in the LL of shops and other businesses on the railway line. Thus, they also serve as languages of marketisation, especially when emplaced alongside English on signs. Furthermore, the results corrobate the assertion by Banda and Mokwena (2018) that when English is used alongside local Black languages on shop and other merchandising signs, it is often localised to assume Bantu language morphophonology. It is also often blended with the local Black languages for aesthetic and marketisation purposes in commercial advertising Banda and Mokwena (2018). One example of this can be seen on the sign in Figure 4.7, Chapter 4, which shows the name of the business "Krispy nKukhu" in English and isiZulu, where the English word 'crispy' is actually written as 'Krispy'. The effect created by this change in the morpheme makes the English word sound like isiZulu when read in the context of the entire sign. Thus, the commodification of languages and the accompanying hybridised forms entail consideration of the semiotic choices of the local authorship of signs. It also entails consideration of the influence of local communities' languaging practices in the LL. The local Black languages therefore probably share a similar commodity status with English and become signs of commodification in the LL through processes of what

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Banda and Mowkena (2018:30) refer to as "Africanisation", "mystification and exotification" by using local languaging practices to attract local customers.

As Kelly-Holmes (2014:141) observes, foreign languages are used alongside English on advertising signs not merely for its semantic content, but also for the way it looks. She calls this use of languages on signs 'linguistic fetish' which refers to the use of foreign languages for symbolic or fetishised purposes in marketing and advertising texts, as opposed to instrumental-communicative purposes. The results discussed in Chapter 4 clarify how foreign languages such as Portuguese, Urdu, Spanish and Juba, for example, are used for fetished purposes on signs in the LL of the railways in South Africa. Furthermore, as Kelly-Holmes (2014:141) explains, this type of advertising relies on a common practice in foreign language fetish, whereby the name of the product or business is usually given in the language of the country of origin, as revealed in the results of the current study. In addition, the results show that these languages do not necessarily represent any specific ethnolinguistic groups in the area and that they are used solely on commercial advertising signs (c.f. Haarmann 1989; Kelly-Holmes 2014; Banda and Mafofo 2014; 2015).

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The second research question was to determine which language serves as the base language of public announcements and other messages at the railways. This research question was addressed by means of a survey questionnaire. While the results of the survey questionnaire reveal that most messages at the railways were predominantly monolingual English, some were bilingual and multilingual, comprising English, accompanied with translations in one or more of the other local languages. For example, some of the bilingual messages comprised English-Afrikaans and English-isiXhosa combinations while multilingual combinations comprised English-

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Afrikaans-isiXhosa. Other multilingual variations included isiZulu, Xitsonga, Sesotho and Setswana, respectively, in combinations with English. The findings reveal that most commuters' first languages were used on signs and for public announcements in the LL. However, certain cultural groups were excluded from the LL. More specifically, the findings show that many of the official Black languages are generally absent from the LL which could be attributed to the ubiquitous presence of English in the LL. English is also the lingua franca and the preffered language of official communication of both government and private enterprise in the LL of the railways in South Afria. Thus, as suggested by commuters, the languages used on signs and for public announcements at the railways should instead aim to be more reflective of the linguistic and sociocultural diversity of the broader South African population, as enshrined in the Constitution (RSA 1996).

The third research question entailed exploring how place- and meaning-making at the railways are realised and negotiated through the languages in the LL. In answering this question, the semi-structured interviews proved useful. Moreover, the interview findings confirm the view that the LL is a commodified and subjective space which is both a product and producer of meaning. In addition, because of this commodification of space, its meaning is polysemous which is premised on the contention that the urban landscape is a platform for the commodification of space (Jimaima 2016). Also, the findings concur with the view that "the language on signs gains its meaning from the extralinguistic phenomena, such as the political and economic interests that led to its creation or its location in space, as well from the language of the other signs around it" (Leeman and Modan 2010: 182).

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The current study shows that people create their own identities by using processes of geographical imaginings. For example, the discussion of the results in Chapter 4 shows that in much the same way as locating oneself in a particular space may include the ownership of place, and the interactions with such places and with other occupants, national or regional identity is constructed via physical attributes of a place, such as images and the linguistic representations of those particular spaces and places (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). In this vein, Haarmann (1989) and Kelly-Holmes (2005; 2010; 2014) describe how foreign languages used in advertising attempt to associate the advertised product with ethnocultural stereotypes about the speakers of a particular language. Whether or not the target audience actually understands the meaning of a foreign language, they identify the advertised product as belonging to a particular language and attach an ethnocultural stereotype about the language group to the advertised product. In much the same way, the interview findings reveal that the branding of commodities and places in the LL of the railways in South Africa could be attributed to the influence of both localisation and globalisation and consequently, these spaces are designed according to the identities which people desire to portray within particular spaces. It is therefore possible to differentiate between particular spaces and places by merely observing the emplaced semiotic resources, such as commercial advertising, branding and other signs in the LL. This is known as the articulation of territory (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010:8). The articulation of territory is fundamentally a process by which the natural and constructed architectural landscapes are described, reproduced, and recreated in various texts and social practices visible in the LL. It is also called spatialisation, where semiotic representations are structured and used to produce meanings of spatial and social practices (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010:8).

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The fourth research question was to evaluate the dialogicality of the linguistic landscape of the public railways across space and time. Most commuters acknowledged that they had a keen awareness of the signs displayed at the railways, particularly commercial advertising signs. Furthermore, the interview findings revealed individual commuters' perceptions of the LL of the public railways in South Africa in terms of the languages used on signs. Thus, the findings describe commuters' initial perceptions and responses to the changing LL of the railways in post-apartheid South Africa. In particular, the findings reveal that the LL influenced commuters' purchasing decisions differently. For example, while some commuters acknowledged that the languages used on the signs influenced which vendors they would purchase from, others were instead influenced by quality and value for money and not necessarily by the languages vendors used on their advertising signs. The findings show that while some commuters were uncomfortable buying from vendors who advertised goods in languages other than English, particularly from the Chinese, citing a lack of trust in the products, and not understanding the languages used for advertising. Thus, the findings confirm that signs in the LL influenced people differently and that less informed people were more likely to be influenced by inaccurate or untruthful messages on signs in the LL than those who were better informed.

Furthermore the findings reveal that commuters remember that during apartheid, railway signs were mostly bilingual English-Afrikaans, and that Black languages were largely omitted from the LL. The findings show that in post-apartheid South Africa, the messages in the LL of the railways reflect a more diverse society both linguistically and socioculturally than during apartheid. However, gentrification and change of material culture that it entails has had the unintended consequence of

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created apartheid-like spaces. In addition, although the apartheid signs have been removed, they still remain implanted in the memories of many commuters who readily referred to them during interviews. On the whole, the findings show that commuters were generally positive about observing multilingual signs displaying combinations of English-Afrikaans-isiXhosa in the LL since it accommodates most commuters. Also, most commuters acknowledged the hegemony of English in the LL and perceived the use of English to index prestige, status and higher social class.

The findings confirm the gradual disappearance of Afrikaans in the LL of the railways since the end of apartheid which could be attributed to the fact that Afrikaans is viewed as the language of the oppressor by many Black South Africans. This negative view of Afrikaans is ironic since English, which is widely accepted as not only the lingua franca, but is also the official language of government communication, could similarly be associated with both oppression and colonisation in South Africa. Furthermore, the Census (2011) results show that more than half of the Coloured population (who are also in fact Black) in the Western Cape speak Afrikaans as their first language. In addition, Afrikaans is recognised as an official language in the Constitution (RSA 1996) and has the same status as the other official languages, which is essentially contradicted by the linguistic reality.

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While some commuters argued for a more inclusive LL in terms of the languages used on the signs at the railways, others were satisfied with English as the preferred lingua franca. In addition, in describing what they thought and how they felt about observing the visibility/absence of their respective mother-tongues in the LL, commuters stated that the signs in their respective mother-tongues were easy to read and understand, and that those signs were specifically directed at them. Commuters

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held diverging views on whether the languages used in the LL served to index specific social, ethnic or cultural identities. Diverging views were also reported concerning the influence of the languages on signs in terms of connecting people to a particular place. For example, some commuters attributed their sense of belonging to a place directly to the languages used on the signs in the LL whereas others argued that the signs merely addressed commuters passing through those areas, and did not necessarily index the people who live there. The class distinctions which replaced the apartheid-era signs were considered to be more derogatory and divisive than the former signs about racial segregation. Most commuters were nostalgic about their experiences of the public railways. While some reminisced about positive experiences at the railways during their youth, such as travelling to the beach during their school vacation while others vividly remember with sadness and frustration, the racism reflected on the signs in the LL during apartheid. The interviews yielded meaningful insights about commuter perceptions and experiences of the LL of the railways during apartheid and also in terms of the transformed LL in a post-apartheid South African context.

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The fifth research question entailed assessing the influence of globalisation, localisation, hybridity and the mobility of linguistic and cultural artifacts in the LL of the public railways in South Africa. Some broad themes emerged during the interviews which relate to power, prestige and status of languages in the LL; social class, self-positioning and identity; the commodification of languages; language ideology; the hegemony of English; linguistic and cultural in/exclusion; and the mobility and hybridity of languages in the LL across regional and national boundaries. A recurrent theme was how the LL reflects changes in the demographics and languages used at the railways in South Africa. Essentially, these changes are

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attributed to the demise of apartheid while they are also linked to the effects of globalisation, localisation and migration. The study reveals that the act of reading the LL is personal, dialogic, and influenced by wider sociocultural discourses. While the findings reveal that there are some patterns in the noticing of messages in texts on signs, individual commuters offered unique perspectives and interpretations of the LL which is based on his or her own background, experiences and perceptions. Also, the diverse self-positioning and responses to the LL reveal that the LL is not neutral since commuters identified and positioned themselves in relation to the surrounding texts and the cultures and language groups associated with the languages on signs in the LL. Thus, the findings reveal that people have a complex and intimate relationship with public literacy which is both fluid and recursive.

7.3 Contributions of the study

Since the current study entailed consideration of data obtained through photographs of signs displayed in the LL, the results of a survey questionnaire, interview findings and participant observation through a walking tour, it allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the various reasons for which the LL is used and the ways in which it functions. In this way, the tensions between the various agents to participate in the LL are also more clearly revealed. In addition, the study shows that people focus on the semiotic ecology in the LL which helps to emphasise the multisemiotic and diverse process characteristics of meaning-making, particularly in areas that do not have written texts on signs. Thus, the study brings new insights to the argument that sign- and place-making are dynamic and continuous processes and that space is constantly imagined, reimagined, recreated and reinvented. The study also contributes to the notion of oral linguascaping in which people rely on oral language for sign-making. This is in contrast to current theorising on LL which is

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premised on the written or scripted languages or texts. Thus, the study shows that people are still able to traverse the railway system despite the fact that the signs are not written in Black languages or any language at all. People are doing this through memory and are using what Banda and Jamaima (2016) call oralinguascaping as mentioned above. The study therefore contributes to developing an African understanding of LL where signs are not always written, or are written in a language (e.g. English) local people do not understand, let alone read.

Furthermore, the study adds to the evolving methodologies in LL research in that it combined qualitative methodologies such as the walking approach, memory, history, the collection of past and present images and other cultural artifacts as integral to LL studies. Also, the study contributes to the development of multisemiotic analysis of the LL, particularly from an African perspective. This collage of approaches allows for a more comprehensive account of LL in post-apartheid South Africa. Lastly, one of the significant contributions of the study is not only to contextualise but also to historicise the LL of the public railway system in South Africa.

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7.4 Conclusion

The study concludes that the messages about racial segregation that were displayed on official railway signs during apartheid had become embedded in the minds of the people who read those signs over time. Consequently, long after those signs were removed, many people imagine/remember these signs as if they are still there and still act upon the messages that they were accustomed to reading in the LL during apartheid, and they obey those signs as if they were still physically there. Thus, the study further concludes that the messages in the LL could become the lived reality for many people, and that it may become their experienced reality permanently. In

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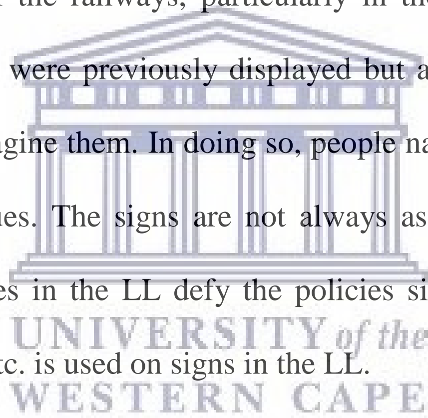
this way, the study echoes what Banda and Jimaima (2015) explain about how people re-use memory, objects, artifacts and cultural materialities in place to new uses, and for extended meaning potentials. These processes unfold "as people draw different meanings from the semiotic material in place as mediated by communication needs, memory, sentiments and perceptions of producers and consumers" (Banda and Jimaima 2015:649).

Banda and Jimaima (2015) explain that texts on signs do not necessarily have to be physically visible neither do they have to be present in place. This observation is useful in the current study and helps to explain how commuters perceive and experience the LL of the railways, particularly in those places and spaces where racist apartheid signs were previously displayed but are no longer physically there yet people still re-imagine them. In doing so, people narrate the signs to one another in their mother-tongues. The signs are not always as per the official policies and some of the languages in the LL defy the policies since languages such as Urdu, Arabic, Portuguese, etc. is used on signs in the LL.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For this reason, careful consideration should be given to the messages displayed on public signs, such as those messages in the LL of the railways in South Africa. However, in the spirit of Ubuntu and in recognition of the mobility of Africans, other African languages should be encouraged to be used in the public railway system. In this way, the multilingual nature of South Africa and Africa in general would be recognised and acknowledged. A further recommendation on the use of languages on signs is that for symbolic purposes, signs should be in the regional languages as stated in the language policies. Lastly, particular care should be taken by the producers of messages in the public domain which could be perceived to be

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disparaging or offensive since messages such as those that were displayed on official railway signs during apartheid, could adversely affect the behaviour of the people who consume those messages, and permanently impair their dignity and self-esteem.

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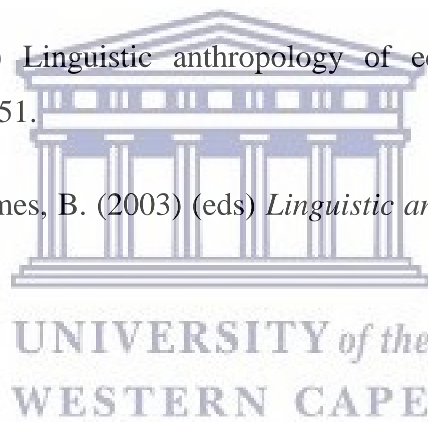
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Appendix A: Survey questionnaire

1. In which province do you usually use the railways?

- Eastern Cape
- Gauteng
- KwaZulu-Natal
- Western Cape
- Other:

2. Indicate your first language/s?

- Afrikaans
- English
- isiNdebele
- isiXhosa
- isiZulu
- seSotho sa Lebowa
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- siSwati
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga
- Other:

3. Which other languages do you use?

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- Afrikaans
- English
- isiNdebele
- isiXhosa
- isiZulu
- seSotho sa Lebowa
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- siSwati
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga
- Other:

4. How old are you?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

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5. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

6. How would you classify yourself?

- African
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Other:

7. How many days a week do you use the railways?

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- Everyday

8. What is the main purpose of your journey?

- School, college, varsity, technikon
- Work, business
- Visiting family and friends
- Outings, shopping, personal
- Other:

9. For which other purposes do you use the railways?

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- School, college, varsity, technikon
- Work, business
- Visiting family and friends
- Outings, shopping, personal
- No other purpose
- Other:

10. Which languages are used for public railway announcements?

- Afrikaans
- English
- isiNdebele
- isiXhosa
- isiZulu
- seSotho sa Lebowa
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- siSwati
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga

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- Other:

11. Which languages do you see on the signage at the railways and on trains?

- Afrikaans
- English
- isiNdebele
- isiXhosa
- isiZulu
- seSotho sa Lebowa
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- siSwati
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga
- Other:

12. Are your languages catered for on signage or public announcements?

- Yes
- No

13. How do you feel about that?

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14. Do the languages on railway signage speak to all the cultural groups South Africa?

- Yes
- No

15. Please give a reason for your answer?

16. Which cultural groups do you think are excluded by the languages used on the signs?

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17. **What can be done about it?**

18. **Do you think there is a language that is dominant on the signs? Please explain?**

19. **Should another language be used instead? Please explain?**

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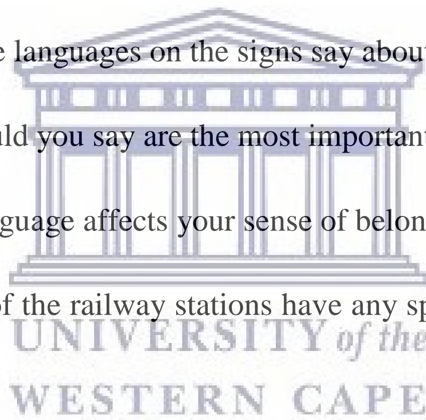
Appendix B: Interview questions

1. Have you ever paid attention to the languages used on signs in public spaces?
2. What are your thoughts about the languages used on signs at railway stations and on trains?
3. How do you feel when you see signs in your mother-tongue?
4. Have you ever noticed any changes over time in the languages used on any of the signs?
5. What was your initial thought or reaction to changes in the languages used on the signs?
6. Do you buy from shops or vendors that advertise in languages other than English?
7. What do you think the languages on the signs say about the people in the area?
8. Which languages would you say are the most important in your area?
9. How do you think language affects your sense of belonging to a place?
10. Do the trains or any of the railway stations have any special meaning or memory for you?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