



A social semiotic analysis of the linguistic landscape of two rural district municipalities in the Northern Cape, South Africa

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

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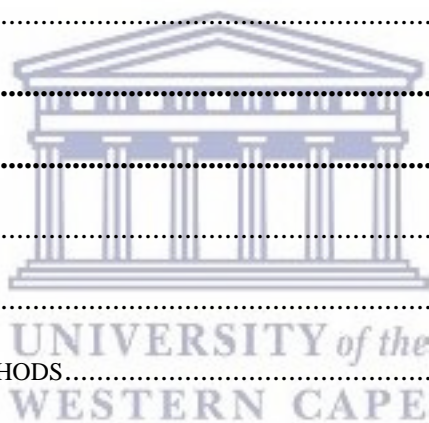
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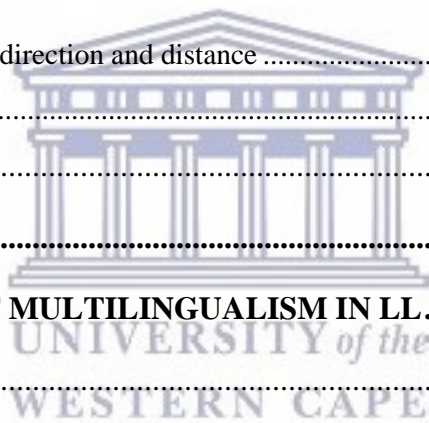
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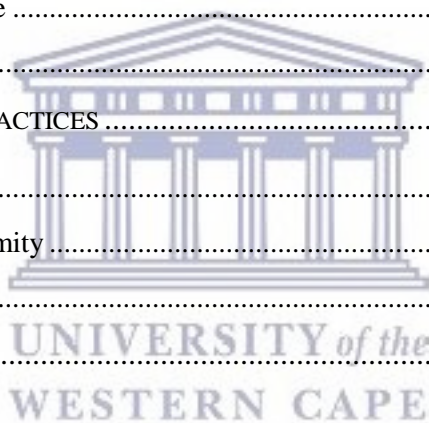
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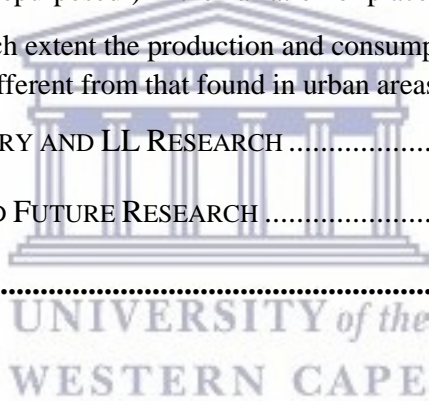
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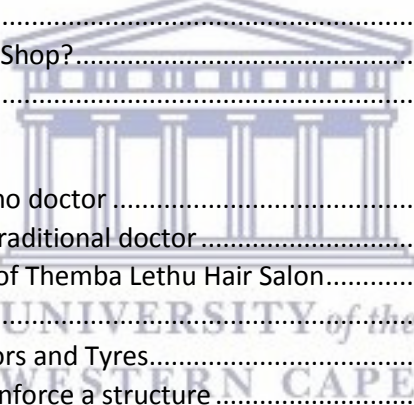


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## ABSTRACT

### A SOCIAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF TWO RURAL DISTRICT MUNICIPALITIES IN THE NORTHERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

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PhD thesis, Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape

Linguistic Landscape (LL) studies typically focus on public signage displayed in urban environments, therefore LL is associated with cityscapes. There is limited research related to the LL of non-urban environments or ruralscapes. Another limiting aspect of the conceptualisation of LL is its emphasis on language only as a resource used in the construction of the LL. This study explored the Northern Cape rural landscape, particularly the Frances Baard District Municipality and John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality. The study analysed various semiotic resources drawn on in the creation, narration and negotiation of the rural landscape. This study employed a multimodal ecological approach towards theorising and analysing the rural linguistic landscape of the Northern Cape. Semiotic remediation as repurposing was used to account for the extended sign systems in rural areas, in which sign-making and consumption is not necessarily dependent of written or 'visible' signs. In turn therefore, the study focused on aspects (visible and invisible signage; scripted and unscripted sign-making and consumption) that contributed to the construction of the rural landscape as distinct from urban landscapes. Gramsci's notion of site of struggle was drawn on to account for how meaning and space is constantly contested, as illustrated through the commercial signage, linguistic and naming practices of tuckshops. Material culture of multilingualism was employed to account for how written signage is used collaboratively with other materialities for sense-making purposes. Additionally, the adoption of material culture of multilingualism approach allowed for the exploration of the transformative role of a multilingual written and oral environment. More significantly is the study's contribution to the development of a more comprehensive theoretical approach to LL, than is currently in place. The study also contributes to the data collection tools and analytical frameworks of multilingualism studies.

In terms of semiotic ecology, the findings illustrate that in the absence of written signage, participants draw on alternative semiotic resources for sign- and place-making. Therefore, it can be concluded that place-making is not dependant on written signage. The alternative semiotic resources used by participants included the imagining and invention of space and/or signage, the repurposing of natural objects to assist in the navigation of space, and oral linguascaping. Inadequate and/or the lack of written signage prompted residents to create street names based on well-known residents and landmarks. Natural objects such as big trees, hills, bushes and tree stumps are repurposed to serve as makers for hiking spots and graveyards. Inscriptions that are in contradiction to the everyday, oral narrative of residents are ignored and the oral narratives are prioritised as such is rooted in the residents' memory and consequently a result of socio-historical knowledge.

The findings indicate that the repurposing of existing materials in the Northern Cape is not only creative and agentive, but it is also influenced by socio-geographical circumstances. The repurposing of discarded sponsored signage as a substitute for home-building material is a result of the enormous distances some residents, particularly rural residents, have to travel to gain access to home depot stores. Residents showed their appreciation for the rocks as a natural feature of the Northern Cape ecology by repurposing them as writing materials, also as a response to the lack of signage, such as street name poles.

In terms of postulating tuckshops as a site of struggle, the findings reveal that tuckshop owners contest the complete “McDonaldisation” and “Coca-Colonisation” of the tuckshop landscape. Three strategies are drawn on by tuckshop owners to prevent this complete seizure: 1) the increased commodification of local languages (Setswana and Afrikaans) instead of purely English; 2) heightened levels of creativity and agency in the creation of non-sponsored commercial signage; and 3) the invention of localised tuckshop advertisement strategies.

This research study contributes to the theorising of the LL of ruralscapes – an inadequately researched and undertheorised aspect of LL studies. Additionally, the nature of the findings of this research project expands the scope/criteria of what is considered signage in LL studies. In using non-conventional approaches to LL, such as semiotic remediation as

repurposing and material culture of multilingualism, this study contributes to the conceptual and analytic tools of LL studies.

**Keywords:** Social semiotic landscape, commercial signage, tuckshops, Northern Cape, language ecology, rural scapes, material culture of multilingualism, oral linguascaping.



## DECLARATION

I declare that, *A social semiotic analysis of the linguistic landscape of two rural district municipalities in the Northern Cape, South Africa* is my own 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.

Philadelphia Lorato Mokwena

November 2017



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## DEDICATION

To my late sister, Oratile “Ratile” Mokwena – You continue to be the wind beneath my wings.

To my late grandmother, Kesabetswe “Masa” Moilwa – Mama, you are my angel.

To all my research participants and the people of the Northern Cape – Thank you for trusting me with your memories, stories and lived experiences. It was an absolute privilege to share your narratives.



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study entitled: A social semiotic analysis of the linguistic landscape of two district municipalities in the Northern Cape, South Africa. The study examines the materialities that rural residents draw on in place- and sign-making. Additionally, the study explores how signage is repurposed by rural residents in order to meet the needs of local people. The study also discusses how the commercial signage and linguistic practices of tuckshops in the Northern Cape unmask the tuckshop as a site of struggle. Consequently, the chapter provides a brief background on the Northern Cape, tuckshops and the conceptualisation of rural South Africa. Additionally, the chapter outlines the rationale of the study along with the specific objectives, hypotheses, research questions and chapter outline.

### 1.2 Northern Cape

The Northern Cape is one of the nine provinces in South Africa and geographically, it occupies about a third of South Africa's land area, making it the biggest province (South African History Online). It covers 372 889 km<sup>2</sup> and with a population of 1,145,861, the province has the least residents contributing a mere 2,2per cent to the country's population (Census, 2011). The Northern Cape's landscape is mostly desert (South African History Online) and the landscape is characterised by vast, arid grasslands with outcroppings of haphazard rock piles (SouthAfrica.Info). The province is rich in minerals including alluvial diamonds, iron ore, copper, asbestos, manganese, fluor spar, semi-precious stones and marble (Local Government Handbook). According to the Local Government Handbook, the province is divided into five district municipalities and further subdivided into 27 local municipalities. The 2011 Census indicates that three South African languages are predominantly used by the provincial population, namely Afrikaans (53,8per cent), Setswana (33,1per cent) and Xhosa (5.3per cent). The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the first quarter of 2015 indicates that nationally, the number of official unemployed people increased from 626 000 to 5, 5 million (compared to the fourth quarter of 2014). As a province, the Northern Cape



recorded the largest increase in unemployment (5.4 percentage points). Furthermore, an increase was also observed nationwide in terms of expanded unemployment rates with the largest increase in the Northern Cape at 4, 2 percentage points.

A closer look at the profile of the Northern Cape, based on Census 2011, indicates that the Frances Baard and John Taolo Gaetsewe municipality districts experienced the most socio-economic changes. These changes include a shift in the first languages mostly spoken, the economic sector, living standards (housing and basic services), education levels, but also the land allocation. Inevitably, these changes filter into the landscape and therefore these two municipality districts were selected as the fields of study. Below follows a brief exploration of the two district municipalities respectively.

### **1.2.1 Frances Baard District Municipality (FBDM)**

Geographically, the Frances Baard District Municipality (FBDM) is the smallest district in the Northern Cape with a land area of 12 836km<sup>2</sup>. The municipality, however, accommodates the largest proportion of the province's population with a total of 382 086 people (Census, 2011). The FBDM comprises of the four local municipalities of Dikgatlong, Magareng, Phokwane and Sol Plaatje. The city of Kimberley, which is the seat of the District Municipality and of the Northern Cape legislature, is located in the Sol Plaatje Municipality (FBDM website).

FBDM boasts with being the home to one of South Africa's oldest townships, Galeshewe and the diamond capital of the world, Kimberley. Kimberley's establishment dates back to the period of colonialism and the city's existence can be attributed to the discovery of diamonds. In 1871, five years after the discovery of a diamond near Hopetown, a servant found three diamonds on a small kopje (hillock) known as Colesberg Kopje. Colesberg Kopje eventually turned into a large crater and went from being known as the Kimberley Mine to the Big Hole. (South African History Online)<sup>1</sup>

Galeshewe is named after Kgosi Galeshewe of the Bathlaping tribe, in honour of his battle against the decision of the cape colony government to kill all the cattle in a bid to prevent rinderpest, a common disease among cattle. The first parts of Galeshewe emerged in the 1870s

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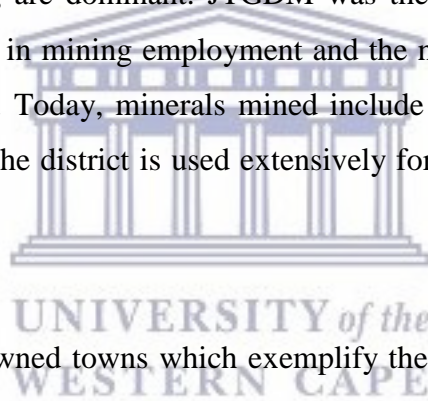
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/northern-cape>

however the naming of the town only took place in May 1952. The first large compound in Kimberley - Greater No 2, introduced in 1886 at the De Beers Mine, was established soon after the mine opened, as the workers needed to live in close proximity to the mine.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2.2 John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality (JTGDM)

John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality (henceforth JTGDM) is the municipality formerly known as Kgalagadi and has a land area of 27 283km<sup>2</sup>. The three local municipalities under JTGDM are Gamagara, Ga-Segonyana and Joe Morolong (previously Moshaweng). The district has 186 towns and settlements, of which the majority (80per cent) are villages.

According to van Weele (2011), the JTGDM area is characterised by an array of land uses of which agriculture and mining are dominant. JTGDM was the richest mining region in the Northern Cape until a decline in mining employment and the near extinction of the asbestos mining industry in the 1980s. Today, minerals mined include manganese ore, iron ore and tiger's eye. The rural land in the district is used extensively for cattle, sheep, goat and game farming.



JTGDM is home to two renowned towns which exemplify the beauty and natural wealth of this region, namely Kathu and Kuruman. Kathu, 1230 metres above sea level, and loosely translates to 'the town under the trees', is situated in the Kathu-bush, which mainly consists of majestic camel thorn trees ([www.gamagara.gov.za](http://www.gamagara.gov.za)). According to Walker, Lukich and Chazan (2014:1), Kathu Townlands, a site situated between the Kuruman Hills to the east and the Langberge mountains, is a high density Earlier Stone Age locality. One of Kathu's main attractions for visitors is the Sishen Mine, which is one of the largest open iron ore mines globally, and the iron-ore railway from Sishen to Saldanha is one of the longest iron-ore carriers in the world ([www.gamagara.gov.za](http://www.gamagara.gov.za)). Kuruman, also referred to as the "oasis of the Kalahari", is the main town in the Kalahari Region ([www.places.co.za/html/kuruman.html](http://www.places.co.za/html/kuruman.html)). The name 'Kuruman' is allegedly a variation of the name of an eighteenth-century San leader, Kudumane. One of Kuruman's main attractions is "die Oog" (The Eye) - a permanent and abundant source of water in the form of a mineral spring, delivering approximately 20

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:829647/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

million litres a day. Kuruman's thriving economy is mainly assisted by mining and agricultural (cattle and game) activities. Numerous minerals are mined in the area, for instance, manganese ore, iron ore, tiger's eye and crocidolite (blue asbestos) ([www.northerncape.org.za](http://www.northerncape.org.za)). In fact, the richest deposits of crocidolite in the world are found in the Kuruman district ([www.northerncape.org.za](http://www.northerncape.org.za)).

### 1.3 Central terms to the study

The following section introduces and contextualises two concepts that are central to this study.

#### 1.3.1 Rural

Globally, no clear, consistent definition of the word 'rural' exists. For South Africa, the definition of rural was altered upon the birth of democratic South Africa (Bass & Hearne, 2000). According to Bass and Hearne (2000: x), "until 1995, 'rural' was defined as all households not living in formally declared towns. In apartheid South Africa, many areas defined as rural were, in reality, urban areas without services". In post-apartheid South Africa, rural is defined as "the sparsely populated areas in which people farm or depend on natural resources, including the villages and small towns that are dispersed through these areas" (Rural Development Framework, 1997). The definition is problematic as it defines rurality from a purely economics perspective and additionally, the assertion that rural households derive income from 'natural resources' is inaccurate as many rural households their income is derived from a variety of sources (Rural Development Framework, 1997). Therefore, based on their sources of income, most rural households and areas fall into both urban and rural categories. Geographically, South Africa's rural landscape includes the former homelands and the large farm areas (Rural Development Framework, 1997). The Rural Development Framework (1997) describes that the rural landscape includes mountains and plains, semi-deserts and humid savannas and areas that include large settlements in the former homelands.

According to the Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review (2011), the rural municipalities in South Africa are concentrated mainly in four provinces: Kwa-Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Limpopo. The municipalities in these three provinces are

predominantly characterised by small towns, communal land tenure, villages and scattered group of dwellings (Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review, 2011). It is remarked in the Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review (2011: 192) that “the constitutional classification of municipalities does not distinguish between municipalities in urban and rural areas. Consequently, “it is common to find many large urban municipalities that contain areas that are functionally rural” (Local Government Budgets and Expenditure Review, 2011: 192).

### 1.3.2 Tuckshops/Spaza shops

Chebelyon-Dalizu *et al.*, (2010:1) defines spaza shops as “small, home-based micro-convenience stores that typically sell basic goods such as groceries, cigarettes and fuel to nearby residents”. Generally, the terms spaza shop and tuck shop are used interchangeably in South African communities. This study uses the term tuck shop as the term is commonly used in the Northern Cape – the research site. According to Moloi (2014:21), spazas became popular from the early 1980s and onward. They ultimately became an undeniable feature of the township landscape and served as an example of consumer boycotts of formal retail outlets, particularly those associated with the apartheid regime in South Africa (Moloi, 2014:21). According to Terblanche (1991:38), “the word spaza means camouflaged or hidden in township slang”. Thus, the word ‘spaza’ describes the way “traders were forced to operate underground because they usually broke all rules and regulation” (Moloi, 2014:21). Charman (2012) explains that the term derives from the Zulu language and mushroomed during the apartheid period when business opportunities for black entrepreneurs were restricted. An alternative explanation of the term ‘spaza’ is offered by Spiegel (2002) who contends that the word ‘spaza’ comes from a Zulu verb, ‘isiphazamisa’ (meaning, that which causes hindrance or annoyance) (cited in Moloi, 2014:21). Based on this view, spaza shops, therefore, appeared as an action of resistance to apartheid legislation that had aimed to restrict African people’s trading opportunities in the cities and their associated townships. Spazas were therefore an annoyance as their existence transgressed laws and regulations and hindered whites’ plans to ensure that blacks remain impoverished. Both perspectives help to sketch the context under which spaza shops emerged and consequently operated, and share a dominating narrative, namely spazas as a tool – a survival tool against poverty and a resistance tool against white businesses and oppressive regulation. Moloi (2014) asserts that one of the ways spazas ensured they were not discovered is avoiding using promotional indications (sign-posts).

In 2002, a detailed investigation estimated that “spaza shops amounted to approximately 2,7% of retail trade with a total sales volume of over R8 billion” (Lighthelm, 2005:202). Spaza shops are different from tuckshops and house shops by their business turnover, characteristic and distinctive branding and business operation (Sustainable Livelihood Foundation). Additionally, on average spaza shops are open for business seven days a week - from early morning until about 10.00 p.m. Tuckshops and house shops sell a significantly smaller range of goods, have no branding and tend to operate less frequently (Sustainable Livelihood Foundation).

A longitudinal study conducted by Sustainable Livelihoods (2010-2013) emphasises that, amongst others, signage and branding forms an important aspect of most spaza shops. This study also concluded that, in terms of the type of signage and branding, most spaza shops are named, while many have their business names advertised on sponsored signboards from suppliers such as Vodacom, MTN, Coca-Cola, Jive, Unilever and Standard Bank. According to Sustainable Livelihoods (2010-2013), smaller spazas often also tend to paint or draw the image of popular products on exterior walls. Charman, Petersen and Piper (2011) state that the spaza shops, unlike most businesses, stand out through their highly visible branding and serving windows. Perks (2010) argues that Coca-Cola sponsored signage is most sought after by spaza shop owners as it attracts customers and stimulates sales of other products.

#### **1.4 Statement of the problem & Significance of the study**

The very definition of linguistic landscape, i.e. the scope and variety of the type of publicly displayed language, is based on a typical urban environment. This causes a challenge, as the definition thus falls short of accounting for publicly displaced language in non-urban areas. As stated by Coulmas (2009:14), “LL research is typically focused on urban environments. Linguistic landscape is really linguistic cityscape, especially in multilingual settings.” Actually, in Landry and Bourhis’ (1997:25) the authors state that the signs that form part of the founding delineation of LL (road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shops signs and signs on government buildings) form part of an “urban agglomeration”. To the researcher’s knowledge, to date, the only study exploring the LL of

rural South Africa was conducted by Kotze (2010) on Philippolis, in the Free State Province. Kotze (2010) however followed a very traditional approach to LL by restricting the study to the language problem. Kotze's study also used an entirely survey-type approach, which has since more or less been discarded in LL/semiotic landscape studies (see Jaworsky and Thurlow [2010] for critique). Due to the ethnographic approach of my research study, this study contributes to knowledge in two main ways: (1) by focusing on the LL of areas classified as rural areas, this study will add to the almost non-existent body of knowledge on the LL of rural areas globally; and (2) by approaching the study from a multimodal social semiotic, material culture of multilingualism / multiculturalism and semiotic ecology of LL theoretical and analytical frameworks, the study will be contributing to the development of novel toolkits in the field of linguistic landscapes.

Traditionally, linguistic landscape studies have primarily been preoccupied with one form of literacy – writing, as Gorter (2006) states, that LL is centred on language in its written form. Juffermans and Coppoolse (2012) conducted a study in a Gambian village which forms part of The Gambia, a West African country, to analyse how the public space is received and interpreted by people with various levels of literacy competency. Juffermans and Coppoolse (2012:234), following Kress and van Leeuwen's thinking, argue that the scope and definition of literacy has evolved – due to the increasing technological advances and the use of multimodal texts, literacy has gone beyond the ability to “decode scripted symbols of written language”. As argued by Juffermans and Coppoolse (2012:234), “one has to be able to ‘read images’ to be literate in a visual world – ...those who have not learned to read can draw reading images to understand and to participate in a world that is saturated with literacy”. Blommaert (2012:6) argues that “Linguistic Landscape Studies compels sociolinguists to pay more attention to literacy, the different forms and shapes of literacy displayed in public spaces.” This study takes a holistic approach towards literacy and explores the different forms of literacy practices participants draw on in the construction and/or narration of their environment.

Dowling (2012) explores the informal and formal signage around Cape Town and alludes to the lack of sensitivity and research in relation to ‘alternative’ means of constructing one's landscape in the absence of signs. She quotes one of her participants who asserted that “we

don't use signs but notice how things look. If a tree is crooked, it is a sign, or if there is a bump in the road, it is a sign. If there is a white flag outside a hut that is a sign". In operationalising what they called semiotic ecology of LL, Banda and Jimaima (2015: 643) extend the "repertoire of 'signs' to include faded and unscripted signboards, fauna and flora, mounds, dwellings, abandoned structures, skylines, and village and bush paths (with no written names)". They emphasize the critical roles oral language and memory play in narrations of place in areas with no scripted signage, but with a tradition of oral narrations of place. Drawing on semiotic ecology enables this study to account for the alternative semiotic resources used by individuals, especially in rural areas of Africa in the narration of place to compensate for the lack of visible or written signage.

Gorter (2013:205) suggests that moving forward in LL research, "empirical studies need to be used to test theoretical ideas rather than provide descriptive or analytic accounts that more or less illustrate theoretical ideas". Gorter (2013:205) goes on to state that "a panoptical view can be beneficial but the LL theoretical framework must be strengthened further". Going on Gorter's (2013) suggestion, this research study saw to both aspects – it tests theoretical/conceptual ideas such as semiotic ecology, material culture of multilingualism and simultaneously contributes to the enhancement of theoretical ideas.

The study will be limited to the following specific objectives.

### **1.5 Objectives**

2. To examine the cultural materialities in place for the narration of place in FBDM and JTGDM.
3. Considering the few emplaced public signs generally, and dearth in written signage: to investigate alternative ways that signage is produced and consumed in FBDM and JTGDM.
4. To investigate the differential effect that the production and consumption of meaning has on the narration of place in these rural settings considering the dearth in scripted/written signage.

5. To explore how the local people use the semiotic resources, visible and invisible, to navigate the rural environs of FBDM and JTGDM.
6. To explore how prior signs (faded or those no longer in place) and existing semiotic material are reused ('repurposed') in the narration of place in FBDM and JTGDM.
7. To investigate the extent to which the production and consumption of signage in these ruralscapes is similar or different from that found in urban areas.

The following are the research questions.

### 1.6 Research questions

1. What cultural materialities are in place for the narration of place in FBDM and JTGDM?
2. Considering the few emplaced public signs generally, and/or absence of written signage in particular: how is signage produced and consumed in FBDM and JTGDM?
3. What differential effect does the consumption/production of meaning have on the narration of place in these rural settings considering the dearth in scripted/written signage?
4. How do the local people use the semiotic resources, visible and invisible, to navigate the rural environs of FBDM and JTGDM?
5. How are prior signs and existing semiotic material reused ('repurposed') in the construction/narration of place in FBDM and JTGDM?
6. To what extent is the production and consumption of signage in these rural-scapes similar or different from that found in urban areas?

### 1.7 Chapter outline

*Chapter One* introduces the research project by providing background information on the Northern Cape, rurality and tuckshop/spaza. Additionally, the chapter elaborates on aspects



such as the significance of the study, research questions, objectives and hypotheses and lastly, the outline of the thesis.

*Chapter Two* provides the literature review of the relevant literature that the research project draws on and the theoretical and analytic framework the research project is situated in.

*Chapter Three* elaborates on the research methodology that underpins the research project.

*Chapter Four* provide an analysis of how participants draw on strategies such as semiotic ecology, imagining and invention of place and repurposing in the process of sign-making and place-making as compensation for the lack/absence of written signage.

*Chapter Five* explores the material culture of multilingualism by analysing how multilingualism as a linguistic dispensation transforms signage and, in the process, the socio-environment at large.

*Chapter Six* discusses how tuckshops can be considered as a site of struggle –operationalised through: 1) linguistic practices, 2) commercial signage, 3) non-linguistic signage, and 4) naming practices.

*Chapter Seven* discusses sign-making and signage as a local practice by exploring how signage is localised through the commodification of local languages, the repurposing of existing signage (such as rocks and discarded commercial signage) for localised purposes, and how signage can be interpreted as a site of struggle against dominating local discourses.

*Chapter Eight* elicits the conclusions from the above-mentioned analyses and comments briefly on this study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

## **1.8 Summary**

This chapter introduced the research site and also discussed the significance of this research study by elaborating on the knowledge gaps this study aims to contribute to. In addition, the chapter also outlined the study's research questions and objectives (which will be revisited in Chapter 8 and discussed and contextualised two central terms of this study. Lastly, the chapter provided the thesis outline. The succeeding chapter provides a review of literature relevant to the study and discusses the theoretical framework the study is situated in.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter has a dual purpose – firstly, it provides a summary of literature on Linguistic Landscape (LL), and secondly, it discusses literature on the theoretical framework that guides this research project. The chapter starts by providing an overview of the progression of LL research and ultimately situates this research project among the latest wave of LL studies, i.e. an ecological approach to LL. Following this is an exploration of literature that this research project draws and/or expands on. These studies are grouped into the following categories: LL and ruralscapes, multilingualism in LL and commodification of languages, LL and names, and authorship in LL.

The remainder of the chapter elaborates on the key theories that frame this study, namely geosemiotics, multimodal social semiotic approach, and semiotic remediation as repurposing.

#### 2.2 Genesis of linguistic landscape

Linguistic Landscape as a field of inquiry has evolved significantly since its initial conceptualisation. Landry and Bourhis (1997:23) are credited with the seminal work on Linguistic Landscape and defined LL as “the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory”. Their study focused on how the LL of Canada served as a marker of in-group versus out-group ethnolinguistic vitality. Following in their footsteps, various scholars conducted research on signage from varying perspectives. Shohamy, Amara and Huebner (2006) explored the visibility of private and public signs in Israel, while Huebner (2006) compared government signs to those of the private sector in a bid to explore to code-mixing. Backhaus (2006) was intrigued by the characteristics that differentiated official and non-official signs based on the notions of power and solidarity in Bangkok. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) explored the LL of two streets in two multilingual cities and focused on the use of minority languages, state languages and English on signs based on the differences in language policy.

These studies greatly aided what was still a blooming field of study and sparked interest about signage as a neglected factor of language and multilingualism. However, these studies had numerous pitfalls. Firstly, the majority of these studies were primarily quantitative – the act of counting how many languages were used on signs inevitably boxes languages and portrays languages as static. Secondly, most of the research was conducted in urban areas and findings were not entirely generalisable to other types of landscapes, e.g. rural, semi-rural or urban-rural environments. Thirdly, in relation to the second point, with a few exceptions, most of these studies were conducted in Europe which are inevitably embedded in a Western perspective. Fourthly, the studies failed to provide an ethnographic perspective – conclusions were based on the researcher’s perspective and accounts on how residents of given areas interacted with signage was absent. Fifthly and lastly, the majority of these studies were monomodal – the focus of the analysis was only on the linguistic aspect of the sign.

### **2.3 Alive with possibilities: The expansion of LL**

In 2009, Shohamy and Gorter published their prolific book titled *Linguistic Landscape – Expanding the scenery*. As can be deduced from the title, with this publication, authors set out to broaden the horizons of LL – methodologically and conceptually. Additionally, Shohamy and Gorter (2009) called for a more inclusive view of LL – from being the written language of selected texts (commercial signage, government buildings etc.) to “all texts situated in a changing public space and this goes beyond written texts of signs and includes verbal texts, images, objects, placement in time and space as well as human beings”. Lastly, Shohamy and Gorter (2009) call attention to the significance of space in LL research and contest that LL is not a neutral phenomenon but needs to be contextualised in a contested sphere of the free space that belongs to all. The publication is eloquently divided into five parts which respectively outline various growing edges for LL in terms of theoretical frameworks, methods and the connection between LL and language policy, and how LL can be representative of different identities.

In the concluding part of the book, and closely related to the approach of this study, Shohamy and Waksman (2009) carve out a way forward for LL studies by suggesting an ecological approach. Shohamy and Waksman (2009:313) suggest that future LL studies incorporate all displayed and interwoven ‘discourses’ – “what is seen, what is heard, what is spoken, what is

thought”. LL studies that employ an ecological approach to LL must take into account all aspects in a given environment and how these aspects/discourses together compose the landscape. Central to this ecological approach to LL is the notion that public space is not neutral but rather a negotiated and contested arena. LL is part of the ecology – it is situated in a given environment and, consequently, LL is “each building, each site, each sound, a billboard, an outdoor moving screen, a mall, a homeless person sitting in the corner of the street is actually an LL text that has to be critically read” (Shohamy & Gorter, 2009: 328). I elaborate on this below, especially on how Banda and Jimaima (2015) build on and operationalise the ecological approach by including the notion of material culture of multilingualism, and multiculturalism.

#### **2.4 Ecologic approach to LL**

It is within this ecological approach to LL that this study embeds itself. Consequently, the rest of this review discusses literature and theoretical approaches directly related this study. The concept of the ‘ecology of language’ was suggested by Haugen (1972), and language ecology may be defined as “the study of interactions between any given language and its environment” (Haugen, 1972:57). The term ‘environment’ automatically brings to mind nature – the physical surroundings that a language is spoken in (Garner, 2005) – after all, the term ‘ecology’ is from the field of biology. However, Haugen (1972) does not consider the natural/physical environment of language, but insists that the environment of language includes primarily psychological and social aspects. Haugen (1972) cautions a one-sided analysis of the ecology of language – after understanding the psychological and sociological environment language operates in, a further analysis is needed to understand how this psycho-social environment impacts the practical/real-life use of language.

Garner (2005) suggests a theoretical framework to accompany Haugen’s (1972) notion of language ecology. According to Garner (2002), an ecological approach to language perceives phenomena as: 1) holistic; 2) dynamic; 3) interactive; and 4) situated. Building and expanding on Haugen’s (1972) concept of language ecology, Banda and Jimaima (2015) propose the notion of semiotic ecology for the study of LL. According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:649), the term ‘semiotic ecology’ aims to “capture the productive and complex interplay between the diverse semiotic material in place, to which meanings are assigned and

appropriated based on the circumstance of use and its consumers”. This study draws on the notion of semiotic ecology in an attempt to provide a comprehensive and holistic account of all semiotic resources in a given territory, and more particularly, their interrelatedness.

Closely aligned to Shohamy and Gorter’s (2009) perspective that LL includes everything from buildings to the homeless is the concept of material culture (Prawn 1982; Aronin and Ó Laoire, 2013). According to Prawn (1982:1), “material culture is the study of the beliefs (values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions) of a particular community or society through objects”. Aronin and Ó Laoire (2013:227) broaden the scope of material culture and state that material culture is also “the study of landscapes, cityscapes, roads, villages, localities, dwellings, private households and collective homes, public spaces and ways of their organisations and use”. Essentially, the study of material culture aims to explore the meaning people attach to objects (Aronin & Ó Laoire, 2013). Signs are objects surrounded and influenced by various other objects. Material culture presents LL research with the opportunity to draw on this approach and consequently expand LL’s primary unit of analysis (i.e. publicly displayed written texts). Consequently, Aronin and Ó Laoire (2013) suggest the exploration of material culture instead of purely linguistically marked objects within LL research. This suggestion is based on three main reasons: 1) material culture objects are found both in public and private spaces, therefore this enables LL to go beyond only the public sphere; 2) material culture includes a variety of objects, including the staple objects initial LL research was centred on; 3) lastly, material culture studies already have firm footing in disciplines such as sociology and ethnology and is therefore an interdisciplinary approach (Aronin & Ó Laoire, 2013:234).

In drawing on material culture, this study distances itself from this ‘pure’ linguistic approach to LL, but rather aims to explore all forms of material (visible, invisible, imagined, linguistic, oral) evident in the FBDM and JTGDM. Semiotic ecology will allow the appreciation and consequently the analysis of how these various semiotic materials create a semiotic ecology and as an ecology function in meaning production.

## 2.5 LL and ruralscapes

To date, very few LL studies have been based on the rural landscape. Kotze (2010) conducted one of the few LL studies based on the rural landscape in South Africa. Kotze (2010) explored the LL of a rural town (Philippolis) in the Free State in a bid to determine whether South Africa's socio-political change (i.e. the birth of democratic South Africa) was reflected in the LL. In terms of the informative function of LL, Kotze (2010) reports that in Philippolis, a misrepresentation of the English and African communities exist in the linguistic public space. Although the African-speaking community is in the majority, the lack of signage written in African languages in the LL of Philippolis suggests otherwise (Kotze, 2010). However, English – a language used by less than 1 per cent of the population – dominated the LL. Symbolically, Kotze (2010:132) argues that the lack of signage written in African languages in the LL appears to be an attempt by “the African community to create their new identity by power of association with the language of English, and by deliberately marginalising their own languages in the public space”.

Laitinen (2014) explored the linguistic landscape of rural and urban Finland in a bid to explore the use of English in the area. Banda and Jimaima (2015) discussed how individuals from rural Zambia extend the scope of signs by drawing on non-conventional, particularly non-textual, artefacts such as village and bush paths, and fauna and flora in their narrations of place. Juffermans and Koppolse (2012) conducted a study in a Gambian village to explore how literate, low-literate and non-literate readers read the linguistic landscape. I elaborate on this below.

## 2.6 Multilingualism in LL and Commodification of language

Backhaus (2006) drew on the LL in a Tokyo city to explore multilingualism by analysing the differences between official and non-official multilingual signs. This study concluded that two different types of multilingualism existed, as detected from the signage: multilingualism related to power, which is perpetuated in official signs, is illustrated by the predominate use of only Japanese. The multilingualism of solidarity, evident in non-official signs, is evident in the hybrid use of languages on signs, for instance, Japanese-English or Japanese-Korean. Backhaus (2006) concluded that the use of English serves as a symbolic expression and implies internationalisation and the association with Western culture.

Cenoz and Gorter (2006) explored the LL of two multilingual streets in Netherlands and Spain where minority languages are spoken. The study was aimed at analysing the use of minority languages and English on language signs and the relation between the LL, language policy and minority languages. Conclusions drawn from their study indicated that the majority language clearly dominated on signs, the use of English on signs was spreading, and that the promotion of minority languages can only be done through an active language policy. The study reinforces the differentiation between the informational and symbolic function of LL and asserts that English as the language of international communication on commercial signs is mainly informational yet symbolic due to its associations with prestige and modernity. Cenoz and Gorter (2006) make an important observation that, although the LL reflects the power and status of different languages in a socio-linguistic context, “the LL does not necessarily reflect the use of the languages in oral communication”. Consequently, in order to accurately determine the dominance of languages, oral and visual communication must be explore parallelly. This study therefore aims to explore how linguistic and oral communication merge to construct a semiotic landscape.

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009) explored the commercial signage around South Africa’s biggest township, Khayelitsha, and concluded that the commercial signage in this township is indicative of the existence of two sites: sites of luxury which host technologically advanced, commercial signage around product and services higher-up in the economic scale; and sites of necessity, home to signage built around constrained resources at a lower economic scale. The third site recognised by Stroud and Mpedukana (2009), namely site of implosion, host signage that is hybrid in nature and draw on elements both typically associated with signage in sites of luxury and necessity.

Juffermans (2015) conducted research in Gambia to illustrate how the linguistic landscape serves as an environment of language and literacy production. Juffermans (2015) noted three specific language and/or literacy practices in the linguistic landscape of Gambia that calls into question the roles of local languages and English in commercial signage. These three practices are: grassroots Englishing, campaigning with local languages, and multimodality and audiences. In terms of grassroots Englishing, Juffermans (2015:63) notes that very few

public signage in Gambia is in a language that is not English, yet the English used on the signs is a local variety of English. The few signs that do contain local languages are the marketing material (billboards) from Gambia's mobile telephone operators and, in this case, "local languages are used to achieve an effect of conspicuousness and markedness in an otherwise English-dominant visual environment" (Juffermans, 2015:73). In terms of multimodality and audience, Juffermans (2015) concludes that in Gambia, regardless of business type and size, all retailers "communicate meaningfully for an audience including non-literates by designing their messages in explicitly multimodal ways" (Juffermans, 2015:76).

Various studies have focused on the commodification of language – a focus that is applicable to this research project. Using primarily signage from Washington DC's Chinatown, Leeman and Modan (2009) focused on how the material manifestations of language in urban cities are influenced by extra-linguistic phenomena such as political and economic interests. Additionally, drawing on the symbolic use of Chinese in the linguistic landscape of Washington DC's Chinatown, Leeman and Modan (2009) explore how minority languages with other design elements in the built environment are commodified and together are used to 'sell the city'. Heller (2003) conducted an ethnographic study in francophone areas of Canada in a bid to explore the commodification of language and authenticity as a consequence of a globalised, new economy. Heller (2003) drew on a heritage tourism site and a call centre as her main research sites. In terms of the call centre industry in francophone Canada, Heller (2003:483) mentions how language has been commodified through the intentional "hiring of bilingual representatives in a bid to maximize the client base". Consequently, "language in the call centre industry is considered a skill" (Heller, 2003: 485) – a skill used by potential employees to sell themselves and a skill used by employees to sell/service their diverse customer range. Heller (2003:488) explains that the commodification of authenticity in the heritage tourism section of francophone Canada occurs through the "development of a unique francophone product, of unique interest to francophones, and under francophone control" in a bid to distinguish themselves from Anglophones and indigenous groups.

Kelly-Holmes (2000) draws on the Marxian notion of fetishism to analyse the use of foreign languages in European intercultural advertising. Drawing on examples such as the German



slogan of car-maker Audi and the use of French in a Chanel advertisement for lipstick, Kelly-Holmes (2000: 70) illustrates how language becomes a fetishized commodity – “its utility or use value has become secondary to its symbolic value”. Kelly-Holmes (2000: 72) argues that the decision not to translate “foreign” words in advertising results in the mystification and obscuring of language as its communicative value is irrelevant. This commodified fetishisation of language in European intercultural advertising results in the symbolic association of, for example, German as a language associated with “engineering quality”, and French as a symbol for “femininity, fashion and beauty”. Kelly-Holmes (2000:76) notes that in certain instances intercultural advertising draws on “total fetish”. Total fetish describes the process where the language(s) used in intercultural advertising has both communicative and symbolic value.

Jaworski (2015:76) mentioned how consumer culture has resulted in the ‘thingification’ of words and the ‘wordification’ of things – the way words are materialized and the way objects are semiotized”. Kelly-Holmes (2014) defines this phenomenon as linguistic fetish. Linguistic fetish is described by Kelly-Holmes (2014:135) as “the use of languages for symbolic (fetishised) rather than utility (instrumental-communicative) purposes in commercial texts”. Kelly-Holmes (2014) asserts that the concept of linguistic fetish was developed to explain multilingualism in economically driven displays, such as marketing and advertising texts.

## **2.7 LL and names**

Proper names are a common feature in the text displayed in commercial signage. Edelman (2009:143) states that proper names that are commonly found in the LL include shop names, brand and product names, and the names of residents. A particular type of multilingualism is associated with the use of proper names in the advertising space. According to Edelman (2009), as proper names such as shop names and brand names do not communicate factual information, they can be written in languages the audience is not acquainted with. Haarmann (1986) terms this impersonal multilingualism (cited in Edelman, 2009). Edelman (2009) problematizes the classification of proper names in LL research as many names can either be categorised as being part of a particular language and/or any language. Irrespective of this

methodological challenge, Edelman (2009) contends that the inclusion of proper names in LL research is a necessity.

Neethling (2010) conducted a study that explored the shifting onomastic landscape brought on by a shift in power and economic relations in democratic South Africa. The study aimed to describe and interpret the emergence of some names from the indigenous Bantu languages in the economic sphere and illustrate how “naming can serve as a powerful indicator of power, success, competitiveness, participation and identity” (Neethling, 2010:81). Although not an exhaustive list, Neethling (2010) identified three categories under which the names of small businesses can be divided, namely: 1) names reflecting ownership or identity; 2) names that suggest positive images or values; and 3) names descriptive of the location or appearance of the business or product. Lanza and Woldemariam (2014) explored the link between language and globalisation by analysing the use of international brand names and English in the commercial signage of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In their analysis of how international brand names infiltrate the local markets, Lanza and Woldemariam (2014) highlight strategies used by locals and international companies. For example, locals use clone advertisement, which is the practice of associating with well-known international brands to signify modernity. International brands such as Coca-Cola use linguistic segmentation (glocalised marketing and advertising materials for different language groups) to associate with local markets and customers. In the conclusion to their study, Lanza and Woldemariam (2014:504) argue that in Ethiopia, “the use of English and international trademark brands serve to index identities associated with distinction, luxury and modernity”.

Peck and Banda (2014) conducted a longitudinal study on the LL displayed in Lower Main Road, Observatory in Cape Town and explored changes in the LL brought on by an exchange of space ownership by new actors, namely African immigrants. Peck and Banda (2014) accurately argue that the analysis of LL should go beyond issues of the visibility and positioning of signs – but include the identification of “semiotic resources which speak to issues involving appropriation, power, preference, inclusion/exclusion and integration of signage”. Of particular interest to this study is Peck and Banda’s (2014) suggestion of branding anonymity. This concept follows from the discussion based on VIV Supermarket (a corner shop that underwent a change in ownership but did not change the shop’s sign). Peck

and Banda (2014) observe how contrary to other establishments in the area, a Somalian national, who is the new owner of VIV Supermarket used Coca-Cola sponsored signage instead of personalised commercial signage. Typically, the use of Coca-Cola signage would be employed for brand association (Peck & Banda, 2014). However, the Somali owner drew on brand anonymity to firstly, be associated with a corporate identity, and secondly and most interestingly, to conceal his identity, as Somalian shops are targeted often by xenophobic looters and vandals in South Africa. Peck and Banda (2014) contend that brand anonymity is therefore a result of social necessity. The present study aims to explore this notion of ‘brand anonymity’ and whether it is generalisable to environments such as the Northern Cape where xenophobic attacks are not as prevalent.

## 2.8 Authorship in LL

Any given linguistic landscape is constructed, i.e. a linguistic landscape is the result of concentrated efforts by an array of participants. Malinowski (2009:108) refers to this as “authorship” and posits that authorship as a notion has not been directly addressed in LL studies. In their study of the linguistic landscape of Canada, Landry and Bourhis (1997:26) differentiate between “private” and “government” signs: according to Landry and Bourhis (1997:26), “private signs include commercial signs on storefronts and business institutions, commercial advertising on billboards, and advertising signs displayed in public transport and on private vehicles”. Government signs are categorised as “public signs used by national, regional, or municipal governments in the followings domains: road signs, place names, street names, an inscriptions on government buildings including ministries, hospitals, universities, town halls, schools, metro stations and public parks” (Landry & Bourhis, 1997:26). In their study of the linguistic landscape of Israel, Ben-Rafael *et al.* (2006) distinguish between “top down” and “bottom up”. Top down signage is “used and exhibited by institutional agencies which in one way or another act under the control of local or central policies”, while bottom up signage is “utilised by individual, associative or corporative actors who enjoy autonomy of action within legal limits” (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006:10).

Spolsky (2009:30) criticises the “top-down, bottom-up” sign distinction and claims that “it is simply a post-hoc guess which fails to recognise the process by which a sign is designed”. This view is supported by Huebner (2009:74) who argues that “the distinction between ‘top-

down' versus 'bottom-up' fails to capture the notion of agency and how it impacts language forms in the LL". Instead of post-hoc distinctions, Spolsky (2009) suggests a theory that allows researchers to understand the process of language selection/management on signage. According to Spolsky (2009:33), the choice of language on the majority of signs is influenced by three relevant conditions or rules: 1) "write a sign in a language you know; 2) prefer to write a sign in a language which can be read by the people you expect to read it and 3) prefer to write a sign in your own language or in a language you wish to be identified".

Malinowski (2009) conducted a multimodal, ethnographic study in the neighbourhood of Oakland, California. Drawing on interviews, participant observations and joint visual analysis with Korean American business owners, Malinowski (2009) set out to understand the appearance of respective linguistic codes and other semiotic modes on commercial signage. In terms of authorship, Malinowski (2009:123) concluded that "any readings of territorial or other far-reaching symbolic intent from code choice and positioning on signs may result as much from the agency of landscape as they do from the intent of any individual or group of people".

Besides Malinowski (2009), the current studies and/or debates about LL and authorship are non-empirical, i.e. these studies are based on the researcher's perspective and/or interpretations of signs. This study joins Malinowski (2009:124) in response to "a greater commitment by linguistic landscape scholars to situate and contextualise our studies in the lives of those who read, write and conduct their lives amongst the signs of our field". Additionally, current studies of LL and authorship, including that of Malinowski (2009), are purely centred on language, i.e. authorship is assumed to be written. This study expands this view by illustrating how authorship and/or contestation of authorship is not always linguistic, by illustrating how authorship can be oral.

The remainder of the chapter discusses the theories that frame this research project.

## 2.9 Geosemiotics

Another important theoretical framework that frames this study is geosemiotics (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). Essentially, all signs are meaningless until they are placed in a specific physical location – the traffic sign ‘STOP’ is only applicable when it is visibly located next to the road compared to when it is stored in a warehouse. This ‘location based’ meaning of signs is the gist of geosemiotics – “the *in place* meaning of signs and the discourses and the meanings of our actions in and among those discourses in place” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003:1). Geosemiotics is defined as “the study of the social meaning of the material placement of signs and discourses and our actions in the material world” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003:2). In geosemiotics, the emphasis is on the meaning of a sign located in the real world, e.g. a stop sign on a street corner. Scollon and Scollon (2003) argue that, due to the shift from abstract potential meaning to actual, real-world meaning, geosemiotics is closely linked to indexicality. Although indexicality is a broad concept in relation to language and geosemiotics, indexicality is described as “the context-dependency of signs” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003:5). Regardless of the centrality of indexicality to the theory of geosemiotics, Scollon and Scollon (2003:5) caution that this theoretical framework is not about indexicality in language but rather about “the ways in which this sign system of language indexes the other semiotic systems in the world around language”.

According to Scollon and Scollon (2003:14), four elements are central to geosemiotics: the social actor, the interaction order, visual semiotics, and place semiotics. Scollon and Scollon (2003:19) argue that “exactly where on earth an action takes place is an important part of its meaning”, and “everything from our location among mountains and rivers, oceans and deserts, cities and farms is part of the world which may be called upon by humans in taking particular actions”.

Geosemiotics’ emphasis on the physical environment – the actual placement of material and how the physical location adds to meaning-making – is central to this study as it deepens the interpretation of signs. So, geosemiotics ‘completes’ the analytical circle of this study. This study is intrigued by materials that construct the landscape of FBDM and JTGD with the understanding that these materials and their meanings are socially constructed (and constantly

re-constructed). Therefore, these meanings are not arbitrary nor neutral, particularly because the signs' physical placement is not neutral.

Scollon and Scollon (2003:145-146) group general geosemiotic practices under three categories: decontextualized semiotics, transgressive semiotics, and situated semiotics. According to Scollon and Scollon (2003:145), “decontextualized semiotics include all the forms of signs, pictures, and texts which may appear in multiple contexts but always in the same form for instance the Nike ‘swoosh’ or the characteristic ‘Coca-Cola’ typeface”. Scollon and Scollon (2003: 146) describe transgressive semiotics “as any sign that is in the ‘wrong’ place” and situated semiotics describes “any aspect of the meaning that is predicated on the placement of the sign in the material world such as common regulatory signs or store names”.

## **2.10 Multimodal social semiotic approach**

Semiotics (i.e. the study of signs and symbols) is a broad field that can be approached from varying angles. This study follows a multimodal social semiotics approach which frames how signs will be perceived, understood and ultimately analysed. A brief description of this framework follows below, as discussed by Kress (2010) and Van Leeuwen (2005).

Increasing numbers of signage found within our given environments consist of various modes. Acknowledging and understanding the role of each mode within a given sign is at the core of multimodality. According to Kress (2010:1), multimodality is essentially about understanding how different kinds of modes do different kinds of semiotic work – how each mode holds a distinct potential for meaning. Kress and Mavers (2005:172) argue that “the perspective of multimodality shares the assumption that all modes – and not just those of speech and writing – have specific parts to play in the making of meaning”. Multimodality as an approach is linked to various methods that have been suggested to explore how this interplay of modes is actualised in texts and essentially practised in everyday life.

Kress's (2010:54) social semiotic theory is interested in meaning in all its forms. The social in this theory is “the source, the origin and the generator of meaning. Meaning arises in social

environments and in social interactions”. That makes *social* into the source, the origin and the generator of meaning. From a social semiotic approach, “the individuals, with their social histories, socially shaped, located in social environments, using socially made, culturally available resources are agentic and generative in sign-making and communication” (Kress, 2010: 54).

The core unit of analysis of semiotics is the sign. However, the analysis of the ‘sign’ from a social semiotic perspective rests on various fundamental assumptions:

signs are always newly made in social interaction; signs are motivated; not arbitrary relations of meaning and form; the motivated relation of a form and a meaning is based on and arises out of the interest of makers of signs, the forms/signifiers which are used in the making of signs are made in social interaction and become part of the semiotic resources of a culture (Kress, 2010:54).

According to Kress (2010:61), multimodal social semiotics theorises meaning from three perspectives.

1. The overarching perspective is that of *semiosis* – making meaning; its categories apply to all representation, to all communication and to all media of communication.
2. From the perspective of *multimodality*, the theory deals with issues common to all modes and to the relation between modes.
3. In the third perspective, of dealing with a *specific mode*, the theory has categories that describe forms and meanings which are appropriate to the specificities of a given mode.

This approach is quite extensive, accompanied by numerous concepts that build the theory, but one central concept is semiotic resources (van Leeuwen, 2005, Kress, 2010). According to van Leeuwen (2005:1), “semiotic resources are the actions and artefacts we use to communicate”. Van Leeuwen (2005:1) explains that the term ‘resources’ is favourable as it does not imply that the meanings assigned to signs are static/pre-given and are not affected by how the sign is used. Kress (2010:8) adds that semiotic resources are socially made and

(therefore) constantly remade, not arbitrarily but precisely in line with what the maker of the sign requires it to do at that point in time.

Multimodal Social Semiotics does not make use of Pierce's well-known tri-partite classification of signs, as iconic, indexical and symbolic (Kress, 2010). Multimodal Social Semiotics also rejects Saussure's rationale that the relationship between signifier (sign) and signified (meaning) is arbitrary. According to Kress (2010:67), "in sign-making there is a homology between signifier and signified: both are from the same level. In Social Semiotics, arbitrariness is replaced by motivation, in all instances for any kind of sign". Kress (2010:66) argues that the assumption in social semiotics theory that "all signs are motivated conjunctions of form and meaning forces social semiotic research to attempt uncover motivation, in all cases". Kress's perspective of social semiotics (2010:67) considers all signs as important that "deserve to have their meaning uncovered as the banal, the everyday, the remarkable is always the best site to anchor theory".

## 2.11 Semiotic remediation as repurposing

This study draws on semiotic remediation (Prior and Hengst, 2010), and repurposing as suggested by Bolter and Grusin (2000).

Bolter and Grusin (2000) wrote extensively about remediation and the new digital media. According to Bolter and Grusin (2000: 45), remediation is defined as "the representation of one medium in another". Bolter and Grusin (2000) state that there are various acts of remediation, and the act typically drawn on in popular culture today is repurposing. Repurposing, a type of borrowing, describes the act of taking a property from one medium and reusing it in another. The content has been borrowed, but the medium has not been acknowledged as with reuse comes a necessary redefinition – a type of 'new-ness' (Bolter and Grusin, 2000).

The significant difference between Bolter and Grusin's (2000) and Prior and Hengst's (2010) approach to remediation is what is being remediated. The former focuses on how various mediums are refashioned among each other. The latter extends the scope and calls for



“attention to the range of semiotics that are present and consequential in interactions rather than taking single-mode analyses” (Prior and Hengst, 2010: 6-7).

Consequently, semiotic remediation draws attention to “the diverse ways that humans’ and nonhumans’ semiotic performances (historical or imagined) are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity” (Prior, Hengst, Roozen, and Shipka, 2006: 734). This type of semiotic remediation calls for the “understanding signs of all kinds as dialogic, not generated out of abstract systems, but drawn from a history of sign use, tuned to the present interaction, and oriented to future responses and acts” (Prior & Hengst, 2010: 6-7).

Following Bolter and Grusin (2000), Banda and Jimaima (2015) and, to a certain extent, Prior and Hengst (2010), this study focuses on semiotic remediation as repurposing. According to Irvine (2010:236), “remediation, in this sense, implies taking up some previously existing form but deploying it in a new move, with a new purpose”.

Irvine (2010: 240) cautions against a superficial study of semiotic remediation practices. For Irvine (2010:240) the purpose is to discover why the repurposing took place – what was at stake, and why and how that moment, or those actions were important.

## **2.12 Summary**

This chapter provided an overview of the main LL literature and literature on the theoretical framework related to the study. The chapter started out by providing a brief history on the conceptualisation of LL and the initial key LL studies. The historical trajectory of LL was followed by a discussion of more recent studies and positioned this study among various studies that take an ecological approach towards LL studies. This was followed by a brief exploration of studies that this project draws on. The remainder of the chapter discussed the key theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underlie the study.

The following chapter outlines the Methodology used in the research project.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an account of the research design and methodology that underpins the study. In particular, details are provided about the selected research design, sampling type and population, data collection and analysis methods, and the ethical considerations. Lastly, the research challenges are discussed.

#### 3.2 Research design

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006:34) defines “a research design strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research”. Creswell (2014:3) distinguishes between three research designs: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research. This research project draws on qualitative research methods. Barni and Bagna (2015) highlight that, initially, methodologies to research multilingualism (including LL) were mostly quantitative. However, the realisation of the multiple disciplines LL draws on, and consequently, the interrelated discourses that shape any LL, called for researchers to draw on qualitative research methods too (Barni & Bagna, 2015). An additional factor for the preference of qualitative is based on the calibre of the study’s research questions and/or topic. According to Durrheim (2006: 20), qualitative research is needed when “the topic is new, the subject has never been addressed with a certain sample or group of people and existing theories do not apply with the particular sample or group under study”. Thus so far, no studies have been conducted about the linguistic/semiotic landscape of the Northern Cape, and existing LL studies are excessively based on urban environments, i.e. cities. Therefore, the qualitative, ethnographic approach of this study enables the researcher to provide a pioneering “thick description” of the semiotic landscape of the Northern Cape.

According to Creswell (2014:4), “qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”. Kelly (2006:287) supports Creswell’s perspective by elaborating that “qualitative researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world”. Qualitative research has numerous characteristics which distinguishes it from quantitative research. Most importantly, qualitative research has characteristics that prove favourable for this research project, of which the top four are:

- a). Natural research setting – the collection of data at the site where the participants experience the issue under study.
- b). Multiple sources of data – qualitative researchers have the luxury of gathering multiple forms of data instead of depending on a data source.
- c). Participants’ meanings – qualitative research focuses on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem/issue.
- d). Holistic account - qualitative researchers attempt to report on multiple perspectives and identifying the many factors involved in a situation (Creswell, 2014:185).

Durrheim (2006:47) comments that the kind of data collected by qualitative researchers is typically “in the form of written or spoken language, or in the form of observations that are recorded in language”. To this list, Creswell (2014:192-193) adds audio-visual material such as photographs, physical trace evidence and any stimuli of the senses.

### **3.3 Data collection methods**

Androutsopoulos (2014: 75) states that “data collection in LL research can be positioned on a continuum between a “purely textual” and a more ethnographic approach by drawing on ethnographic techniques such as observation and interviews”. This research study drew on a combination of different types of ethnographies, primarily visual ethnography (Pink, 2011), material ethnography (Stroud and Mpedukana, 2009), and semi-structured mobile interviews. Before providing additional information about these two ethnographies, it would first be appropriate to glance over some key facts on ‘traditional’ ethnography.

### 3.3.1 Ethnography

Ethnography as a research tradition originates from the discipline of anthropology (Ritchie, 2003). Patton (2005: 84) states that ethnography was borne as a method for “studying and understanding the other – it was the fascination with ‘exotic otherness’ that attracted Europeans to study the peoples of Africa, Asia, the South Sea Islands and the Americans”. Margaret Mead’s (1943) extensive time spent living with Samoan villagers is cited as one of the most prominent examples of a ‘traditional’ ethnographic research (Kelly, 2006: 310). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1) define ethnography as “the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research”. Box 1 below summarises the main features of ethnographic research, as sourced from Flick (2009: 233).

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A strong emphasis on exploring the nature of a particular social phenomenon, rather than setting out to test hypotheses about them.</li><li>• A tendency to work primarily with "unstructured" data: that is, data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories.</li><li>• Investigation of a small number of cases, perhaps just one case, in detail.</li><li>• • Analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most.</li></ul> |
| Box 1: Features of ethnographic research   |

Ethnographic research has evolved and, consequently, has been imported from anthropology into other disciplines such as sociology or education (Flick, 2009). According to Kelly (2006: 310), “ethnography has since come to encompass a study of culture more generally, often the study of subcultures such as geographic communities, professional groups or marginalised groups”. Kelly (2006:310) notes that culture in contemporary ethnography refers to “the particular ways of living together that such groups have developed rather than the kind of culture associated with ethnic differences among people”. Whitehead (2005:5) defines contemporary ethnography as a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems and defines culture as a “holistic flexible and non-constant system with continuities between its

interrelated components” (Whitehead, 2005:5). As stated by Flick (2009: 234), “current ethnography starts its research around the corner and wants to show the particular aspects of what seems familiar to us all”.

In terms of the methods associated with traditional ethnography, Pink (2007:22) argues that “handbooks of traditional research methods tend to represent ethnography as a mixture of participant observation and interviewing”. This perspective is shared by Flick (2009:234) who argues that “methodological strategies applied [to traditional ethnography] are still very much based on observing what is going on in the field by participating in the field”. Flick (2009:234) adds that “interviews and the analysis of documents are integrated into this kind of participatory research design where they hold out the promise of further knowledge”. According to Whitehead (2005), contemporary ethnography allows for the collection of a variety of data including technologies and human-made material objects (material culture) and data from the physical environments in which humans interact. Pink (2007:22) extends the scope of data typically associated with contemporary ethnography by insisting that “ethnography should also account for objects, visual images, the immaterial and the sensory nature of the human experience and knowledge”. Flick (2009: 234) cites Atkinson *et al.* (2001:2) who state that “contemporary ethnographic research is characterized by fragmentation and diversity. There is certainly a carnivalesque profusion of methods, perspectives, and theoretical justifications for ethnographic work. There are multiple methods of research, analysis, and representation”.

In exploiting the luxury of diverse research data collection methods that ethnographic works affords researchers, this research project employed three interrelated research methods, namely visual ethnography (Pink, 2007, material ethnography of multilingualism (Stroud and Mpedukana, 2009), and walking-talking interviews.

### **3.3.1.1 Visual ethnography**

Pink (2007:65) states that “photography has a long and varied history in ethnography. Supported by different methodological paradigms a camera has been an almost mandatory element of the ‘tool kit’ for research for several generations of ethnographers”. Pink (2007:22-23) puts forth that “there is no definition of what it is that makes an image ethnographic – the ethnographicness of any image or representation is contingent on how it is

situated, interpreted and used to invoke meanings and knowledge that are of ethnographic interest”. To understand the intentions behind photographs, i.e. what meanings photographs are meant to portray, Pink (2007: 72) suggests a reflexive approach. According to Pink (2007:72), a reflexive approach consists of three aspects: 1) developing a consciousness of how ethnographers play their role as photographers in particular settings, how they frame particular images and why they choose particular subjects; 2) a consideration of how these choices are related to the expectations of both academic disciplines and local visual cultures; and 3) an awareness of the theories of the representation that inform their photography.

According to Androutsopoulos (2014:86), “photographic documentation lies at the heart of LL data collection and basic hardware requirements such as a digital camera will prove adequate for photographic documentation”. For this study, a digital camera was used to take photographs of the semiotic landscape of the Northern Cape. This data collection method is customary in LL studies and normally enables the researcher to capture an unlimited number of pictures of the signs in a given LL (Gorter, 2006). Creswell (2014:193) states that one advantage of audio-visual material as data is its unobtrusive nature.

### **3.3.1.2 Material ethnography of multilingualism**

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009) conduct what the authors call a material ethnography study of multilingualism in the South African township, Khayelitsha. Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:364) argue that a material ethnography approach to multilingualism needs to explore “the social circulation of languages across spaces and different semiotic artifacts, such as signs, newspapers, books, TV channels, music videos, etc.” Furthermore, as part of a material ethnography of multilingualism, Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:357) suggest that “attention needs to be paid to how constructs of space are constrained by material conditions of production, and informed by associated phenomenological sensibilities of mobility and gaze”.

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:382) suggest that:

Future work on signage from the perspective of a material ethnography of multilingualism would benefit from exploring how people take up, use, manage and

discard, interact with and through the signs and artifacts they insert into practices and ideologies of language construction in their everyday interaction.

This research project takes a material ethnography of multilingualism stance and extends the scope of this perspective in two manners: 1) an intentional focus on the materialities (visible and invisible) that contribute to multilingualism in a given semiotic landscape, and 2) interviews are conducted with local residents to explore if and how they interact with signage.

### 3.3.2 Walk-talk interviews

Androutsopoulos (2014: 83) states that LL research has developed beyond purely photographic documentation – “involving participants is now increasingly seen as necessary in order to understand the relation between the semiotic choices on signs and their social context”. In exploring how individuals narrate their physical space, walking and talking interviews were conducted instead of the traditional, sedentary interview. Sheller and Urry (2006:208) state that, regardless of the reality of increased movement of things, people, and ideas, social research has remained largely ‘a-mobile’. As part of data collection methods that would fit a ‘new mobilities paradigm’, Sheller and Urry (2006: 217) suggest ‘mobile ethnography’, which involves “participation in patterns of movement while conducting ethnographic research”. Walking and talking interviews form part of an array of mobile methodologies in social science research increasingly being acknowledged for their “importance to generate understandings of mobilities and to create more dynamic understandings of space and place” (Moles, 2008:2). Brown and Durrheim (2009) conducted mobile interviews in Durban around issues of race, discrimination, prejudice and segregation. Brown and Durrheim (2009:11) suggest five features of the mobile data collection process:

1. Research and participant walking alongside each other
2. Moving through disruptive space
3. Having situated, indexical conversations
4. Engaging in a line of inquiry in these conversations
5. Encouraging participants to guide the tour

Evans and Jones (2011:850) highlight that a major benefit of walking interviews is its ability to “access people’s attitudes and knowledge about the surrounding environment”. Androutsopoulos (2009:87) states that “LL research that involves participants draws especially on interviews – either with producers or recipients or both”. Additionally, Creswell (2014:191) states that interviews are beneficial when: 1) participants cannot be directly observed, 2) participants can provide historical information, and 3) it enables the researcher control over the line of questioning.

Various linguistic/semiotic landscape studies have used walking-talking interviews as a method of data collection. Garvin (2010:1) conducted walking tour interviews in Memphis, Tennessee, to explore self-reported understandings and visual perceptions of public signage. Garvin (2010:1) puts forth the following stages in walking tour interviews:

1. The selection of the sites, photographing and description of walking tour sites
2. Selection of participants
3. Conducting walking tour interviews
4. Recording of field notes and transcription of interviews
5. Conducting a follow-up meeting to ensure validity of data

Stroud and Jegels (2014:184) drew on narrated walks in Manenberg to explore how “semiotic artefacts figure and are used in these narrative performances in spatial practice, as residents make place, and experience space, as lived space”. During the narrated walks, participants were asked to guide the interview by narrating specific characteristics associated with the respective Manenberg zones. As part of the narration, participants were intentionally asked to comment on “the significance of an abundance of signage/graffiti in a particular zone, or what the explanation was for different types of signage in different zones” (Stroud and Jegels, 2014: 184).

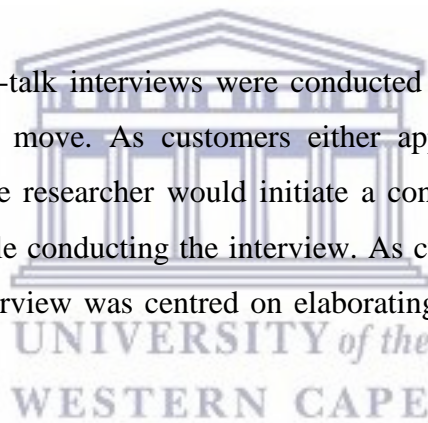
In his 2004 research with environmental activists, Anderson (2004) built on Casey’s (2000) notion of ‘co-ingredience of place and self’ to suggest a mobile method called *bumbling*, defined as aimlessly walking by (Evans, 1998). Casey (2000) asserts that “the relationship between self and place is of constitutive coingredience: each is essential to the being of the other. In effect, there is no place without self and no self without place”. Anderson



(2004:260) argues that, by drawing on mobile methods such as bumbling and talking whilst walking, is useful as “it produces not a conventional interrogative encounter, but a collage of collaboration: an unstructured dialogue where all actors participate in a conversational, geographical and informational pathway creation”.

In their study of the ruralscape of Zambia, Banda and Jimaima (2015) also drew on walking interviews as a data collection method. Banda and Jimaima (2015) used the walking interviews in one of two ways: 1) one of the researchers would walk to a particular place and upon arrival ask questions relating to it and surrounding areas, or 2) a researcher would ask directions to a location within the rural environs and request for the company of the interviewee in the walk as a way of eliciting information about the construction and consumption of space.

In this research project, walk-talk interviews were conducted with tuck shop customers as they were constantly on the move. As customers either approached or completed their purchases at the tuckshop, the researcher would initiate a conversation with the customers and walk with customers while conducting the interview. As customers are perceived as the recipients of signage, the interview was centred on elaborating on the extent to which they use signage.



Essentially, the tuckshop is a mobile space – owners are constantly moving up and down to serve customers and customers are constantly walking in and out, in and around the tuckshop. Therefore, due to the constant flow of people and exchanges in the tuckshop, the interviews with the tuckshop owners were mobile.

Mobile interviews were also conducted with some local residents who were busy walking down the streets. Although some sedentary interviews were conducted, one of the interview questions that specifically asked participants to give step-by-step route directions (i.e. from the participants’ home to the local shop) enabled participants to imagine mobility.

### 3.4 Population and sampling

Androutsopoulos (2014:84) states that “LL data collection is typically carried out in a vast urban environment that cannot be surveyed exhaustively. LL research therefore begins by determining a survey area together with the institutional domains and types of sign to be covered”. The population of the research is located in two district municipalities in the Northern Cape, South Africa. The first district municipality is *Frances Baard* – the smallest yet most populated district municipality in the Northern Cape. The second district municipality which consists mostly of villages is *John Taolo Gaetsewe* District Municipality. The sample size for this research project was approximately 230 photographs and 43 transcribed interviews with local residents in FBDM and JTGDM, tuckshop owners and tuckshop customers.

Durrheim (2006:49) describes sampling as “the selection of research participants from an entire population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours, and/or social processes to observe”. According to Ritchie, Lewis and El am (2003: 78), qualitative research uses non-probability samples for selecting the population for study. In a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of or groups within the sampled population.

The study used purposive sampling which is one of the non-probability sampling methods (Durrheim, 2006). Cresswell’s (2014:189) purposeful sampling methods enable the researcher to intentionally select participants, sites or visual material that will best help the researcher to understand the problem and the research question. According to Babbie (1989), there are four different units of analysis that are common in the social sciences: individuals, groups, organisations, and social artefacts (cited in Durrheim, 2006:40).

Androutsopoulos (2014:85) states that determining the unit of analysis in LL research is “closely related to the research questions and, at the same time, impact directly on the photographic documentation to be carried out”. In line with Androutsopoulos’s (2014) view, the decision of which units of analysis to focus on in this research project was influenced by the main objective of the research project, which was to explore why and how participants

draw on a range of social semiotic resources (visible, invisible, imagined, tangible) in place- and sign-making.

The units of analysis of this research project were:

- Commercial signage, i.e. any signage that advertised a business or a service/product.
- General signage related to the research questions and objectives.
- Natural phenomena – trees, hills, bushes, rocks, tree stumps, etc.
- Man-made objects, e.g. buildings
- Individuals – interviews were conducted with various individuals in both district municipalities.

### 3.5 Data analysis

#### 3.5.1 Transcription

Flick (2009:299) states that if data have been recorded using technical media such as video or voice recorders, transcription is a necessary step on the way to the analysis of the data. Consequently, the first step in the data analysis process of this research project was the transcription of the voice-recorded interviews. Flick (2009:299) observes that social science researchers might feel obligated to employ the transcription conventions in conversation analysis as it has often been the model for transcriptions in social science. However, Flick (2009:299) warns against this ‘one size fits all’ tendency and puts forth that “a (transcription) standard has not yet been established and that different transcription systems are available which vary in their degree of exactness”. In the absence of clear transcription guidelines for specific disciplines in the social sciences, Flick (2009:299) cites Strauss (1987) who states that “it seems more reasonable to transcribe only as much and only as exactly as is required by the research question”. As the research questions and objectives of this study prioritises participants’ responses, explanations and descriptions and not their manner of speech, the transcription of the voice-recorded interviews into textual form did not follow any particular convention. Consequently, in transcriptions, do not take note or indicate standard transcriptions conventions such as overlapping words or pauses.

Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor (2003:200) put forth that "there are no clearly agreed rules or procedures for analysing qualitative data". Going on Ritchie *et al.*'s (2003) assertion and the desire to provide a rich description of the data, the research study employed various analytic frameworks in a bid to ensure that the data is holistically interpreted. Primarily, this research project drew on two analytic frameworks: Social Semiotic Analysis (Kress, 2010), and Ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis (Blommaert & Maly, 2014:4). Generally, the data analysis of this research project is of an ethnographic nature and "provides an account which is largely descriptive and which detail the way of life of particular individuals, groups or organisations" (Ritchie, 2003: 200). As qualitative research is essentially interpretive by design, the data analysis takes an "interpretative approach which aims to understand and report the views and culture of those being studied" (Ritchie, 2003:201).

Ethnographic linguistic landscape analysis (ELLA) was conceptualised by Blommaert and Maly (2014:4) and in essence, this analytic framework posits that all signs can be analysed based on three axes (past, future and present) and that signs have specific functions (semiotic and spatial). This approach was employed to account for the extent to which signs have historical and social significance. The axes and functions are briefly discussed below.

Blommaert and Maly (2014:4) argue that:

- (i) "Signs point towards the past, to their origins and modes of production. The history of the sign, thus, leads us towards the broader sociolinguistic conditions under which the sign has been designed and deployed.
- (ii) Signs point towards the future, to their intended audiences and preferred uptake.
- (iii) Signs also point towards the present, through their 'emplacement' (Scollon & Scollon 2003) – their location is not a random given, and neither is their "syntagmatic" position relative to other signs."

Given these three axes, Blommaert and Maly (2014:4) conclude that "signs always have a semiotic scope – the communicative relationship between producers and addressees, in which normative and regulative messages are conveyed and a spatial scope ("don't smoke here")".

This research project applied a multimodal social semiotic analysis (Kress, 2010) to explore how multimodality is drawn on by participants in the creation of signs and the navigation of spaces. Additionally, the approach was drawn on to explore how any object holds meaning-making potential. As discussed in length in chapter two, a multimodality social semiotic perspective focuses on meaning – on how each mode contributes to meaning within a specific sign and rejects the notion that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary. From a multimodality social semiotic perspective, signs are motivated and even the mundane signs have meanings.

### 3.5.2 Coding the photographs

Gorter (2006:2) worryingly states that, in LL research, particularly one “who does data collection in the form of large numbers of photographs faces a number of general and some special problems due to LL’s developing methodology”. One of the special problems Gorter (2006) mentions is the coding/categorisation of photographs. There is no standardised coding system, as LL studies vary. According to Gorter and Cenoz (2007: 7), “researchers distinguish between top-down and bottom-up signs, and they usually analyse the language or languages used in the sign and the type of establishment where the sign is located”. As LL studies are so varied, Gorter and Cenoz (2007:7) admit that “there are many other aspects of the signs which can be considered when coding”.

Androutsopoulos (2014:86) provides three examples of the range of coding criteria that are employed in LL research.

- Cenoz and Gorter (2006) focus their coding on linguistic aspects on signs. Main categories include number of languages on the sign, and the distinction between top-down versus bottom-up signs.
- Backhaus (2007) uses the following criteria: monolingual versus multilingual, languages on the sign, top-down versus bottom-up.
- Barni and Bagna (2009) used five main criteria to code photographs: mono- versus multilingual signs, textual genre (e.g. advertisement, warning signs), location, domain, and place.

For this research project, photographs were coded based on the research project's units of analysis, i.e. commercial signage, general signage, natural phenomena and man-made objects. The criteria for coding also included multilingual versus monolingual signs. Informed by one of the research questions of the study, intangible signs (memory, socio-historical background) were also noted.

### 3.5.3 Thematic analysis of interviews

In analysing the transcribed data from the interviews, the researcher drew on thematic analysis and multimodal/multisemiotic discourse analysis with a focus on social semiotics because “the semiotic signals our broad interest in signs across modes, media, channels, and so on” (Prior and Hengst 2010: 1; see also Kress, 2010). A focus on semiotic ecology enabled the researcher to extend the exploration to include signage that are visible and not visible, scripted and unscripted, flora and fauna and other signage, based on sound, smell, light and so on, used in ruralscapes, which do not feature in current studies that focus on urban areas.

According to Durrheim (2006:52), generally, qualitative research analysis commences with the identifying of themes in the data and the interrelatedness of themes. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006: 322–326) provide a five-step data analysis procedure applicable to most qualitative studies. This five-step procedure was employed for the thematic analysis of this study's data. Below follows a discussion of the six-step procedure:

#### 1) Familiarisation and immersion

This initial phase focused on the researcher re-familiarising her/himself with the data (field notes, interview transcripts, photographs) by reading and/or going through it. Terre Blanche *et al.* (2006:322) state that, by the end of this phase, the researcher should know “what kinds of interpretation are likely to be supported by the data and what are not”.

#### 2) Generating codes

Following the researcher's familiarisation with the data, is the second phase referred to as coding. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 18), “codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst and refer to the most basic element of the raw data that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon”.

#### 3) Inducing Themes

The third phase of thematic analysis involved using the codes generated in phase two and sorting the different codes into themes, as different codes combined to form an overarching theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006:18).

#### **4) Elaboration**

In the second last phase, the researcher visited themes and codes to uncover the finer nuances of meaning possibly not captured in phases two and three. According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006: 326), “the aim is to ensure that the themes and data are representative of the data and that no further significant new insights appear”.

#### **5) Interpretation and checking**

According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006:326), the final step involves writing up the researcher’s interpretations by “giving an account of the phenomenon studied, most probably by using thematic categories from the researcher’s analysis as sub-headings”.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

As per university rules, the research proposal for this study was submitted to the Faculty of Arts’ Research Committee in July 2016. The research proposal was accompanied by an ethical clearance application form and appendixes such as a written example of the information sheet that was distributed to participants, informed consent forms and a sample of the interview questions.

As interviews were one of the data collection methods, participants signed forms affirming informed consent. Lewis (2003:66) describes informed consent as a process which involves “providing participants with the information about the purpose of the study, the funder/organisation/institution, who the research team is, how the data will be used and what participation will require of them”. Lewis (2003:67) adds that “informed consent should be based on an understanding that participation is voluntary”. Participants were duly informed about voluntary participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The interviews were conducted anonymously and in so doing, the anonymity of all research participants was secured. Lewis (2003: 67) states that “anonymity means that the identity of those taking part not being known out-side the research team”. The only names made

mention of in interviews are tuckshop names which were exclusively used for analysis purposes.

Juffermans (2015:59) states that, in principle, it is arguable that “everything put up in public is offered to the public and may be read and interpreted (or photographed and studied) by anyone” (in the case of LL studies). However, Juffermans (2015:59) argues that shop signs (a unit of analysis in this research project) are located “in the borderland of what is public and private”. Although verbal permission was granted by some tuckshop owners to take pictures of their business signs, the researcher could not secure permission to photograph the signage of non-operating tuckshops and tuck shop commercial signage that was only meant for descriptive purposes. Additionally, it proved illogical to attempt to get permission to capture images of signs that were painted on walls, posted on trees/street poles or ‘household’ signage of deserted homes or absent owners. The conflict between public and private spaces and, consequently, the securing of informed consent, is a muddy terrain in LL studies, as argued by Juffermans (2015:60) who states that “the notion of informed consent, the central concept in codes of research ethics, seems too rigid and technical to be applied wholesale in linguistic landscape research”.

### **3.7 Research challenges**

According to Kelly (2006: 293), “sensitive research includes research into issues where there are strong social alignments and tensions”. Due to the tuckshops’ assumed association with xenophobic acts in South Africa (Charman & Piper, 2012), the section of the research related to tuckshops can be categorised as sensitive.

The researcher observed an increased level of reluctance/anxiety from tuckshop owners in Kagung (outside Kuruman) to participate in the study and/or ending interviews mid-way. Lewis (2006:69) states that “it is important to be alert to signs of discomfort, and if these are given to check the participant’s willingness to continue or to offer to stop the interview”. After noticing one such instance, a South African local informed the researcher that this was due to ‘passport issues’. According to the customer, around November - December 2016, government authorities conducted random searches in Kagung (outside Kuruman). During such a search, non-South African tuckshop owners had to provide ‘authorities’ with legal



migration documents. This resulted in immigrant tuckshop owners switching tuckshops weekly in order to 'evade authorities'. Consequently, the researcher was mistaken for and/or associated with government authority and the ongoing random 'raids'.

Pink (2007: 24) asserts that "ethnographers ought to be self-conscious about how they represent themselves to informants and they ought to consider how their identities are constructed and understood by the people with whom they work". Following the observation that my physical presence, language of choice (which was English as most tuckshop owners were non-South Africans), and the type of questions posed to the tuckshop owners induced the tuckshop owners' anxiety, the researcher resolved to 'prepare' tuckshop owners by first asking the questions off-record. Kelly (2006) mentions this strategy as an option when researching a sensitive topic.

An additional challenge related to the tuckshop owners' interviews was the linguistic barrier between the tuckshop owners and the researcher. The overwhelming majority of the tuckshop owners who participated in the study were non-South Africans and, consequently, interviews were mostly conducted in English. However, the limited English proficiency of most of the tuckshop owners resulted in miscellaneous responses on a few occasions. As a solution to overcome this linguistic barrier, the researcher simplified and/or repeated some questions. This intervention is in line with Lewis' (2006:68) suggestion that sensitive topics are best addressed through clear and direct questions to avoid ambiguity and/or confusion.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter discussed the methodology that was used in this research project. It stated the research design of this study and went on to motivate why this research is qualitative in nature. The rest of the chapter provided details regarding the data collection methods, the sampling strategy used to recruit participants and the analysis approaches used. The last two sections of the chapter elaborated on the research's ethical considerations and the research challenges.

The following chapter is the first analysis chapter and discusses the semiotic ecology of Ulco and Delporthoop – two small places in the Francis Baard District Municipality.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### SEMIOTIC ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS: ULCO AND DELPORTSHOOP

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comparative, semiotic ecological analysis of two small places in the Northern Cape, namely Ulco and Delportshoop, both situated in FBDM. Ulco and Delportshoop are 16.7 kilometres apart, but share an interrelated yet simultaneously disconnected nature. Ulco is home to Afrisam, a cement mining company – arguably Ulco’s biggest attraction and the sole reason for Ulco’s existence. Ulco is regarded as private property as only employees and their family members and contractors of Afrisam can reside in Ulco. Delportshoop’s existence is linked to the discovery of diamonds along the banks of the Vaal River. Delportshoop is regarded public/government space with typical government services (a municipal office, government clinic, public schools). Ulco and Delportshoop have stark differences especially in terms of the geographical layout of place, population and socio-economic status and these factors have implications for the repertoire of signage, the navigation of place and the sense-making of space.

In their conceptualisation of semiotic ecology of LL, Banda and Jimaima (2015:649) emphasise that:

the ecology of semiotic material in place is meant to privilege and highlight the creativity of producers and consumers of the semiotic material, who selectively use memory, historical knowledge, the natural features in the environment, spatial architecture and cultural materialities to bring to life diverse meanings relating to the spaces they navigate.

Evidently, at the heart of semiotic ecology is consumers’ ability to creatively draw on a range of semiotic resources in the sense-making, place-making and navigation of space. Therefore, drawing on semiotic ecology of LL (Banda & Jimaima, 2015), this chapter discusses the rich semiotic resources (visible and invisible, written and oral, real and imagined) drawn on in the construction of space and the influence of histories, categorisation and purpose of space

(private versus public) on the materialities of a place. It is not just signage; in this chapter, interviews are analysed as narratives of place (Pennycook, 2009, 2010) with particular emphasis on the semiotic resources drawn on in the navigation of space, history of place and the naming of space.

## 4.2 Construction of space

### 4.2.1 Inventions of street names

Street names have become typical features in urban environments. According to Azaryahu (2009:53), at a practical level, street names assist users with spatial orientation and enable administrative control over a city. Street names are meant to designate and differentiate between locations as the rule is that no two streets should bear the same name (Azaryahu, 2009). Tom and Denis (2004) add that in cities, street names are typically displayed in a systematic, conventional fashion on street plates. However, this practice, i.e. naming of paths, is not found in all environments, e.g. the countryside and on a campus (Tom & Denis, 2004). Azaryahu (2011:30) supports this view and asserts that “as a form of toponymic inscription, street names are something of a modern, Western innovation...street names have become conventional, though not necessarily an obligatory norm”. Street names play a critical role in terms of regulation and navigation purposes in the cities; but it is not only cities that have a need for administrative control and navigation. However, the existence of street names is not a normality. Rossouw and Kgope (2007) state that more than half (4.5 million) of South African households do not have a formal physical street address, especially in rural areas and informal settlements. Instead, most individuals in rural areas have P.O. Box addresses for mail delivery purposes (Rossouw & Kgope, 2007).

This lack of formal physical street addresses is evident in Ulco, which only has one official street name that is one that is publicly displayed, namely Work Street. However, in interviews with Ulco residents, it became evident that, although Ulco has one named street, residents have invented additional street names.

In his discussion of graffiti as transgressive, urban semiotics that prompts LL researchers to reconceptualise the notion of ‘landscape’, Pennycook (2010:307) argues that graffiti as a

transgressive semiotic is about “territory and about different ways of claiming space. Graffiti is transformative in the sense that it change the public spaces but that also reinterprets it”. The transformation and reinterpretation of public space is observed in the invention of street names.



In response to a question regarding his familiarity of Ulco’s different sections, a participant made mention of ‘Hospital Street’ and ‘Main Road’. After enquiring about the exact location of this street as this was new to the researcher, especially since Ulco does not have a hospital, the participant elaborated that he was referring to it as Hospital Street as it was close to the section in Ulco where the clinic used to be and where the local doctor’s surgery is currently located. The participant’s decision to invent a Hospital Street instead of Clinic Street is an example of upscaling (Stroud & Mpedukana, 2009).

Figure 4. 1: “Hospital Street”

A closer observation at figure 4.1 potentially ‘justifies’ the upscaling. In figure 4.1, there are two semiotic resources that illustrate the existence of a clinic: 1) the linguistic sign, i.e. the word ‘clinic’, and 2) the image, i.e. a red cross in a white circle. In their study of consumption/production of LL in rural Zambia, Banda and Jimaima (2015: 667) observed how “linguistic and scripted signage are ignored or translated in local expressions and reinterpreted with other kinds of semiotic material for sign- and place-making”. Although the linguistic sign’s meaning is straightforward, the meaning of the image is open to interpretation as often the same combination (cross in a circle) is used to indicate the existence/location of a hospital. Consequently, the participant ignores the written sign and uses the image to transform the space orally through upscaling.

Pennycook (2009: 109 -110) states that “landscapes are not mere backdrops on which texts and images are drawn but are spaces that are imagined and invented”. Apart from using upscaling as a way to invent street names, participants also drew on two additional invention strategies: sense of geography, and the name of prominent residents. As mentioned before, the same participant spoke of the existence of Ulco’s “Main Road” and essentially invents

this street name, drawing on his sense of geography a semiotic resource for place-making. Ulco doesn't have a main road – the road the participant refers to is the longest road in Ulco. It stretches from the entrance of Ulco straight down to Ulco-West and the road provides access to all the residential areas and the cement factory depending on where one turns. Additionally, this road is the only way to gain access to Ulco via motor transport, which means that it is essential to the economic activities of this area. It can be safely assumed that, given the participant's classification of that road as Ulco's Main Road, he is familiar with the purpose of a main road, i.e. a road that is commonly used and that goes through the main part of a city, town, etc.

Apart from the placement of signs, Pennycook (2009, 2010) additionally highlights the importance of movement in the construction of space. As stated by Pennycook (2010: 145), “moving through the landscape does not so much bring meanings to life as it makes meaning possible: It is a spatial realisation of place”. Following his move to Ulco, the only participant who ever got lost in Ulco (while looking for a tuckshop) mentioned he was referred to “Kedie se straat” (Kedie's street). ‘Kedibone’ (or Kedie as she is referred to by Ulco residents) is a well-known member of the Ulco community as she runs a tuckshop from her garage. However, Kedi's tuckshop does not have a business sign that indicates its location as Afrisam's policy prohibits the running of small businesses from homes (Ulco is private property). Additionally, Kedi and her family most probably have stayed in that street the longest compared to other residents who have come and gone. Consequently, Kedie's popularity due to her ownership of a local tuckshop and ‘extended’ residence in Ulco, has earned her the privilege of having a street ‘named after her’. The lost newcomer moved through Ulco's space without any prior meaning associated to Kedie. However, movement enabled meaning-making, as he spatially realised the location of the tuckshop and consequently Kedie's house.

The last street names, namely Old Plant Road and Vlenter Street, are named after demolished buildings, therefore not only does invention occur but also the reimagination of spaces back into life. The inventions came from a participant who, before his recent passing was an Ulco resident for 65 years, and consequently, was privy to Ulco's various spatial transformations. Banda and Jimaima (2015:660) argue that “the narrative representation of space is subjective

in nature. Each of the semiotic resources is evoked based on the individual's ideology, experiences and oftentimes, preferred reference points". The 65-year-old participant's unique reference points served as testimony of the subjective nature of narrative representation. Although there is no physically proof, i.e. landmarks to support his reference points, the participant nonetheless narrates his space as he recalls it. Below follows a brief explanation of the motivation for the street names.

The Mine moved its entire operations from what is now known as "Die Ou Plant/Myn" to where it is currently located, which is close to Work Street. Die Ou Plant/Myn remained deserted until a few years ago when the official demolition started. Those tall, deserted kilns used to be the most noticeable feature around that area and since it was the old mine, the participant named the road in front of it Old Plant Street.

The word "Vlenter" can loosely be translated to 'rubble' in English. The participant refers to the street as Vlenter as that is the street in which non-employees were removed and the houses were demolished. Evidently, following the demolition of the houses, there was leftover rubble after which the street was then named.

This invention of street names and reimagination of space is in line with Banda and Jimaima's (2015:659) testimony that respondents in rural Zambia reported that "trees, rivers, mounds, anthills, buildings and prominent personalities (including those who had long passed on) within these ruralscapes are used as semiotic resources to index the different meanings being referred to".

Unlike Ulco, Delportshoop has street names although their written display is inconsistent. Based on interviews with participants, Delportshoop has street names such as Buthelezi Street, Lekwene Crescent, Tsekweng Street, Heidelaan, Angeliersweg, Long Street, Bepawersingel, Jakandrastraat and Freesia Laan. This inconsistent written display is evident in the following extracts:

### Extract 1

*“Die straat name sien ek gewoonlik in die lokasie. In die lokasie is dit maklik want daar sien ‘n mense Moruri street en wat maar hier (Proteahof) is dit nie maklik wat jy dit sal sien nie. Sien jy die lang pale staan Mimosalaan of Disalaan of wat. Dit is by die huise – die straatname. Maar vir die lokasie is dit meer maliker – jy het mos al gesien daar staan by ‘n paal Moruri street, Lekwene Street en wat wat. Sien jy? So.”*

“One normally sees the names in the Location. In the Location, it is easy because it is written Moruri street and so forth. But in Proteahof, poles with street names such as Mimosalaan or Disalaan are not easily found. The street names are written on the houses...”

### Extract 2

*“Dit het straat name maar kyk nou – Delports is ‘n plaas so daar is nie...hoe sal ek sê? Daar is nie straat name nie. Die straat name gaan jy miskien by paar van die huise kry of op posbuste.”*

“It (Delportshoop) has street names but look – Delports is a farm so there is not...how shall I put it? There is no street names. Here and there, you will perhaps find street names written on the mailboxes of some houses.”

To some extent, Delportshoop has written street names indicated on either poles, the front, exterior walls of homes or on mailboxes. However, regardless of this, no participant from Delportshoop mentioned street names in their numerous route directions. Route directions are discussed in greater detail later on, but for the purpose of this section, below follows an example of route directions provided by a Delportshoop resident:

### Extract 3

*“Okay, dit is mos nou uit en dan draai ek regs, links, weer regs, links, straight af.”*

*“Okay, I leave here and then turn right, left, right again, left and then straight down.”*

As is observable in Extract 3, no mention is made of street names while describing movement. Since it can be safely concluded that participants know the street names, the absence of written street names in route directions serves as another example of participants’ consciously choosing not to use written signage. As observed by Banda and Jimaima (2015: 653), in “some cases the written language, albeit in local languages, was ignored in giving



directions, with people opting to give their own oral linguascaping of the environment based on socio-cultural and historical knowledge and particular landscapes in the environment”. In this case, it is arguable that the decision to ignore written signage can result from the residents’ confusion and frustration with inconsistent written signage. This confusion is illustrated in Extract 2 where the participant initially states that Delportshoop has no street names which is expected because it is a village, but continues to contradict herself by stating there are street names – they are found on the mailboxes of homes.

Tom and Denis (2004:1223) explain that, as street names tend to be processed and retrieved as proper names, “street names do not provide any implicit description of the designated locations”. A visualisation strategy is therefore unlikely to be implemented and as a result, processing and retrieval are impaired”. Cognitive maps are an essential part of human navigation and without the ability to ‘store’ a mental representation of space, navigation is hindered. Arbitrary street names such as Lekwene Crescent, Buthelezi Street and Heidelaan do not provide the user with any visualisation material for their cognitive maps – visualisations of Lekwene, Buthelezi and Heide would definitely differ greatly. In comparison, Hospital Street and Main Road, when part of route directions, enable the formation of visual images of place, i.e. look for a hospital and a busy road that runs throughout the entire town. The invention of the additional street names in Ulco were based on actual, pragmatic events (e.g. busiest and longest road in Ulco) and the existence of prominent individuals and landmarks (tuckshop owner, old mine, rubble). Thus, these street names are more relatable and relevant than Lekwene Crescent and Gousblom Street which, when compared, come across as arbitrary.

#### **4.2.2 Imagination of signage**

Going on Pennycook’s (2009) assertion that landscapes are spaces that are imagined and invented, below follows an example of how a participant imagines the existence of signage. The researcher’s instruction to participants to give directions from their homes to the local shop to an outsider elicited interesting data, but none as prolific as one participant who ‘imagined’ the existence of signage. The following snippet is from her interview (translated into English):

#### Extract 4

*I: Imagine I was new in Delportshoop and I was never in this place, how would you direct me from your home to the Blue Shop?*

*P: You will most probably assume where it is or use the signage that shows you where it is.*

*I: Where? Is there signs?*

*P: Are there no signs? On your way to the Blue Shop?*

*I: No, there are not.*

*P: You will most likely get lost then...there are no signs. Or you will assume. Or you will ask people to direct you accordingly.*

Three interesting observations can be made from this incident. Firstly, for this participant and, most likely, many other Delportshoop and Ulco residents, navigation through space has become second nature. Consequently, spatial navigation occurs unconsciously as it has become a habit. For this participant, however, these signs she thought existed physically might actually be mental representations – mentally she might have created her own signs which she draws from when navigating. Therefore, when prompted for directions, the existences of these mental signs transcended and were imagined to have a physical, tangible existence. Secondly, the contestation about the existence of these signs and ultimately denial from the research assistant (who happens to also be a Delportshoop resident), alerts us to the possibility of how different people can have different mental representations of an identical space. Thirdly, it becomes evident how pivotal insiders' knowledge and oral linguascaping is when navigating places such as Ulco and Delportshoop. For an outsider, the non-existence of written signage could be seen as disastrous. However, because residents of Ulco and Delportshoop are actively involved in the construction and the invention of their spaces, spatial navigation (with or without written inscriptions) is not hampered.

#### 4.2.3 Oral linguascaping

Banda and Jimaima (2015:656) argue that “imagination and revisualization of ‘unsigned’ semiotic material or faded signage are critical components of oral landscaping” as “the absence of definitive inscriptions provides a ‘blank’ space...opening up the possibility of multiple meanings to be created around it by interlocutors through oral language mediation”.

In this instance, the history of Ulco and Delportshoop is equated to ‘faded/fading’ signage. The almost non-existent definite history of these places provides residents with a blank space – a blank space to construct and narrate their individual meanings associated with Ulco and Delportshoop. Below follows an exploration of the various constructions of Ulco and Delportshoop.

Ulco’s name is the abbreviation of *Union Lime Company*. According to Nicholson (2011), Union Lime started the mining of secondary limestone reserves in 1936 and in 1985, Union Lime Company was purchased by Anglo Alpha. Nicholson (2011) further states that in 1995, Anglo Alpha changed to Alpha (Pty) Ltd, which subsequently changed its name to Holcim (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd in February 2004, and finally to Afrisam (South Africa) Pty Ltd in June 2007. According to Afrisam’s website, “‘Afri’ refers to our proud African heritage and the sub-Saharan African countries in which we operate. ‘Sam’ comes from the word samente or disamente which means cement in six of South Africa’s official languages. In essence we are all about African Cement”.

It is arguable that the name ‘Ulco’ was initially meant as a demarcation of ownership, but later on the abbreviation was repurposed to also serve as a place name. The repurposing of Ulco as a place name therefore explains the retention of the name irrespective of changes in ownership - from American (Anglo Alpha) to Holcim (Switzerland) to Africa (Afrisam).

To date, Ulco has arguably existed for 81 years –coupled with changes not only in ownership but in community members. Consequently, without existing knowledge of Ulco’s history, Ulco becomes a blank space residents can creatively construct with their own experiences and knowledge. As is evident in the interview extracts below, participants provide multiple meanings associated with Ulco’s etymology and history:

Extract 5

*“..die plek word Ulco geroep want hier word kalk geverkoop.” (This place is called Ulco because lime is sold here.)*

Extract 6

*“...because it is a mine where cement is produced...”*

Extract 7

*“...en Ulco word genoem Union Lime Company omdat dit gechange het van ‘n plaas na ‘n myndorp toe.”* (It is called Union Lime Company because it changed from a farm to a mining city.)

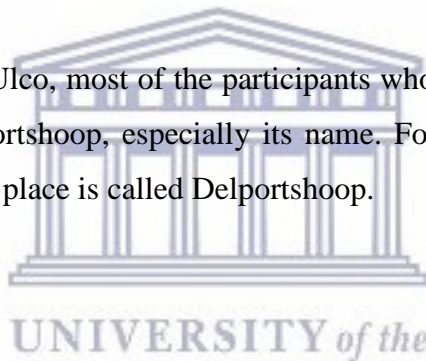
Extract 8

*“It is called Ulco because it is the Union Lime Company because lime is produced here. This is actually a lime place but it has a company that produces cement.”*

Extract 9

*“They call it Ulco because of the mine when the mine bought the place from Riekiet. They the name to U L C O and then it became Ulco. The company gave Rickett one bag of cement. My dad used to work for Rickett...”*

Similar to the participants in Ulco, most of the participants who reside in Delportshoop can't testify to the history of Delportshoop, especially its name. Four participants provided their account of why they know the place is called Delportshoop.



Extract 10

*“Ek weet nie regtig nie maar ek neem aan dit gaan oor delwers en die eerste ou wat hier kom gebly het was dalk ‘n Delport.”* (I don't really know but I assume it is about diggers and the first guy who first stayed here was perhaps a Delport.)

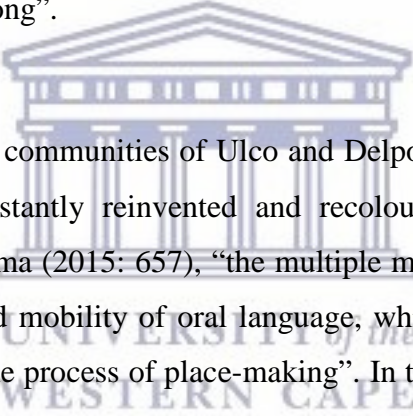
Extract 11

*“As ek reg onthou was dit die delwers wat voorheen of wat oorspronklik hier gedelf het wat die plek na vernoem is as ek reg is.”* (If I remember correctly, the place is named after the initial diggers that dug for diamonds here.)

Extract 12

*“Delportshoop kom van ‘n Meneer Delport wat sy delwers hoop beskikbaar gestel het sodat mense daar op kan kerk hou voordat die eerste kerk gebou is in Delportshoop.”* (The name comes from a Mr Delport who gave his digging land as a location for people to go to church before the first church was built in Delportshoop.)

Pennycook (2009: 310) advises that it would be useful to see landscapes in terms of “landscaping” where this implies not only the active management of the material environment, but also the discursive creation of the landscape. The invention of nicknames for Delportshoop is an example of how Delportshoop residents are actively involved in the discursive creation of their landscape. Participants were asked how they referred to Delportshoop and, although most of them used the standardised name, a few residents invented alternative names for Delportshoop. These names include: “Shate by Night”, “Dellies”, “Delports”, and “Parraspan”. One participant alluded to the fact that he doesn’t know the origin of the name Delportshoop, but he remembers his mother referring to Delportshoop as “Marotobololong”. The two alternative names, “Dellies” and “Delports” are apparently shortened versions of Delportshoop. “Shate by Night” is an extension of the youth’s nickname for Delportshoop which is Shate – the addition of ‘by night’ pays tribute to Delportshoop’s active nightlife. Unfortunately, no account was given for the etymology of “Parraspan” and “Marotobololong”.



Due to the constant flux in the communities of Ulco and Delportshoop, these places equated to blank spaces that are constantly reinvented and recoloured by residents’ narratives. According to Banda and Jimaima (2015: 657), “the multiple meanings attached to a sign are illustrative of the pliability and mobility of oral language, which is used to give shape and meaning to the figure during the process of place-making”. In that regard, signs are reused in the process of re-signation for new meanings and purposes as demanded by communicative contexts in time.

### **4.3 Semiotic remediation as repurposing**

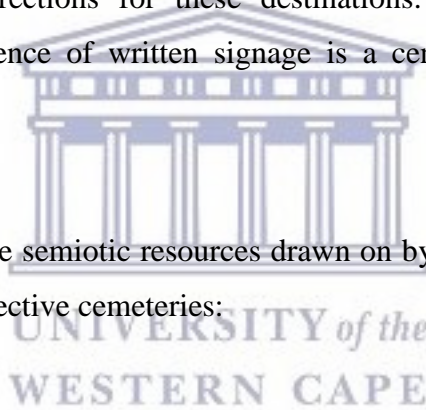
Banda and Jimaima (2015) suggest the inclusion of semiotic remediation as repurposing as an analytic tool for linguistic/semiotic landscape studies. Their suggestion is coupled with the intention to extend the notion of repurposing (Bolter & Grusin, 2000) “to beyond the relationships between old and new media cultures, to the recycling and reusing of objects, memory and cultural materialities for sign- and place-making generally” (Banda & Jimaima, 2015: 645-646). Below follows an analysis of how Ulco and Delportshoop residents draw on repurposing for spatial navigation.

### 4.3.1 The “hiking spot” and “cemetery”

In their study of Zambia’s rural landscape, Banda and Jimaima (2015:660) concluded that “people in rural areas transcend the constraints imposed by material conditions to stretch the purposes and the meanings of the semiotic material in place beyond what they are known or were originally designed for”. This observation is also applicable to the rural landscape of the Northern Cape.

As alluded to earlier, Ulco and Delportshoop have minimal written signage in their linguistic/semiotic landscape – in fact, there are examples of infrastructure that is central to the socio-cultural existence of residents that have no written signage at all. Two such examples are: 1) hiking spots, and 2) cemeteries. Irrespective of the non-existence of written signage to indicate the location of these spaces, residents know the exact locations and can effortlessly provide route directions for these destinations. The understanding of how navigation occurs in the absence of written signage is a central interest of this research project.

Below follows examples of the semiotic resources drawn on by both Ulco and Delportshoop residents in locating their respective cemeteries:



Extract 13

*“Daai pad van die treinspoor.” (The road of the train rail.)*

Extract 14

*“...jy kry die spoor aan die linkerkant. Die begrafplaas is aan die regtekant.” (The train rail is found on your left and the cemetery on your right.)*

Extract 15

*“There is no sign but I know that it is there based on the amount of years I have been in this place.”*

Extract 16

*“Ek het al een dag ‘n funeral daar geattend toe sien ek word daai paai gevat.” (I attended a funeral once and saw people using that road.)*

According to Delportshoop participants, the following semiotic material serves as reference points for locating their cemeteries:

Extract 17

*“Growing up, I knew that Delportshoop had three - four camps (cemeteries).”*

Extract 18

*“Ja, daar is ‘n boom.”* (Yes, there is a tree.)

Extract 19

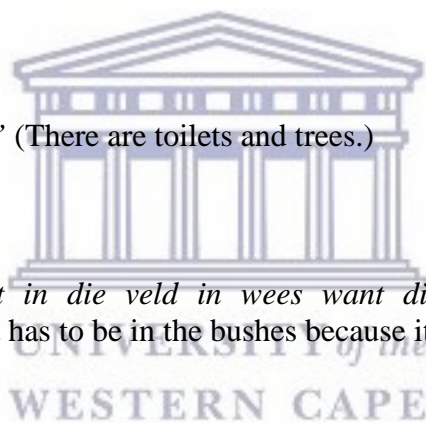
*“As ek af gaan en straight loop en af gaan met die bult dan sien ek sommer daar is die begrafplaas.”* (If I walk straight and go down the hill, then I see the cemetery.)

Extract 20

*“Daar is toilette en bome.”* (There are toilets and trees.)

Extract 21

*“Ons weet mos dit moet in die veld in wees want dit is grave so dit is die begrafplaas.”* (We know it has to be in the bushes because it is graves.)



According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:648), “narration of place in rural areas may require additional or intricate oral input in repurposing natural objects such as trees, hills and bush paths as semiotic materials for sign and place-making”. The extracts provided above about the reference points used by participants to locate cemeteries in Ulco and Delportshoop is in line with Banda and Jimaima’s (2015) argument that narrations of the rural landscape involves the repurposing of natural objects as reference points in place-making. Additionally, excluding natural objects mentioned by participants such as trees, bushes and a hill, it is observable that history and lived experiences also form part of the narration of place in rural areas.

A hiking spot is where people can stand and hitch-hike private automobiles for lifts and often paying for these lifts. Below are two pictures of Delportshoop’s hiking spots in figure 4.2 and

figure 4.3. The picture in figure 4.2 can be said to be Delportshoop’s former taxi rank. In the past, residents would wait under the tree in the shade for taxis to either Barkley West or Kimberley. This practice has diminished now as taxis drive through the respective sections recruiting passengers due to the long distance from sections such as Proteahof and Ikele to the ‘big tree’. Irrespective of the new practice, this ‘big tree’ is still symbolic as a sign in the community and is currently used as a bus stop for Afrisam employees who stay in Delportshoop. The ‘big tree’ is exemplifies how the meaning(s) associated with semiotic resources can constantly change and affirms to Banda and Jimaima’s (2015: 659) assertion that “the semiotic environment is constantly in flux and which necessitates changes to the constructions of space”.



Figure 4. 2: The taxi rank



Figure 4. 3: The tree stump at the hiking spot

As is evident above, there is no written signage that demarcates the location of these hiking spots, but as participants comment below, alternative semiotic materialities have been repurposed to serve as reference points for the hiking spots:

Extract 22

*“Ek weet net want as jy daar staan en die kar staan, dan klim jy in.”* (I know because if you stand there and a car stand, you get inside of it.)

Extract 23



*“Daar is ‘n stomp en ‘n boom waar die mense staan en hike.”* (There is a tree stump and a tree where people stand and hike.)

Extract 24

*“Ek het al gewoonlik daar verby gery dan sien ek taxi’s staan by daai groot boom.”* (I used to drive past there and see how taxis stand at that big tree.)

Extract 25

*“Ek myself het ook al daar gestaan en hike.”* (I have hitch-hiked there before.)

Extract 26

*“Daar voor Juffrou Liezel. Daar voor die stadium.”* (There in front of Teacher Liezel. There in front of the stadium.)

No research participants (in both places) reported not knowing where the hiking spots and cemeteries were. Participants conceded to the absence of linguistic signage that demarcates these places, but simultaneously confidently narrated of equally important semiotic resources that they draw on in place-making. Ulco and Delportshoop’s residents continued navigation of space regardless of the absence of linguistic signage, which supports Banda and Jimaima’s (2015:659) argument that “the lack of written language (or in this case, the absence of written signage) does not impair the navigation of space: if anything it makes the act of place-making a very creative endeavour”. Extract 22 is an example of the localisation of signage. The localisation of signage is consistent with Pennycook’s (2009:308) claim that “our linguistic landscapes are the products of human activity not merely in terms of the signs we put up but also in terms of the meanings, morals and myths we invest in them”. Teacher Liezel’s house has been included in the range of semiotic resources that serve as reference points to locate the hiking spot. Her house is a localised sign as outsiders wouldn’t know where Liezel stays and that she is a teacher at the local high school.

The responses from Ulco and Delportshoop residents regarding the location of these linguistic signless locations indicate that the coming to know of the location of the cemeteries and hiking spots are combinations of various semiotic resources: Insiders’ spatial knowledge, lived experiences, memory, common sense (graves are normally in secluded areas, visibility of graves), natural signs (hill, trees, people) and man-made objects (tombstones, toilets, fence, train rails). The use of multiple semiotic resources in the navigation of space serves as

an example of multisemioticity (Pennycook, 2010). Banda and Jimaima (2015:666) argue that “the focus on multisemioticity entails an understanding that features such as tree linings, over-hanging branches, different kinds of paths, different kinds of soil and related flora and fauna – be seen as potential semiotic affordances and hence reference points in the semiotic landscaping”.

#### 4.3.2 One Mile: Destination (hiking spot) or distance indicator?

Banda and Jimaima (2015:667) observed that in rural Zambia, “linguistic and scripted signage are ignored or translated in local expressions and reinterpreted with other kinds of semiotic material for sign- and place-making”. ‘One Mile’ serves as a unique example of how oral linguascaping supersedes written signage and more particularly, the power of oral linguascaping to invent space and, consequently, invent additional semantic meaning.



Figure 4. 4: Entrance of Ulco



Figure 4. 5: Where is ‘One Mile’?

Figures 4.4 and 4.5 are pictures of the two written signs that indicate the entrance to Ulco. Ulco’s research participants, however, refer to the entrance as “One Mile”. As is evident in figures 4.4 and 4.5, “One Mile” is not written on these signs or any other publicly displayed signs.

When the researcher enquired about the exact location of ‘One Mile’ and its purpose, participants’ mentioned the following:

Extract 27

*“One Mile is called One Mile because we, as people stand there and ask for a hike. It is also the road that the trucks use when entering Ulco when they go to the mine to pick up cement.”*

Extract 28

*“By One Mile is die T-junction as jy in gaan. Dit word ook gehike daarso.”* (One Mile is at the T-junction when you enter. People also hike there).

Extract 29

*“One Mile is when I walk straight and pass the shop and then I get One Mile.”*

Extract 30

*“...dit is mos ‘n T-junction so daai is ‘n Main Road en jy kan net langs aan die pad staan van die karre gaan verby.”* (It is a T-junction so that is a Main Road and you stand next to the road because cars pass there.)

From the extracts above, it becomes evident that Ulco residents have invented “One Mile” as a place – although it doesn’t exist physically, its existence is re-produced orally. In addition to inventing ‘One Mile’, ‘One Mile’ was repurposed as a hiking spot. It is also observable how Ulco residents draw on multisemioticity in place-making – these multiple semiotics, as mentioned by participants, include a T-junction, cars, people, trucks and a shop. Essentially, although ‘One Mile’ was imagined into life as a physical space, its existence is maintained through real, tangible reference points.



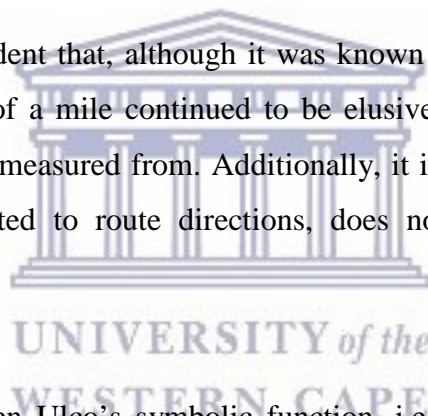
*Figure 4. 6: A hitch-hiker at 'One Mile'*

Figure 4.6 shows an individual actually hitch-hiking at the place Ulco participants refer to as “One Mile”. The spot where the individual is standing is where residents normally stand and hitchhike cars that pass by on the R31. In recalling how he learned of the name, ‘One Mile’, the research participant that resided in Ulco for over 64 years claims that:

Extract 31

“We got here and it was called One Mile. The elders referred to it as One Mile. We asked why it was one Mile and they said that it was the kilometres from here (home) to there (entrance of Ulco).”

Based on extract 31, it is evident that, although it was known that One Mile was related to distance, the exact meaning of a mile continued to be elusive to previous generations and where exactly the ‘mile’ was measured from. Additionally, it is observable how the concept of distance, particularly related to route directions, does not appear important to Ulco residents.



A contradiction exists between Ulco’s symbolic function, i.e. being a hiking spot and its informational function, i.e. measurement of distance. The Oxford Dictionary defines a mile as “a unit of distance on land in English-speaking countries (approximately 1.609 kilometres)”. As mentioned before, the mine in Ulco was once under American ownership – a country that measures distance in miles instead of kilometres, which is used in South Africa. So One Mile might have been the Americans’ way to indicate the distance from the entrance of Ulco to the mine, most likely due to Ulco’s absent written signage. So the contradiction exists mainly due to linguistic and cultural differences – One Mile was an indication of distance to the American company owners while to the community, it became a destination and consequently a hiking spot. One Mile serves as an example of how places that were owned by international companies prior to being owned by local companies might be interesting case studies of multiculturalism, and how traces of the respective cultures blend or contradict each other.



Apart from Ulco residents ignoring written signage and inventing “One Mile”, One Mile’s multi-layered spatial identity can additionally be attributed to the sign pictured in figure 4.7. Figure 4.7 depicts the first sign that is visible after one turns into Ulco. In accordance with South African road signs and how to interpret them, this sign suggests that Ulco is 3 kilometres from the location of that sign.

Figure 4. 7: 3 kilometres or one mile?

This is quite intriguing as the physical space on which that sign is placed still forms part of what is considered ‘One Mile’ which is approximately 1.69 kilometres. The physical placement of the sign in figure 4.7 at ‘One Mile’ can therefore be considered transgressive semiotics (Scollon & Scollon, 2003), as the informational content on the sign transgresses the local oral landscaping of Ulco’s community. The placement of the sign in figure 4.7 at ‘One Mile’ is a very special case of how the process of the placement of official road signs is quite linear, without consideration of context or socio-historical knowledge.

When asked to comment on One’s Mile naming history, participants had the following to say:

Extract 32

*“I am not actually sure why it is called **One Mile** but I think it might be an indication of distance which is **3 kilometres from the residential place to One Mile**. One Mile is where one exists Ulco from.”*

Extract 33

*“Actually **One’s Mile** it is at the **Work Street** where you enter the Mine but when we say **One Mile**, we take it that we are talking about the **hiking spot** which basically it’s like not at the intersection of the Mine. It is actually the hiking spot.”*

Extract 32 and 33 illustrate once again the importance of movement in place-making, as argued by Pennycook (2009, 2010). The distance attached to One Mile is movement dependant – depending on where one is in Ulco, i.e. at the cement mine or in the residential area, One Mile has different meanings. However, although the distance attached to One Mile is contextually to one's movement through Ulco's space, the symbolic meaning attached to One Mile remains constant: it is a hiking spot.

In writing about name changes, Azaryahu (2011: 30) states that, instead of perfecting toponymic coherence, ideologues and bureaucrats “should consider the possibility of ostensible incoherence, polysemy and heterogeneity, while acknowledging and seeking to explain the contradictions and inconsistencies that reflect the history”. Inevitably, One Mile will hold different meanings and these different meanings can be attributed to various reasons, including historical spatial knowledge, branding signage, oral history and so forth. It is these very contradictions and inconsistencies that speak to the history of One Mile that this study attempted to unpack as they reflect the popularity in the construction of place. Additionally, Azaryahu (2011) brings to attention the possibility that “certain historical commemorations may be subject to different interpretations, which makes them compatible with different, possibly conflicting narratives of history”. Although not a historical commemoration site, the case of One Mile – its inception meaning and current meaning – are in stark contrast with each other (distance versus destination), and serves as an example of how a name can produce conflicting narratives based on who the narrator is.

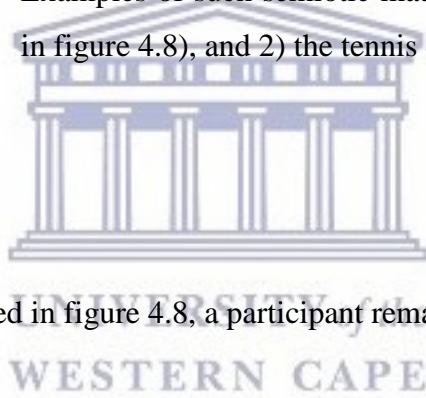
### 4.3.3 Ulco-West

Semiotic resources (natural and man-made) normally have specific affordances associated with them and these affordances are based on the needs and preferences of the community that uses these resources (Kress, 2010). Related to this, Banda and Jimaima (2015:665-666) propose the notion of repurposing “to explain how, even in the context of limited or no scripted material, people use their human creativity to rework the semiotic material at hand for different meanings and purposes”.



Figure 4. 8: *Sethlare sa bua*

Ulco-West, a section of Ulco, has three sub-sections namely: Kgorokwe, Location and LahlumlENZE. However, there is no official scripted signage that demarcates the location of the different sections within Ulco-West. Instead, the written signage that exists scripts Ulco-West as a homogenous section with no sub-sections. It is important to know the different sections of Ulco-West as essential facilities are spread across the different sections. For example, the clinic is located in the Location, the pre-school in Kgorokwe and the primary school next to LahlumlENZE. This lack of scripted signage resulted in Ulco-West residents creatively drawing on semiotic material in their immediate ecology to serve as reference points that differentiate Ulco-West sections. Examples of such semiotic material are: 1) the tree (pictured in figure 4.8), and 2) the tennis court (pictured in figure 4.9).



With regards to the tree pictured in figure 4.8, a participant remarks that:

Extract 34

*“The tennis court is next to a tree we call Sethlare sa bua which is one of the signs we use in Ulco to give directions.”*

*Sethlare sa bua*, which loosely translated to ‘the tree speaks’, is a tree located at the start of a footpath that separates Kgorokwe from Location. The tree used to be big and provide shade, but as evident in the picture, the tree was cut as its branches extended into the road and became an obstruction.

More than an important sign that informs navigation, the tree used to be a chill spot where young men who resided in Ulco would spend their leisure time. A participant remarks that:

Extract 35

*“At this tree we used to sit there and discuss everything that was happening in Ulco.”*

Ulco lacks adequate meeting places for young people to socialise so the youth repurposes different spaces and repurposes it to serve this purpose. The young men took advantage of the tree’s natural affordance, i.e. to provide shade, and repurposed the tree from a natural phenomenon to a gossip and chill spot – what better place to sit under the shade, see people pass and gossip about the latest and greatest.



*Figure 4. 9: Tennis Court or Soccer Field?*

Another resource that was repurposed by the youth of Ulco was the tennis court, pictured in figure 4.9. Initially, the tennis court was built for exactly that purpose – to play tennis on. However, as years went on, the tennis court was repurposed as a soccer field. The following responses from participants illustrate the repurposing of the tennis court into a soccer field and how playing soccer at the tennis court formed a part of normal childhood activities in Ulco:

Extract 36

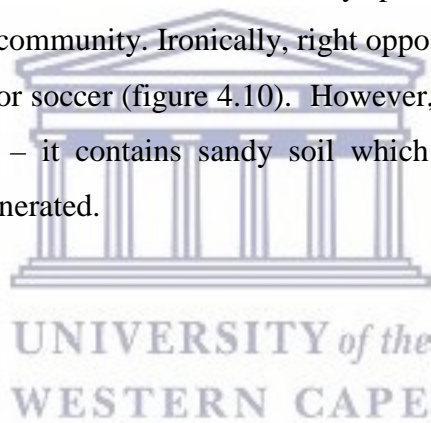


*“Yes, there are signs like Sethlare sa bua on the West, there is Kgorokwe and Tsineng. We also have a tennis court which wasn’t used for playing tennis but it was actually a football pitch where kids who grew up in Ulco would play.”*

Extract 37

*“We played soccer there at the tennis court. If you wanted to play soccer in Ulco<sup>3</sup>, you had to go to the tennis court first.”*

A couple of reasons could have motivated this repurposing: 1) tennis, as a sport, was not popular among the black youth, as they were never taught how to play it and therefore considered it a white people sport code; 2) tennis equipment is relatively expensive and not every parent would be able to afford it; and 3) tennis is not a team sport – a maximum of four people can play in one game. This onlooker, exclusionary sports code would go against what was such an inclusive (black) community. Ironically, right opposite the tennis court – seconds away is a soccer field meant for soccer (figure 4.10). However, the soccer field doesn’t have grass fit for a soccer match – it contains sandy soil which might make playing soccer unpleasant with all the dust generated.



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<sup>3</sup> Ulco has a local soccer club named Ulco Pirates and the team can be joined by any young male soccer player deemed to be talented enough. The participant indirectly implies that the tennis court was the hunting ground for talent that could play for Ulco Pirates.



*Figure 4. 10: The soccer field or Ulco-West Bridge?*

The repurposing of the tennis court and abstinence from using the actual soccer field can be attributed to spatial navigation logistics. The soccer field is a significant gateway in the navigation of Ulco – it separates Kgorokwe from Location but simultaneously is used as frequently as a ‘road’ by Kgorokwe residents to leave their section. Without that soccer field, residents would be forced to take longer, unsafe footpaths with overgrown grass. Figures 4.10 and 4.11 offer an illustration of the visible footpaths on the soccer field as an indication of how much pedestrian traffic the soccer field experiences.



*Figure 4. 11: Visible footpaths on soccer field*

The legendary tennis court

Only people from #Ulco would know what happens there!



Like Comment Share

You, Clifford Fisher Jr Majahe, Millandre Delcia Clark and 15 others

- Nametsego Mojagotihe-Mocumi** 😊  
Like · Reply · 1 · May 2 at 2:16pm
- Sipho Psyfo Raadt** Bors brandt papa lol  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:23pm
- Eugene L. Modirapula** lmao the whole day!!!!  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:24pm
- Olifant Segovia Segopotso** Indeed, I think, I was a top goal socceraaH!! hahahaha!!!  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:24pm
- Olifant Segovia Segopotso** \*Good memories...\*\*\*  
Like · Reply · 1 · May 2 at 2:25pm
- Eugene L. Modirapula** crazy memories  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:27pm
- Olifant Segovia Segopotso** Clifford Fisher Jr Majahe  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:27pm
- Olifant Segovia Segopotso** Glenton Swart  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:28pm
- Eugene L. Modirapula** Donavin Don Moltse and KG  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:28pm
- Olifant Segovia Segopotso** Thy can tell I was a top goal socceraah!! Yah Donavin Don Moltse did soccer a lot,  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:28pm
- Eugene L. Modirapula** Those were the top scores  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:29pm
- Olifant Segovia Segopotso** KG @Drogba He played it well so is Marquez Moltse  
Like · Reply · May 2 at 2:29pm
- Eugene L. Modirapula** Hai that tennis court brought out star players

The active play of soccer on that field would result in the frustration of both pedestrians and players: 1) the game would need to be stopped every time a pedestrian crosses to avoid unintended accidents, and 2) pedestrians would potentially be annoyed at the clouds of dust they would have to walk through and walk quickly at that as the game must continue. Lastly, as the soccer field is the mid-point between Kgorokwe and Location, residents normally stand on the soccer field and have lengthy conversations before separating. All of these factors illustrate the impracticality of using the soccer field as an actual soccer field and therefore the tennis court was repurposed, as it cancels out all of the above-mentioned challenges.

Figure 4.12 is a screenshot that I captured from the Facebook profile of a former Ulco resident – a young man who was born and bred in Ulco. The status update is a picture of the tennis court with a caption that reads: “*The legendary tennis court. Only people from #Ulco would know what happens there!*” Most of the individuals who liked the status update were or still are residents of Ulco, and the comments are a trip down memory lane where star soccer players are mentioned and two commenters refer to recollection of tennis court moments as “good memories” and “crazy memories”.

Figure 4. 12: Throwback on Facebook about tennis court

Pennycook (2009:308) suggests that “the landscape is not blank canvas but rather a constructed space – this construction involves transgressive semiotics”. The repurposing of the tennis court into a soccer field can be considered as transgressive, but this ‘transgression’ is what makes space dynamic and constructed. Additionally, the repurposing of the tennis court serves an example of the localisation of signs, as suggested by Pennycook (2009). The *tree that speaks* and the tennis court illustrate how individuals are active agents who creatively reimagine semiotic resources and respective affordances and reinvent such material to include affordances that serve their contextual needs.

Additionally, this status update and the commenters’ recollection again exemplify how memories are linked to spaces (Banda and Jimaima, 2015), and how these memories live on through oral history, and maybe now even through digital history.

#### 4.4 Route Directions

Giving route directions is a typical activity that forms part of human navigation. Route directions are produced when one person has to provide another with information to help him or her to navigate in an unfamiliar environment (Denis, Pazzaglia, Cornoldi and Bertolo, 1999). According to Tom and Denis (2004:1214), route directions are typically described as belonging to the class of procedural discourse and the procedural parts consist of two main aspects: prescribing the action that a user should perform to reach a target point in the environment (‘Turn right’), and the other part describes the environment in which the actions have to be executed (‘There is post-office at the end of the road’). Participants were instructed to either indicate how they would navigate from their homes to the local shop in either Delportshoop (Blou Winkel) or Ulco (OK Value/Die Winkel), or how they would direct an outsider. As is evident from the responses, participants typically prescribed the action and described the environment in which the action should occur:

Extract 38

*“Ek gaan reg uit af loop, dan draai ek, verby Spaza Rama, verby die polisie stasie want ek hou nie van veldpad nie...”* (I walk straight, then I turn, walk pass Spaza Rama, pass the police station because I don’t like using the foothpaths in the bushes...)

Extract 39

*“When I leave here, I would pass Dikgathlong school, then I would turn left. At the four way stop, I would turn right and go straight.”*

Extract 40

*“...as ek hier uit gaan, ek gaan draai net hier by die Star Shop, dan gaan ek verby die skool. Daar is nie weer draais nie. Dit is upwards. (When I leave here, I turn at Star Shop, then walk past the school. There are no more turns. It is just upwards).*

As is evident in the responses above, participants draw on relative directions (left, right, forward, backward, up and down) when giving directions and making sense of their place. The overuse of relative directions, particularly “left” and “right”, can be attributed to their “everydayness” –the distinction between left and right can easily be illustrated and memorised. It forms part of everyday dialogue and doesn’t involve any formal teaching or equipment. This is in contrast to cardinal directions (north, east, west and south) which are used less frequently and complex and mostly likely requires a compass and the comprehension thereof. The reliance of relative directions is contextually relevant to the navigation of this community and more particularly, their level of literacy and education. According to Denis *et al.*, (1999), this finding is consistent with average human navigational practices, because although following a compass heading forms part of the three modes of purposeful navigation, “most instances of route directions in natural (and) urban environments do not make use of compass instructions, if only because the metrics involved are not compatible with common forms of human spatial dialogue”.

Instead of drawing on compass instructions, participants draw on a mode of navigation that has become the hallmark of human navigation: landmarks. Although there are varying definitions of what a landmark is, a definition typically encountered is that of Lynch (1960) which states that a landmark is a readily identifiable object which serves as an external reference point (cited in Ritcher, 2013:84). Millonig and Schechtner (2006:2) state that “in many cases navigational tasks are solved by the use of visual clues (landmarks) and by building a mental representation of the environment (cognitive maps)”. Millonig and Schechtner (2006:2) further assert that “findings in spatial cognition research reveal that humans need salient objects for orientation and navigation and that navigational instruction given in pedestrian navigation systems improve when referring to these objects”.

Below follows interview extracts that illustrate how landmarks are central to participants' navigation of space:

Extract 41

*“Hier van af, hier by die eerste uitdraai, gaan jy reg af. Dan kom jy daar by Moleele se hoek. Dan draai jy daar by die skool. Dan gaan jy reg af – by die kliniek verby – reg af in die dorp in.”* (From here, you walk straight until you get to Moleele's corner. Then you turn at the school. Then you go straight, past the clinic, straight into town.)

Extract 42

*“Ek sê gewoonlik vir die mense kyk waar sit die China Shop, soek die surgery, om die hoek en dan gaan jy sien jou eerste gebou op die linkerkant.”* (I normally tell people to locate the China Shop and the surgery, around that corner, the shop is the first building on the left.)

Extract 43

*“Ek gaan hom sê hy moet net so op stap – straight op sien jy. Daar voor is 'n T-junction dan gaan hy links. Daar verby die kliniek, gaan hy straight af. Dan kry jy 'n four way daar en dan gaan hy straight af. Dan gaan hy die winkel sien.”* (I would instruct the person to walk straight and take a left turn at the T-junction. Then past the clinic, walk straight. Past the four way stop, walk straight.)

The landmarks identified above include a school, a Chinese-owned shop, a surgery, a T-junction, and a four-way stop. Interestingly, the location of someone's house particularly (Moleele's corner) is also referenced as a landmark, which suggests that the house of prominent individuals in communities can also serve as a 'readily identifiable object'. Noteworthy is that instead of distance, street names or time allocation (the amount it would take to reach the destination), participants relied on the referral of easily recognisable landmarks. This further illustrates Denis *et al.*'s (1999) assertion that metrics are not a norm in human spatial discourse. Millonig and Schechtner (2006:3) concur with this perspective and argues that the reason why landmarks are widely used in human navigation is because they are “more efficient than plain geometric information such as directions and distances would do; especially as the human capability to estimate metric distances correctly is rather poor and individually varying”. This use of landmarks for the navigation of space is also consistent with Banda and Jimaima's (2015) viewpoint that spatial architecture forms part of

the semiotics in the ecology of rural-scapes that is creatively drawn on in the navigation of space.

Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665) concluded that people draw on memory for sign- and place-making purposes. This use of memory in place-making was also observed in this study. Below are examples of such instances:

Extract 44

*“I take the street where this clinic is then I walk past Vlenter street. There used to be houses there before they were destroyed. Mr Hammer, Mr Makone and the likes used to be the big cats of that street.”*

Extract 45

*“I know where the cemetery is. There is a cemetery there by Eskom. That was the first cemetery before they put a fence around the place. We used to get coal from that side. When we still used mbaula.” (A mbaula is an old 20-litre (five-gallon) paint canister in which a coal fire can be made for household heating and cooking purposes.)*

Extract 46

*“Ek bly in Ikele in. Kyk, dit is ook maar ‘n ou plekkie-tjie wat na die tyd met President Mandela goed se tyd toe word hy gebou.” (I stay in Ikele – a small place that was built during President Mandela’s time.)*

Extract 47

*“Ek weet waar daar is want ek het al my ma daar gaan begrawe by die begrafplaas.” (I know where the graveyard is because I have buried my mother there.)*

Extract 48

*“Ek het baie in Rooikoppies gegaan toe ek ‘n kind was. Ek het daar vis gevang.” (I went to Rooikoppies frequently when I was a child. I used to catch fish there.)*

Be it the association of places with former popular residents (Mr Hammer and Mr Makone), painful memories such a parent’s funeral, fun childhood leisure activities such as fishing, service delivery following the birth of democratic South Africa, or reminiscing about the pre-electricity era, spaces become places through the attachment of the residents’ lived

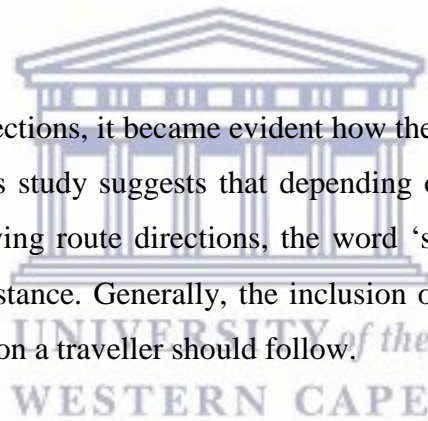
experiences. These lived experiences are often only recorded as memories and such memories inform not just navigation but also perception of spaces.

#### **4.4.1 Straight: Indication of direction and distance**

Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665) conclude that “sign- and place-making is dynamic and ongoing endeavour as space is continually imagined, reimagined, created and reinvented as people draw different meanings out of the semiotic material in place as interceded by communication needs...”

As discussed above, geometric information such as distance is not typically used by Ulco and Delportshoop residents in route directions. As a way to compensate for this, participants repurposed the ‘straight’ as a distance indicator.

As participants gave route directions, it became evident how the word ‘straight’ was used and ‘pronounced’ differently. This study suggests that depending on how the word ‘straight’ is pronounced when used in giving route directions, the word ‘straight’ can serve as both an indication of direction and distance. Generally, the inclusion of the word ‘straight’ in route directions indicates the direction a traveller should follow.



However, when the word ‘straight’ needs to be used as an indication of distance, participants uses the following strategies: 1) vocally putting emphasis on the word, 2) repeating it (straight, straight), and/or 3) dragging it (straaaighhhh). The use of one or a mixture of these strategies implies that the distance one has to travel straight for is relatively long. This creative repurposing of the word ‘straight’ replaces the estimation of distance in route directions.

#### **4.4.2 Getting lost**

As mentioned before, Banda and Jimaima (2015) argue that the lack/absence of signage in rural Zambia does not impair the navigation of space. As discussed in numerous examples above, Ulco and Delportshoop has minimal scripted signage. Nonetheless, this lack of



scripted signage has no significant impact on participants' spatial movements. This conclusion is based on reports from the majority participants that they never got lost in their respective places.

In fact, most participants were shocked at this question, almost suggesting that the very idea of getting lost in Ulco and Delportshoop was unthinkable. Two participants actually laughed after being asked the question, insinuating that the thought of getting lost in Ulco is laughable. Below follows the reasoning that justifies why participants deemed it impossible to get lost in Ulco and Delportshoop:

Extract 49

*“Because Ulco is a small place and we all know each other. There is no way of getting lost in Ulco.”*

Extract 50

*“Nee, ek het hier groot geword.”* (No, I grew up here.)

Extract 51

*“...it is not possible for me to get lost in Ulco because I have stayed here for a long time.”*

Extract 52

*“Ek kan nie verdwaal nie want ek bly al hier vandat ek twee jaar oud is.”* (I can't get lost because I have stayed here since I was two years old.)

Extract 53

*“If you know places such as Setlhare sa bua, the tennis court, Boikhutso Hostel, then you can't get lost in Ulco.”*

According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:667), “with little or no man-made public signage in these rural areas, there is an additional need for creativity in how oral narration is deployed to account for mutual relationships between the interactants themselves and with their semiotic environment”.

The participants' responses in extracts 49–52 are an illustration of this additional need for mutual relationships between interactants and their semiotic environment in order to ensure successful navigation of place, i.e. not to get lost.

From the participants' responses, it is evident how a relationship with fellow community members and being acquainted with the semiotic resources in the ecology signs/places, i.e. the Tree speaks, the tennis court and Boikhutso Hostel, eases the navigation of space. However, it goes beyond just being acquainted with fellow residents and semiotic material in the material world. As oral-linguascaping serves as a substitute for scripted signage, familiarity of how to interpret and narrate the semiotic material in the ecology is important.

Banda and Jimaima (2015:666) argue that “the agentive nature of sign-making ...means that linguistic/semiotic landscaping is individualised and participatory at the same time”. Extracts 50, 51 and 52 serve as examples of individualised linguistic/semiotic landscaping – participants' sense of place- and sign-making is related to the length of their residency. The following extracts illustrate how place- and sign-making can simultaneously be participatory:

#### **Extract 54**

*“You can easily ask anyone where someone stays because we all know each other in Ulco.”*

Extract 54 suggests a common narrative among Ulco residents for the navigation of space – although the reference points might be individualised, as alluded to in extract 49, Ulco has common spatial architecture that most residents would refer to in the navigation of space.

#### **Extract 55**

*“Jong, weet jy? Hulle verdwaal altyd na die polisie stasie toe dit is nogal 'n stryd om vir hulle mooi te verduidelik.”* (You know, they always get lost and come to the police station to ask for help and it is always troublesome to direct them accordingly.)

According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:665), “oral linguascaping enables people to easily repurpose idea, socio-cultural knowledge and materialities and other semiotic materials in

places, for meanings and utility functions they are not known or designed for”. In extract 55, we note how the police station is repurposed and reimagined as Delportshoop’s ‘information desk’ and/or navigation system. The repurposing of the police station is embedded with the socio-cultural knowledge of the institution: firstly, police stations are always open. Secondly, police officers are tasked with maintaining law and order and ensuring the safety of civilians, therefore they wouldn’t deliberately provide one with inaccurate directions. Thirdly, police officers probably know the area exceptionally well as they respond to calls from all over Delportshoop. Taking into account these factors, the repurposing of the police station is contextually relevant and serves as an example of the localisation of semiotic material (Pennycook, 2009).

#### 4.5 Summary

This chapter set out to explore the place- and sign-making process undertaken by Ulco and Delportshoop residents in order to ‘compensate’ for the lack and/or absence of written signage in their environments. It can be concluded that residents mainly overcome the lack of inscription in three ways: 1) Inventing and Imaging space into life (and maintaining such ‘imagined’ existence through narrative accounts); 2) repurposing existing natural and man-made objects including actively ignoring/going against existing narrative about place and re-imagining a physical space like One Mile; and 3) drawing on popular local reference points and localised manner of giving directions. Consequently, this chapter supports Banda and Jimaima’s (2015) postulation that the lack/absence of written signage does not hamper the process of sign-making. The lack of inscriptions in fact prompts residents’ creativity and deepens their knowledge and belonging to specific places.

The following chapter explores the material culture of multilingualism in LL.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MATERIAL CULTURE OF MULTILINGUALISM IN LL

#### 5.1 Introduction

The following chapter explores the production and consumption of multilingualism by analysing the material culture of multilingualism (Aronin & Ó Laire, 2012 & 2013; Aronin, 2015) found in Ulco and Delportshoop. According to Aronin and Ó Laire (2012:4), “material culture of multilingualism comprises materialities relating to multilingual way of existence, whether by individuals or by societies”. Additionally, material culture of multilingualism includes the physical environment in which the sign is emplaced as a contributing factor to the sign’s multilingualism. According to Aronin (2015:10), “therefore looking into the interaction between language-defined material objects, and languages heard, read, written, spoken and even referred to, in a given environment means studying the material culture of multilingualism”. Aronin and Ó Laire (2012:2) suggest that paying close attention to the material culture of multilingualism brings into focus a neglected area of LL and multilingualism studies, which is “how multilinguals interact with both their immediate and distant physical and material environments”. Further, Aronin (2015) states that the materialities that are relevant for multilingualism is language-defined objects. Language-defined objects are described as “a meaningful wholeness of material and verbal components considered as a representation of its user or users, or sociolinguistic environment” (Aronin, 2015:7).

Consumption was recognised as the social process by which people construct the symbolically laden material worlds they inhabit and which, reciprocally, act back upon them in complex ways (Dietler, 2012:2). Consumption is a material social practice involving the utilization of objects (or services) as opposed to their production or distribution (Dietler, 2012:1).

By drawing on pictures of signage and interviews, this chapter in particular aims to explore how language-defined objects (signage) can occasionally be a misrepresentation of existent

multilingual and multicultural practices and how oral linguascaping becomes essential in the production of multilingual spaces.

Additionally, this chapter explores how the language use on certain signage could potentially be exclusionary and unconsciously promote ethno-racial stereotypes.

## 5.2 Multilingual and multicultural signage

Ulco is oversaturated with official, monolingual English signage. According to Census 2011, 55.58 per cent of Ulco residents cite Setswana as their first language, followed by 35.8 per cent Afrikaans first language speakers, and 2.21 per cent English first language speakers.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, this signage is a misrepresentation of Ulco's multilingual and multicultural community. However, Aronin's (2015:9) extended notion of multilingualism in LL argues that "the inscription on an object might be in one language, and the settings may include two additional ones – an object is, in fact, bilingual (multilingual, trilingual) when inscription is one language but the milieu or the environment is filled with another language". Below follows an analysis of some of Ulco's numerous examples of signage that is scripted in one language, e.g. English. However, these signage is to be read as multilingual as the environment includes additional languages.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/384004>

Figure 5.1 is a picture of the Afrisam's name and logo erected at the entrance of Work Street.



Figure 5. 1: Afrisam logo

Afrisam is the name of the company that owns the cement mine in Ulco (partially visible in the background of figure 5.1). As mentioned in chapter four, Afrisam as a brand and company name was launched in 2008 and, according to the Afrisam website, “‘Afri’ refers to our proud African heritage and the sub-Saharan African countries in which we operate. ‘Sam’ comes from the word samente or disamente which means cement in six of South Africa's official languages. In essence we are all about African Cement”.<sup>5</sup> Evidently, based on this narrative, Afrisam as a name is rooted in African multiculturalism and multilingualism.

However, without knowledge of this multicultural narrative and based purely on the inscription, the sign in figure 5.1 can mistakenly be classified as a monolingual, English sign – when combined, the shortenings ‘Afri’ and ‘Sam’ have English connotations. ‘Afri’ is a shortening of the English word, ‘Africa’, and ‘Sam’ is an English personal name and additionally, an orthodox shortening of other English personal names such as Samantha and Samuel. However, in this context, ‘sam’ in the company name Afrisam is an abbreviation of the word ‘disamente’ – a multilingual and multicultural South African concept. Consequently, in line with Aronin’s (2015) argument, figure 5.1 is a multilingual sign due to its multilingual environment – both its physical environment (Ulco) and Afrisam’s etymological context.

In addition to being multilingual and multicultural, figure 5.1 is also an example of mobility and repurposing. Afrisam was established in 1934 and, to date, has undergone five name changes (AngloVaal Portland Cement Company Limited, Anglo-Alpha Cement Limited, Anglo-Alpha Limited, Holcim South Africa (Pty) Ltd), including four logo changes. However, the company’s logo, i.e. the Alpha Star, has remained the same. Afrisam’s

<sup>5</sup> <https://afrisam.jonti2.co.za/general/content/about/us>

company logo is based on Alpha Centauri, the brightest and closest star to earth. The new name and symbol was seen to reflect a new vision and great potential for the company and is still in use to this day<sup>6</sup>.

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 are pictures of signage found at different points in Ulco-West. Going on this inscription, Ulco-West is presented as a homogenous section – an English-only section differentiated by house numbers.



Figure 5. 2: Ulco-West signage



Figure 5. 3: Ulco-West signage

However, interviews with Ulco residents painted a heterogeneous, multilingual picture of Ulco-West. Participants who reside in what is referred to as ‘Ulco-West’ on the signage were asked to name the section they live in and below follow some of the responses:

Extract 1

*I stay in the Location.*

Extract 2

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.afrisam.co.za/about-us/>

*In bly hier in die Location...ek ken nie wat roep hulle die Location nie maar net as jy hier in gaan. (I stay here in the Location. I don't know what they call it but just when you enter here.)*

Extract 3

*In Kgorokwe.*

Extract 4

*In Ulco bly ek in Kgorokwe in. (In Ulco, I stay in Kgorokwe.)*

Extract 5

*"I am staying on Ulco-West which used to be called Kgorokwe actually."*

Based on the extracts above, although the signage in figures 5.2 and 5.3 have only one language scripted on them, these signs are actually multilingual, as they are physically placed in a multilingual environment. As mentioned by the participants, as a section, Ulco-West is further divided into three sub-sections: Location, Kgorokwe, and LahlumlENZE with the names of the last two sub-sections being Setswana and Xhosa respectively. Consequently, although the sign is produced in English, the consumption thereof is multilingual and multicultural. The Ulco residents' decision to not consume this homogenous written portrayal of Ulco-West is an example of what Banda and Jimaima (2015:653) term oral linguascaping – the conscious decision to ignore written language and instead give directions based on socio-cultural and historical knowledge and particular landscapes in the environment. According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:664), oral linguascaping serves as an indication of how “the written signboard had little communicative value as the real power of communication lies with the spoken word, which is used to realign, and hence re-‘sign’ the different semiotic materials in place for various directions/meanings” (Banda & Jimaima, 2015:664). According to Shoal (2012), the local residents of [Ulco-West] are practising spatial resistance, which is the unwillingness to change the names of the different quarters, streets and squares, through the maintenance of an unofficial oral system.





Figure 5. 4: Division of Ulco's areas



Figure 5. 5: Sign in Ulco East

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Figures 5.4 and 5.5 are examples of signage that directs one to various facilities and sections in Ulco and both signs are placed within Ulco Central. As can be deduced from the facilities listed in Figure 5.4, Ulco–Central is essentially painted as the ‘entertainment’ hub of Ulco. Figure 5.4 not only enlists certain recreational spots, but also distinguishes between two Ulco sections: Ulco-Central and Ulco-West. In a bid to understand Ulco residents’ construction of their space, research participants were asked which sections in Ulco they were familiar with and below follows some of the responses:

Extract 1

*Ek ken Ulco Location, Ulco East, die Kwartiere en ek ken die myn (homself) en Kgoroko.*

Extract 2

*I know the entire Ulco because it is a small place. There is Ulco Central, Ulco East - these are residential areas where people stay. Then there is the field (there are three of them), then there are two schools, then there is a pre-school, a golf-course, () park...ja.*

Extract 3

*Kgoroko, Hospital Street, Hostel, Club Circle, Central, Ulco-East.*

Extract 4

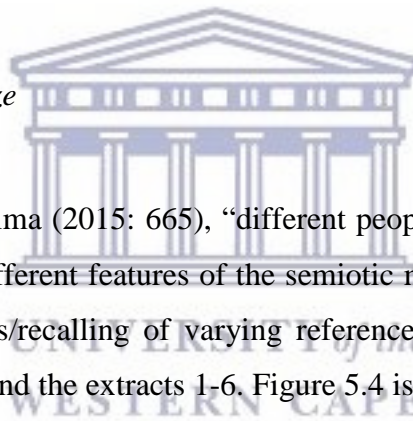
*I know Ulco-West, Ulco-East, Kgorokwe, LahlumlENZE.*

Extract 5

*Kgorokwe, LahlumlENZE. I only know those two.*

Extract 6

*I know Tsineng, LahlumlENZE*



According to Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665), “different people may use different reference points and hence recognize different features of the semiotic material in a theatre of signage to give directions”. The focus/recalling of varying reference points is exemplified by the ‘contrast’ between figure 5.4 and the extracts 1-6. Figure 5.4 is standardised and formal – one language, consistent font size and use of the ‘formal’ terms of said facilities. On the other hand, the oral linguascaping, as narrated in extracts 1-6, is creative and rooted in the socio-historical knowledge of Ulco. In extracts 1-6, participants refer to recreational facilities and Ulco’s different sections in everyday terms – field instead of soccer pitch, Kgorokwe, LahlumlENZE instead of Ulco-West, and Kwartiere instead of Ulco-East. This further illustrates how Ulco residents ignore the written message and draw on oral linguascaping based on socio-historical knowledge and history.



*Figure 5. 6: Die Blou Winkel*

Aronin (2015), and Aronin and Ó Laire (2012) posit three categories of objects and phenomena that form the basis of the material culture of multilingualism research: 1) artefacts with texts, sentences, letters (language-defined objects); 2) objects scripted in one language placed in a multilingual environment; and 3) artefacts and objects which do not have writing on them. Although these categories are progressive as they enable the exploration of an extended perspective of multilingualism, these categories do not account for objects that are visibly scripted in one language, but are orally produced in a different language. Such an object still counts as multilingual; however, the multilingualism is not credited to the environment but to the participants' lack of conforming to the written language. 'Die Blou Winkel' (pictured in figure 5.6) serves as an example of such an object. In this case, Banda and Jimaima (2015: 657) argue that consumers perceive the material object "as a blank space onto which they can script meaning orally". Therefore, consumers draw on other semiotic material such as socio-historical knowledge, and memory (Banda and Jimaima, 2015) in scripting the shop's name.

‘Die Blou Winkel’, as it is referred to by residents, is a shop in Delportshoop which is located in what is typically referred as “die dorp” (the town) – the equivalent to a town centre, normally the economic hub of a small town. Die Blou Winkel’s English translation is ‘The Blue Shop’. As is evident in figure 5.6, the sign placed on the building’s wall reads ‘Delportshoop Multisave Supermarket’ and not ‘die Blou Winkel’. The shop is referred to as ‘die Blou Winkel’ because of the blue paint on the lower part of the external wall. The appropriation of the colour ‘blue’ and its inclusion in the shop’s name is an example of what Iedema (2003) terms resemiotization. According to Iedema (2003:41), “resemiotization is about how meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice, or from one stage of a practice to the next”. Colour, as a semiotic resource is resemiotised and, due to its use/inclusion in a different context, the meaning of blue shifts.

Iedema (2003:50) concludes that “resemiotization is crucially interested in how materiality (‘expression’) serves to realize the social, cultural and historical structures, investments and circumstances of our time”. The resemiotization of the colour ‘blue’ in the construction of “die Blou Winkel” can be considered a circumstance of historical and cultural structures. From figure 5.6, it can be deduced that both of the commercial signs, i.e. the red and green sign on the bottom, and the Coca-Cola sponsored sign on the top, are relatively new based on their physical state. Consequently, before the placement of these commercial signs, Delportshoop residents drew on material (blue paint) to name the shop and accommodate the circumstances of their (former) times.

Pennycook (2009: 109 -110) states that “landscapes are not mere backdrops on which texts and images are drawn but are spaces that are imagined and invented”. Extract 7 below serves as an example of how space can be imagined and invented into being:

Extract 7

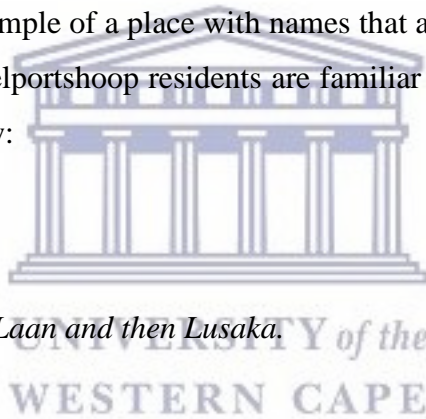
*“Die Blou Shop se naam is daar” (The Blue Shop’s name is there)*

This extract is the concluding sentence of a Delportshoop resident’s route directions to die Blou Winkel – the participant implies that the ‘visitor’ will know they have reached the Blou Winkel when they see the shop’s name on a particular building. As noted before, there is no

such inscription on the business building – the existence of such a sign is imagined into life by the participant.

Aronin (2015:11) posits that “artifacts and objects which do not have any writing on them are also relevant for multilingualism research, if they are used, or experienced, even in passing in a multilingual setting”. Massey (2005: 54), who is against “the longstanding tendency to tame the spatial into the textual”, rebukes the increased focus on spatial inscription and the ‘neglect’ of place names that are spoken – particularly because the spaces focused on are typically urban areas, judging from terms such as “city as text, city-text”. This perspective is supported by Kearn and Berg (2002:283), who state that “place names are not only inscribed on maps and within the landscape on signs, they are also—and more frequently—spoken”.

Delportshoop serves as an example of a place with names that are purely spoken. Irrespective of this lack of inscriptions, Delportshoop residents are familiar with the different sections, as is evident in the extracts below:



Extract 8

*I know Ikele and then 7de Laan and then Lusaka.*

Extract 9

*Rooikoppies en die lokasie, Tidimalo (I know Rooikoppies and the Location which is called Tidimalo).*

Extract 10

*Ek ken die Lokasie, ek weet waar is Rooikoppies, Lusaka, Ikele...7de Laan (I know the Location, I know where Rooikoppies is, Lusaka, Ikele...7de Laan).*

Extract 11

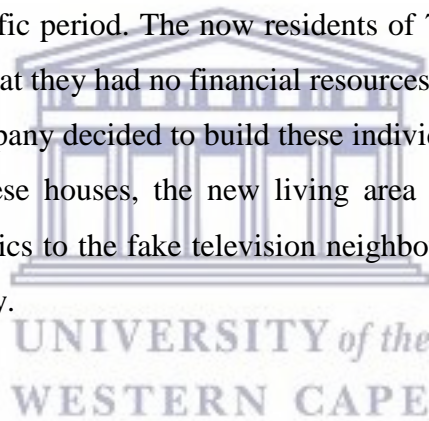
*Proteahof, Lusaka, Ikele, Klipraantjie.*

Delportshoop residents drew on oral linguascaping to name the respective Delportshoop sections. According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:665), “oral linguascaping enables people to easily repurpose ideas, socio-cultural knowledge and materialities, and other semiotic materials in place, for meanings and utility functions they are not known or designed”. The

names of Delportshoop sections exemplify this repurposing of ideas and socio-cultural knowledge:

The section in Delportshoop referred to as *7de Laan* is appropriated from a local television soapie called *7de laan*. In the soapie, *Sewende Laan (7de Laan)* is a small, fictitious neighbourhood located in the suburb of Hillside, Johannesburg, where all the characters live or work.

In fact, *7de Laan* in Delportshoop came into existence as a result of ‘forced’ removals from Ulco. It is standard protocol in Ulco that only its employees and their families can reside in company houses – essentially Ulco is private property. Following the end of employment (through retirement, dismissal, death of breadwinner, etc.), families must vacate the house and leave Ulco within a specific period. The now residents of *7de Laan* in Delportshoop put up some resistance, arguing that they had no financial resources to buy/ build houses. In a bid to resolve the matter, the company decided to build these individuals houses in Delportshoop. Upon their occupation of these houses, the new living area was named ‘*7de Laan*’ as it resembled similar characteristics to the fake television neighbourhood – small, intimate with a sense of unity and familiarity.



The name of the living area “Ulco-block” is another example of how Delportshoop residents draw on socio-cultural knowledge in their oral languascaping of place. Ulco-Block is a residential area in Delportshoop where employees who worked or still work in Ulco reside. It is referred to as a ‘block’ as it is a mini-section that forms part of a larger Delportshoop section, namely Tidimalo (a.k.a. Location) section. AfriSam employees who reside in Delportshoop are not obligated to live in Ulco-Block and numerous employees actually reside in other areas of Delportshoop. However, the name continues to be used, which proves Banda and Jimaima’s (2015:665) conclusion that “sign- and place-making is a dynamic and ongoing endeavour...as interceded by communication needs, memory, sentiments...” Residents of Delportshoop have become accustomed to the name “Ulco-Block” and certain sentiments have become attached to the place, i.e. space where (former) AfriSam employees reside. Scollon and Scollon (2003) posit that the type of material a sign is made out of indexes the sign’s temporality or permanency. Banda and Jimaima (2015) problematise Scollon and

Scollon's perspective on permanency and temporality, particularly in relation to oral languascaping and/or a semiotic ecological approach. Ulco-Block, as an oral construct, serves as an example of a limitation of Scollon and Scollon's (2003) view of permanency and temporality. Due to its oral nature, Ulco-Block, as a sign, is permanently placed in the memory of Delportshoop residents and, evidently, continues to be permanent regardless of the 'practicality' of the name. Therefore, Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665) argue that "'permanency' needs to be understood in terms relative to a multiplicity of the meaning potentials of a given sign".

The name of another Delportshoop living section, namely 'Rooikoppies', serves as an example of how oral languascaping includes the repurposing of materialities in the construction of place. 'Rooikoppies' has numerous translations: "Red Cups", "Red Heads" or "Red Hills". Irrespective of which translation is preferred, two materials had a significant influence in the naming of the area: the colour red and sand. The area has a high amount of red sandy soil compared to the rest of Delportshoop. When it is windy in this area, the sand is easily taken up in the air and the sand disperses and settles almost everywhere including on people's heads (hence Red Heads). Additionally, when the sand is blown around, minor red sand hills are formed (similar to how sand dunes are formed but on a much smaller scale), which explains why the area is dubbed "Red Hills". Similar to Ulco-Block, Rooikoppies is also an illustration of how rural-scapes extend Scollon and Scollon's (2003) understanding of the permanency of signs, "principally because most semiotic resources in use are emplaced by nature, and therefore 'permanent'" (Banda & Jimaima, 2015: 665).

### **5.3 Material objects and multilingualism**

Aronin (2015:6) states that the subject matter of the material culture of multilingualism is to find out how materialities are connected with, and influence the identity of multilinguals. Figures 5.7 and 5.8 are examples of how linguistic signs and materialities, i.e. a tyre and the bread, combine in the process of meaning-making and the construction of a multilingual space.



Figure 5. 7: Tyre used for advertisement



Figure 5. 8: Bread as a sign

Pictured in figure 5.7 is an advertisement sign placed for a business that repairs tyres in Delportshoop. According to Census (2011), 71 per cent of Delportshoop residents cite Afrikaans as their first language, with 22.77 per cent Tswana first language speakers, and 2 per cent English first language speakers.<sup>7</sup> Although the sign is linguistically produced in English only, the sign is placed within a multilingual environment. Figure 5.7 serves as an example of resemiotisation (Iedema, 2003) and semiotic remediation as repurposing (Banda & Jimaima, 2015). The tyre as a semiotic resource is resemiotised (used in an alternative environment) which shifts its meaning from being a vehicle part to an advertisement tool. Consequently, the affordances of the tyre as a semiotic resource has been extended by being repurposed as an advertisement tool; however, the tyre as a medium wasn't altered.

Figure 5.8 is a picture of the pricelist of bread in a specific shop. Although the sign is written in Afrikaans, within the sign exists non-Afrikaans and non-linguistic elements that construct the sign as multilingual, multidiscursive and multimodal. The fractions ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ) form part of mathematics discourse and these two specific fractions are internationally recognisable. The

<sup>7</sup> <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/384005>



letter “R” is the sign of the South African currency, the Rand. It is typically assumed in South Africa that the placement of an “R” in front of numbers serves as an indication of a product’s price. The physical placement of the sign also contributes to its multilingual and multimodal interpretation – the sign is placed in close proximity to the actual product the sign refers to (bread). Consequently, the inclusion of a universal, mathematical practice such as fractions and local economy knowledge transforms the sign into a multicultural and multilingual material object.

Aronin (2015:6) argues that “the interest of the material culture of multilingualism relates to the past, the present and the future and is not on materialities for their own sake”. Figure 5. 9 are examples of multidiscursive and multilingual signage that signal a specific period in time and/or an indication of different time periods captured in one sign.



The name of the car wash in figure 5.9 (*Lion of Judah*) is repurposed from the title of a gospel song that became extremely popular in late 2016. The gospel song, performed by Lebo Sekgobela, is part of her album titled *Restored*.<sup>8</sup> The phrase “Lion of Judah” stems from biblical times and therefore has been in use for centuries. The author of the sign repurposes this phrase as a business name and draws on the popularity thereof as a means to generate business and make his business memorable. Consequently, the sign relates to the past and present.

Figure 5. 9: *Lion of Judah Car Wash*

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.sundayworld.co.za/lifestyle/2017/02/16/lebo-sekgobela-s-big-break>

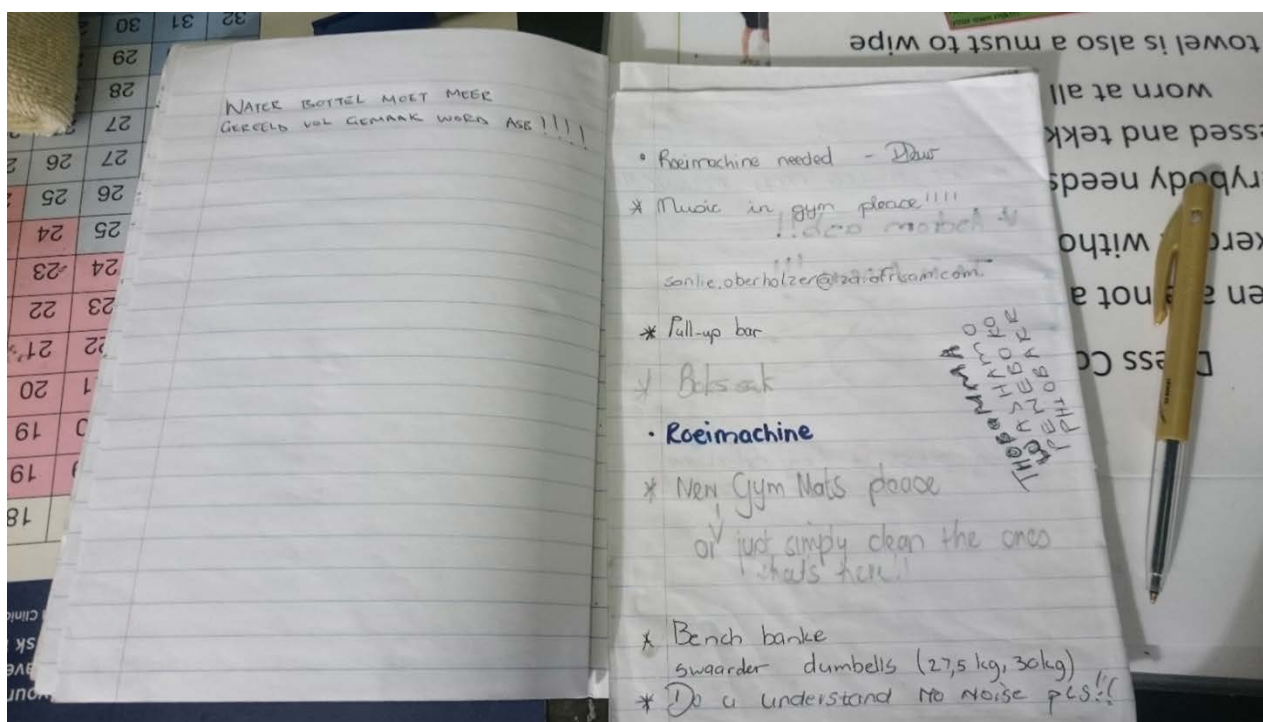


Figure 5. 10: Suggestion Book at Gym

Ulco's gym 'suggestion book', pictured in Figure 5.10 above and figure 5.11 below, further exemplifies how materialities can relate to the past, present and the future (Aronin, 2015), and the constant flow between these different time periods. The book serves two purposes: in the front of the book, gym members are required to 'sign in' by writing down their details and their respective time of arrival and departure. In the back of the book, gym members are encouraged to write down their suggestions. Essentially, the front of the book is indicative of the present while the back suggests a desirable future. Additionally, the conversational nature of some of the suggestions is evidence of this movement between past, present and future:

Extract 12 (in figure 5.10)

*"Music in gym please!!!!"*

Extract 13 (in figure 5.11)

*"Daar is mense wat kom gym in die oggend en los die musiek aan en dan moet ander vir hulle af sit maak asb seker alles is af voor jy loop. Dankie."* (There are people who come to gym in the morning but leave the gym without switching off the music. Please ensure everything is switched off before you leave. Thank you.)

#### Extract 14

*“Ek hoop julle wat so kla oor die aircon is nou tevrede om in die hel te oefen. Dankie!!!”* (I hope those who complained about the airconditioning is satisfied with exercising in this hell. Thank you!)

As evident in extract 12, the addition of music in the gym was suggested and, based on extract 13, the music was provided, because one gym member complained about the music system not being switched off when patrons left the gym. Extracts 12 and 13 now are indicative of different times and illustrate how the past and present are in conversation. Extract 14 is a complaint about a previous complaint – the individual is unimpressed by the altered temperature of the air-conditioning machine in the gym and assumes this temperature alteration was implemented following a complaint. Consequently, the complaint in extract 14 is in conversation with an incident in the past but also hints at the future of an uncomfortable and gloomy gym, as suggested by the term “hell”.

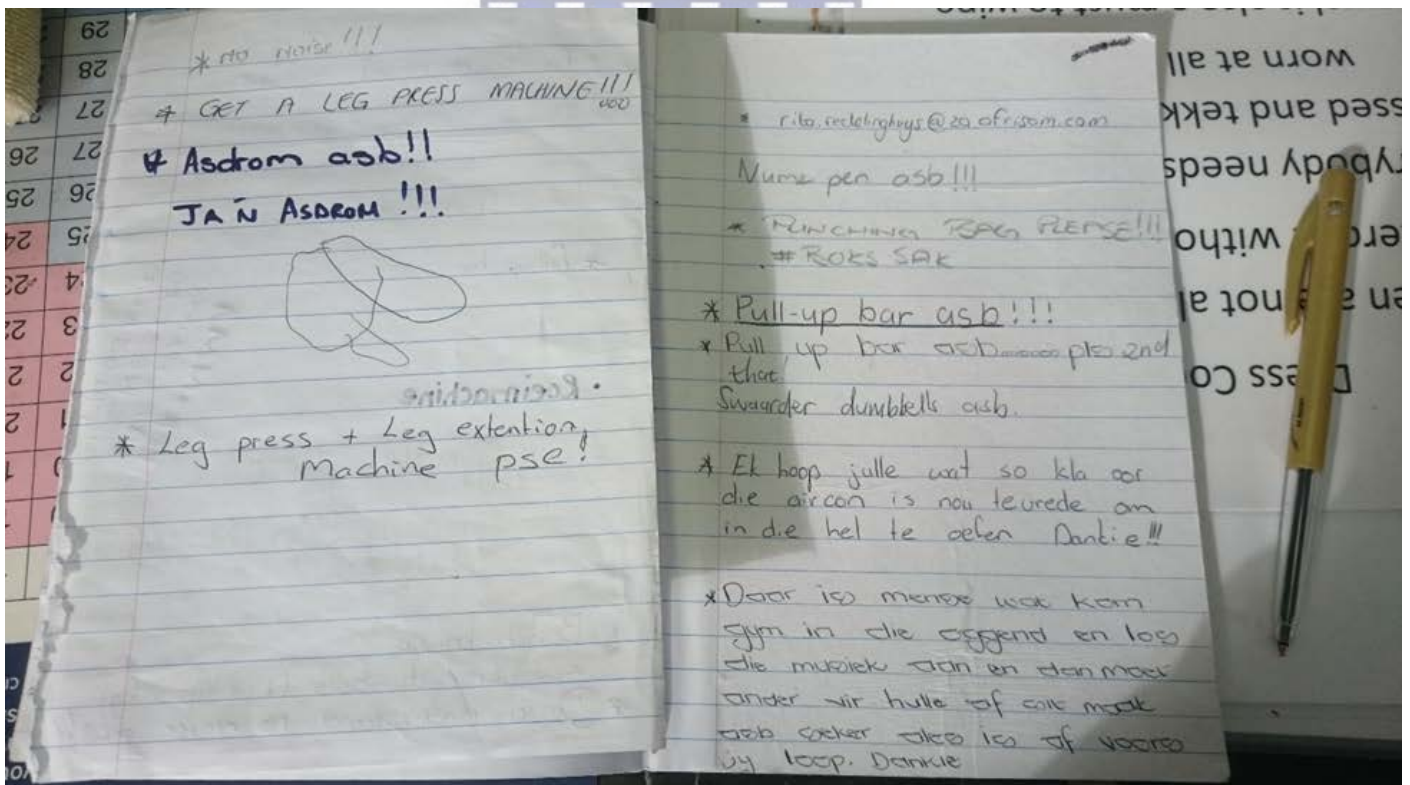


Figure 5. 11: Second page of suggestion book

The suggestion book is also an example of a mobile space representing continuity and fluidity. Urry states that (2007:17), “mobility is the movement of people, ideas, objects and information in the social life”. The suggestion book illustrates multiple movements – the movement of people in the physical space (evident by their use of the book), the movement of ideas (their suggestions in the book), and the movement of information (the information moves from the gym members to the gym’s management). Urry (2007: 13) argues that mobility systems make movement possible: “they provide ‘space of anticipation’ that the journey can be made, that the message will get through, that the parcel will arrive”. In this case, the existence of this suggestion book creates this ‘space of anticipation’ – gym members anticipate that their suggestions will be considered by Ulco’s gym authorities and, consequently, their suggestions, be it of gym material and/or improved gym practices, will be realised.

Aronin (2015:14) puts forth that, “multilinguals belong to a number of discourse communities, in each sharing basic values and assumptions, and ways of communication”. Judging by the great extent to which the suggestions are similar, it is evident that the gym members expressed numerous shared values and assumptions. Firstly, there is a shared assumption that Ulco is a multilingual community. Although the suggestions are primarily written in English and Afrikaans, taking into account the additional languages that exist in Ulco’s environment (Aronin, 2012), there is a common assumption that the receiver is multilingual and/or exists in a multilingual environment. Secondly, there is a shared assumption that all gym members are familiar with the various names of gym equipment – familiarity with the name of gym equipment enables and eases potential suggestions. Additionally, it is assumed the receiver of these suggestions is familiar with gym jargon and therefore knows what material the gym members are requesting. Examples of gym jargon in figure 5.10 and figure 5.11 include: leg press, leg extension, dumbbells, pull bar and roei-machine (rowing machine).

According to Aronin (2015: 14), “multilinguals might share not only grammar and vocabulary, but also material items, attitudes to them, and ways of dealing with them”. Numerous suggestions in figures 5.10 and 5.11 imply a specific gym culture/gym etiquette

and these illustrate the behaviour or expectations associated with gymming and its related material:

Extract 15 (in figure 5.11)

*“New gym mats please or simply clean the ones that’s here”*

Extract 16 (in figure 5.11)

*“Water bottel moet meer gereeld vol gemaak word asb!!!!”* (Water bottle must be refilled frequently please).

Extract 17 (in figure 5.11)

*“Do you understanding no noise pls!!!”*

As apparent in extracts 15–17, a gym culture exists among Ulco gym members – a culture that expects gymming to be a relatively quiet space with material such as clean equipment and water.

The preceding sections elaborately focused on: 1) how monolingual, English signage depreciates multilingual and multicultural environments and the significance of oral linguascaping; 2) the collaboration between physical materials and signage in the meaning-making process; and 3) how material objects provide a glance at past occurrences, present conditions and shape future anticipations. The remainder of this chapter zooms in on the culture aspect of ‘material culture’ and discusses how the language use on signage can exclude, silence and/or discriminate against certain cultures, while celebrating and/or elevating other cultures.

## 5.4 Culture and signage

### 5.4.1 Commodification of language



Figure 5.12: Older Sign



Figure 5.13: Latest sign

The signage pictured in figures 5.12 and 5.13 are placed a stone's-throw from each other as one approaches the location of the cement mine in Ulco. Based on its waning state (peeling paint and rustiness), it can be concluded that the sign in figure 5.12 is 'older'. As can be observed, figure 5.12 is a monolingual English sign. Vandenbroucke (2016:96) explains that the function and value of English in non-native spaces could serve two purposes: Firstly, "English fulfils a vehicular goal to communicate an ideational, comprehensible message". Secondly, English on signage serves as "a vehicle of association, invoking profitable qualities and values related to the brand and the commodities on sale in a particular market" (Vandenbroucke, 2016: 97). Figure 5.12 is an example of the two purposes English serves on signage in a non-native space (of which Ulco is an example, as only 2.21 per cent cite English as a first language). Both inscriptions are meant to communicate a comprehensible message, yet simultaneously drawing on the economic value associated with English. According to Vandenbroucke (2016: 87), the singular use of English on signage is unsurprising as "the 'McDonaldization' of the public domain resulted in English signs, with

or without local impact being common”. Figure 5.12 thus represents a ‘McDonaldised’ Ulco, illustrated by English signage.

However, a shift occurs in figure 5.13 – the inclusion of Afrikaans and Setswana on a previously English-only sign and a breakaway from this ‘McDonalds’ culture. Heller (2003: 474) argues that “many sectors of the globalised new economy are centred on multilingual communication despite the widespread complaints about the McDonaldization of the linguistic landscape”. Vandenbroucke (2016: 87) draws on Bourdieu’s notion of ‘linguistic marketplace’ in her study of commercial signage in Amsterdam and Brussels. A linguistic marketplace is a space in which “different languages and varieties are hierarchically ordered and function within a particular market as commodities with symbolic value attributed to them” (Vandenbroucke, 2016: 87). The sign pictured in figure 5.13 serves as an example of a ‘linguistic marketplace’, where three different languages are used to sell a product, i.e. cement. Although multilingual communication is appreciated in the globalised new economy, certain languages continue to be more economically viable, and in this case, English and Afrikaans is worth more than Setswana due to their position on the sign.

Due to the appreciation of multilingual communication in the global economy, figure 5.13 also serves as an example of the commodification of language. Heller (2003) observes how minority languages in Canada are increasingly being commodified due the globalised new economy. According to Heller (2003: 474), the commodification of language refers to “the shift from understanding language as being primarily a marker of ethnonational identity, to understanding language as being a marketable commodity on its own, distinct from identity...” As AfriSam has branches in other South African provinces and African countries (Swaziland, Tanzania and Lesotho), it is essential that signage caters for a multilingual audience. Additionally, AfriSam’s company name (with the ‘sam’ in AfriSam being an abbreviation for samente/disamente which means ‘cement’ in six of South Africa’s official languages) serves as a further illustration of even the company’s commodification of indigenous languages. The inclusion of these previously marginalised languages (in terms of economic value) onto signage and into the company’s name not only grants value to the respective languages, but also validates AfriSam’s claim of being proud of their African heritage and strengthens AfriSam’s identity as “the largest black-owned and controlled

cement producer in South Africa”.<sup>9</sup> AfriSam recognises “language’s status as a readily identifiable index of ethnicity and cultural authenticity which casts it as a selling vehicle par excellence” (Leeman & Modan, 2009:191). Consequently, for Ulco, “their multilingualism (and in this case multiculturalism) of the population becomes something to sell...” (Heller, 2003; 482) and be included on signage.

### 5.5.2 A lingering apartheid mentality



Figure 5. 14: Ulco Club Sign  
WESTERN CAPE

Figure 5.14 is a sign situated outside Ulco’s Club – this building consists of a bar and a hall. Alongside figure 5.13, the signage pictured in figure 5.14 is one of the only two multilingual signs evident in Ulco’s linguistic landscape. Interestingly, there is a shift in the hierarchical positioning of languages in figure 5.14 – Afrikaans is on top, not English. Afrikaans is also positioned higher than English in the green and white sign in figure 5.15.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.phembani.com/index.php/portfolio/afrisam-group/>





Figure 5. 15: No Loitering Sign



Figure 5. 16: Smoking is not permitted

Figures 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16 are all situated in the front entrance of Ulco's Club, and it is evident that there is an over-saturation of Afrikaans and English in all of the signage. The restrictive nature of the two signs in green and white (figure 5.15 and 5.16), the language practices (Afrikaans and English – dominant languages during the apartheid era), and the word choices (Slegs/Only Members), share a resemblance to the apartheid signs used to demarcate the separate facilities for the different races. The reservation of the Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953, enforced segregation of all public facilities, including buildings and transport, in order to limit contact between the different races in South Africa<sup>10</sup>. Consequently, apartheid signs indicating which people were permitted to enter/use the facilities were displayed throughout the country.<sup>11</sup> Figures 5.17 and 5.18 are examples of the apartheid signs that the signs outside Ulco's Club resembles.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup><http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/south-african-parliament-repeals-separate-amenities-act-1953>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/reservation-separate-amenities-act-no-49-commences>

<sup>12</sup> Pictures available at: <https://rdkreative.wordpress.com/tag/apartheid/>



Figure 5. 17: Examples of Apartheid sign 1



Figure 5. 18: Apartheid sign 2

Dowling (2010) conducted research on the language of signage in Cape Town – a city in the Western Cape Province – a province that, similar to the Northern Cape, also has three dominant languages, namely Xhosa, English and Afrikaans. Dowling (2010:195) states that although the contemporary South African landscape isn't riddled with “blatant racist or discriminatory” signage, a “more subtle injustice” exists, particularly in the manner public multilingual signs are displayed. Dowling (2010) concludes that one major way in which this injustice on multilingual signage persists is through translations – partial, incorrect or the complete absence thereof. As is evident in figures 5.16 and 5.17, the warnings are mostly in English with one warning sign being translated into both English and Afrikaans. The red and white sign in figure 5.15 contains various actions that are not allowed around the public space of Ulco's Club, i.e. no loitering, littering or drinking in public and offenders will be prosecuted. However, the sign is written in English only, which implies that non-English speakers could unknowingly be penalised for transgressing rules they were not informed about. Dowling (2010) refers to the use of only English on signage as “monolingual expediency” – the signage in place is advantageous for Ulco Club's authorities rather than the signage being just. It is merely put in place for the respective authorities to have ground to penalise offenders – their understanding of the signage is irrelevant.

### 5.5.3 Bilingual signage: Who swims? Who recycles?

Aronin (2015: 15) argues that “in a broad understanding, material culture is in itself a discourse of a particular kind which expresses values, assumptions and ideas, through material items”. Figures 5.19 and 5.20 (swimming pool signage) and figures 5.21 and 5.22 (recycle bins) are examples of how materials, particularly the languages used on respective materials, are suggestive and implicitly reveal assumptions held against certain language/ethnic/racial groups.



Figure 5. 19: Protection of whose safety?

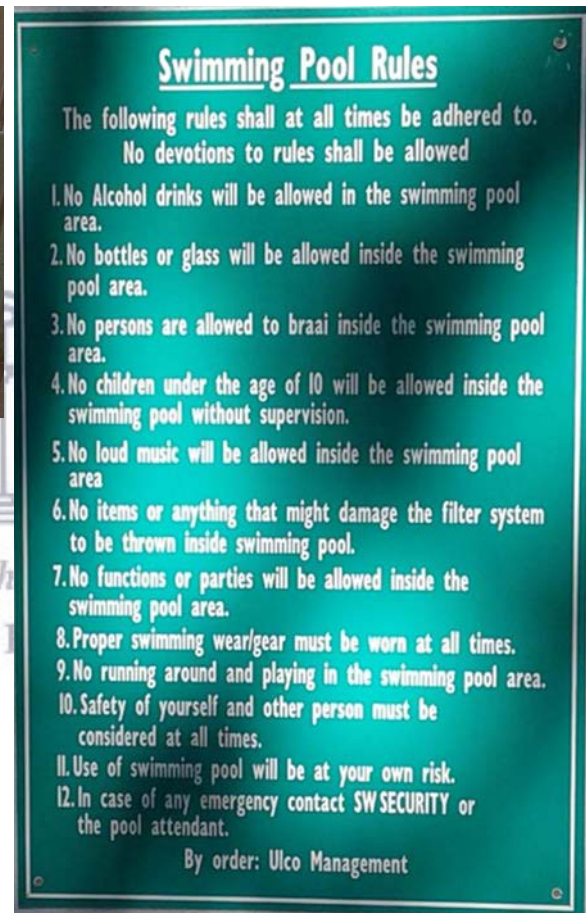


Figure 5. 20: “I told you so” signage

The majority (55.58 per cent) of Ulco residents (478 people) reported Setswana as their first language followed by the 35.81 per cent (308) who declared Afrikaans as their first language. Only 2,21per cent of Ulco residents (19 people) consider English as a first language. Consequently, the signage in figures 5.20 – 5.23 exclude the majority of Ulco’s residents who are black Africans who speak Setswana.

Aronin (2015: 16) argues that “in social context, solid material culture objects and artifacts, merge with often intangible social, cognitive, and emotional aspects of life, thus creating a complex interface of reality”. This linguistic exclusion of Setswana and consequently, black Africans, provides us with insight into the intangible cognitive and social perspectives of Ulco’s Management team. Firstly, Ulco Management assumes that black Africans do not participate in certain lifestyle activities, i.e. swimming and recycling. Secondly, if black Africans do participate in swimming and recycling, they do not/can’t read and therefore it is not necessary to inform them (in Setswana) about swimming pool rules and the categorisation of recycling items. Thirdly, black Africans will break the rules irrespective of whether the rules are written in Setswana or not. Knowledge about the depth of a pool is essential as it implicates the safety of the swimmers, yet as is evident in figure 5.20, this information is only written in Afrikaans and English. Indirectly, this sign indicates that Ulco Management are not concerned about the safety of black African swimmers.



*Figure 5. 21: Recycling bins*



Figure 5. 22: Who would not keep the area clean?

Dowling (2010:207) posits that “looking at what is translated and what is not translated, what is signed and what is not signed” could result in certain deductions by the non-represented linguistic group. In this case, Setswana speakers could conclude that: 1) the swimming pool is not meant for their use; 2) the swimming pool rules only apply to English speakers; and 3) Ulco Management doesn’t care about their safety as the swimming pool rule sign includes safety precaution rules.

#### 5.5.4 Official Signs: A culture of power and authority

Backhaus (2006) explores the differences between official and non-official multilingual signs in Tokyo imploring the notions of power and solidarity. Backhaus (2006:63) concludes that “the information arrangement on official signs expresses a coexistence of monolingual individuals with differing linguistic backgrounds. Care is taken that the languages are visually kept apart...”

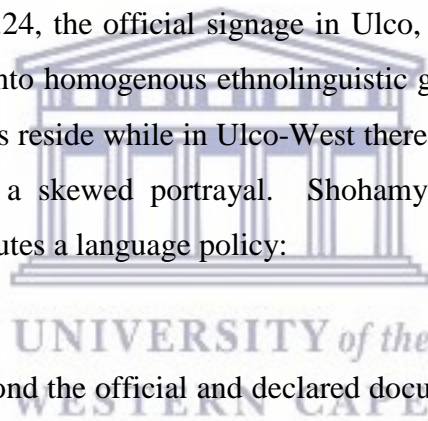


Figure 5. 23: Signage in Kgorokwe (Ulco West)



*Figure 5. 24: Signage in Kwartiere (Ulco East)*

Pictured in figures 5.23 and 5.24 are the facilities located for garden refuse. As is evident, the signage in figures 5.23 and 5.24, the official signage in Ulco, takes care to suggest that the sections in Ulco are divided into homogenous ethnolinguistic groups, i.e. in Ulco–East, only Afrikaans speaking individuals reside while in Ulco-West there is a mixture of Afrikaans and Setswana speakers which is a skewed portrayal. Shohamy, (2006: xvii) argues for an extended view of what constitutes a language policy:



language policy goes beyond the official and declared documents which often pay lip service to inclusive ideologies but incorporates a variety of mechanisms, some overt, some covert and hidden, that serves a major devices that affect and create de facto language policies.

The garden refuse signage serves as an example of an overt mechanism used by Ulco Management to stereotypically suggest a link between racial identity and language. Additionally, this signage strongly suggests which language to use on official signs in the different sections which speaks to the power Ulco’s management holds. In reference to information arrangement on official signs, Backhaus (2006:63) suggests that the positioning of languages on official signs is also an indication of prevailing power relations in the city. Figure 5.24 serves as an example of the power relations between languages in Ulco – even in

Ulco–West, a section that has mostly Setswana, black Africans as residents, Afrikaans is deemed more valuable than Setswana.



Backhaus (2006:62) argues that language choice on official signs is more regulated than non-official signs. According to Backhaus (2006:62), “this is an expression of power by the sign writer, who is in charge of determining what languages may or may not be used on official signs”. This paper argues that power by the sign writer can also be expressed through the decision to place signage or not.

*Figure 5. 25: Ulco-East signage*

Figure 5.25 is an example of a sign in Ulco-East – Ulco-East is divided into circles instead of sections like Ulco-West. At the ‘entrance’ of each circle, a sign similar to the one pictured in figure 5.25 is visible. The placement of these signs eases one’s navigation in Ulco-East. However, in Ulco-West there is a lack of navigation signage, as is evident in figure 5.26.



*Figure 5. 26: Entrance to Lahlumlenze*



Figure 5. 27: Footpath(s) to Kgorokwe

Although Ulco is a mobile space – people and things are capable of movement in that space (Urry, 2007: 7), Kaufmann, Bergman and Jove (2004: 749) argue that “it is important to examine the *modus operandi* of the societal and political logic of movements in geographic space”. This can be done by incorporating motility into the mobility framework. Motility is “the capacity of entities (goods, information or persons) to be mobile in social and geographic space”. Going on the lack of signage in Ulco-West, it can be concluded that it is a highly mobile space which can be perceived to have a low mobility – the potential of movement and navigation can be impaired due to the lack of signage. This contradiction in the construction of Ulco-West’s low motility and Ulco–East’s high motility (through (in) adequate signage) serves as another example of the power that Ulco’s authority hold. However, Ulco-West residents increased the section’s motility level through their creative repurposing of natural and man-made phenomena and oral linguascaping (as discussed in the previous chapter). In so doing, Ulco-West residents reclaimed a portion of the power and authority to construct their everyday spaces.

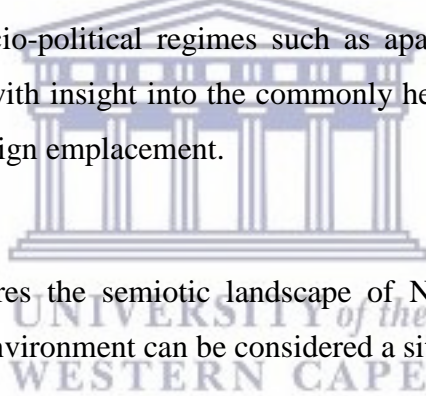


## 5.5 Summary

This chapter set out to explore the production and consumption of multilingualism through the use of various materialities with an enhanced focus on signage. The following conclusions were drawn: Firstly, the production of written monolingual signage belittles and misrepresents the multilingual and multicultural environment in which such signs are placed. These misrepresentations are countered and corrected through the production of oral languascaping. Consequently, although signage might be produced from a monolingual stance, such signs are consumed multilingually due to the multilingual environment and multilingual languascaping.

Secondly, this chapter explored how modern day signage can serve as an illustration of changing socio-cultural practices, for instance, the commodification of language and authenticity. Thirdly and lastly, it is observable how modern day signage can be reminiscent of signage from previous socio-political regimes such as apartheid. Official signage (top-down signs) also provide us with insight into the commonly held psycho-social assumptions of authorities responsible for sign emplacement.

The following chapter explores the semiotic landscape of Northern Cape tuckshops and illustrates how the tuckshop environment can be considered a site of struggle.



## CHAPTER SIX

### TUCKSHOPS AS SITES OF STRUGGLE

#### 6.1 Introduction

Tuckshops became popular in South Africa around the 1980s (Moloi, 2014). Lighthelm (2005: 202) defines spaza or tuckshop “as a business operating in a section of an occupied residential home or in any other structure on a stand in a formal or informal township for residential purposes and where people live permanently”. Tuckshops were dubbed by Terblanche (1991) as “South Africa’s First Own Black Retailing Institution” and positioned spaza shops as a means of survival for the impoverished, unemployed black South Africans. Decades later and the ‘face’ and core purpose of spaza shops have dramatically changed – from South African to international; from survivalist to entrepreneurial. As attested by Charman *et al.*, (2012:48) “since about 2005, a growing class of entrepreneur retailer has emerged as a major economic player within spaza markets. These entrepreneurs, characterised by ‘opportunity-motivated’ individuals have steadily outcompeted many survivalist businesses”. Undoubtedly, this shift in the ownership and purpose of tuckshops has resulted in the tuckshop as a site of struggle – a site driven by constant negotiation of varying linguistic practices, socio-economic motivations, discourses, narratives and identities.

This chapter explores the construction of tuckshops as sites of struggle. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication (2011), the notion ‘site of struggle’ was coined by Gramsci (1971) and can be described as “any situational or textual context in which meanings and/or identities are constructed, negotiated, and contested”. Shi-xu (2007:3) states that sites of contest are “saturated with power and history and therefore diversified, dynamic, and competing”. By drawing on interviews with tuckshop owners and customers, and photographs of the tuckshop semiotic landscape, the chapter discusses how tuckshops, as sites of struggle, are operationalised through drawing on markers such as linguistic practices, material culture, commercial signage and naming practices.

## 6.2 Linguistic practices

### 6.2.1 Signage

Using Washington DC's Chinatown as an example, Leeman and Modan (2010:182) posit that "in late modernity, much language in the urban landscape is both an outcome of, and a vehicle for, the commodification of space". Additionally, Leeman and Modan (2010: 183) state that "material manifestations of language interact with other design elements in the built environment to construct commodified urban places – cities for sale".



UNIVERSITY of the  
*Figure 6. 1: Dumelang Tuck Shop*  
WESTERN CAPE



*Figure 6. 2: Gagona Mathata Tuck Shop*

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 serve as examples of how language is used collaboratively and dialogically (Bakhtin, 1981) with other design elements to sell/promote tuckshops. The word use on the signage in figures 6.1 and 6.2, i.e. “Dumelang” and “Ga gona Mathata”, form part of typical Setswana greeting practices. First, the word ‘Dumelang’ is used when one greets a group of people simulatenously. Second, it is dialogic in the sense that ‘Ga gona mathata’ means “There are no problems”, and is typically the response after one asks someone “O kae”, which means “How are you”. Although the linguistic inscriptions in figures 6.1 and 6.2 are in Setswana, the owners are non-South African citizens. Lanza and Woldermaria’s (2014:503) study on international brandnames and English in the linguistic landscape of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, also shows how small shop owners employ English on their signs, although the owners themselves do not necessarily speak English. Deumert and Mabandla (2013) explored Chinese traders’ migration to rural Eastern Cape, South Africa, with particular interest in language learning and intergroup communication between migrants and the local population. According to Deumert and Mabandla (2013:45), one strategy used by Chinese traders is the creation of signage which draws on local meanings. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 serve as testimony that non-South African tuckshop owners use a similar strategy to locate themselves within the “realm of familiarity” (Deumert & Mabandla, 2013:49). Simultaneously, figures 6.1 and 6.2 also illustrate the commodification of authenticity (Heller, 2003). The tuckshops are located in Galeshewe (a township in Kimberley) – a township where 56.83 per cent cited Setswana as their first language. Using Setswana on the signage not only sells the tuck-shop, but simultaneously sells an authentic identity – Setswana localises the tuckshops.

As mentioned before, since 2005, entrepreneurs have outcompeted many necessity-driven entrepreneurs (survivalists) in the tuckshop market. According to Charman, Petersen and Piper (2012: 48), “the majority of these opportunity-motivated entrepreneurs are immigrants, and the ensuing consequences of their rising dominance has a distinct national or ethnic character”. These opportunity-motivated entrepreneurs originate from various countries, including Somalia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Charman, Petersen & Piper, 2012:48). A change in tuckshop ownership inevitably warrants a contestation of authenticity from new owners. Heller (2003:475) argues that the commodification of language and authenticity ultimately “gives rise to struggles over the role

of locals versus newcomers in the definition of what counts as a valuable product, and ultimately who gets to construct the idea of ‘the product’” (the product in this case is the tuckshop). Figures 6.3 and 6.4 illustrate how immigrant tuckshop entrepreneurs contest for the construction of tuckshops.



*Figure 6. 3: Khaled Sylhet Shop*



*Figure 6. 4: Ramadan and Ramadaan Shop*

In figures 6.3 and 6.4, the immigrant tuckshop owners use names deferred from the Arabic language to style a specific ethnic/national identity – this is in sheer contrast to the immigrant tuckshop owners in figures 6.1 and 6.2 who used Setswana to assimilate to an ‘authentic’ Northern Cape identity. In this case, it is observable how language reverts back to being “valued as a symbol of identity and belonging and therefore of exclusion and inclusion with regard to an organic community (Heller, 2003:481). Following the increased association

between tuckshops and immigrants, the immigrant tuckshop owners use Arabic shop names as a means to be distinguished from non-immigrant owners, yet concurrently identify with the increasingly, dominant immigrant tuckshop owners' community. The use of Arabic shop names also serves as an illustration of the commodification of language – Arabic is being used to sell and authenticate the 'new' face of tuckshops.

Another divergence between the linguistic practices in figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 is the reference to the business as a 'shop' instead of a 'tuckshop'. According to Oxford Dictionaries online, the term 'tuckshop' has British origins and describes "a shop, typically one on school premises, that sells confectionery, snacks, and soft drinks"<sup>13</sup>. The exclusion of the word "tuck" can be perceived as the tuckshop owners contesting the British conceptualisation of tuckshop while simultaneously distancing themselves from British culture.



*Figure 6. 5: Quick Shop*



*Figure 6. 6: African Shop*

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<sup>13</sup> [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tuck\\_shop](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tuck_shop)

Vandenbroucke (2016:87) states that the increased global use of English in public spaces, linguistic repertoires and advertising discourse can partially be attributed to its “commodified index for modernity, sophistication, transnational mobility and economic success”. Through the inclusion of English on the signage in Figures 6.5 and 6.6, the tuckshop owners draw on these symbolic attributes associated with English. Compared to the tuckshop owners in figures 6.1 – 6.4 who use language to highlight their local authenticity, the (tuck-) shop owners in figures 6.5 – 6.6 use English to situate themselves internationally. The name of the shop in figure 6.5 serves as an example of what Kasanga (2010) describes as “clone advertisement” – a practice where local business owners wish to identify themselves with well-known international brands”. A “quick shop” (also spelt “kwick”, “kwik” or “quik”) is internationally regarded as a convenience store – similar to the concept of a tuckshop. Kwik Shop is the name of an American-based company that has a chain of convenience stores.<sup>14</sup> In South Africa, the term “quick shop” is associated with Engen, a South African fuel company that operates over 600 Engen Quick Shops nationally.<sup>15</sup> Engen is also found in the Southern African Development Commission (SADC) countries.<sup>16</sup> In calling her/his business a quick shop, the shop owner ‘upscales’ (Stroud & Mpedukana, 2009) the business to national and international levels ‘comparable’ to the advanced calibre of Engen’s Quick Shops. Figure 6.6 is an example of a specific type of internationalisation – an Africanisation. By using the term “African” in the shop name, the owner implies that the shop is an African product, by an African for all Africans. This name can possibly be considered as the shop owner ‘passively’ speaking out against the allegedly xenophobic attacks against immigrant tuckshop owners in numerous South African townships and informal settlements (Charman & Piper, 2012).

### 6.2.2 Economic transactions with customers

Apart from the commodified linguistic practices on the signage, actual linguistic practices during transactions further exemplify the use of language, authenticity and identity as commodities to contest for economic prosperity. During her study of the commodification of language and authenticity in francophone sites in Canada, Heller (2003: 487) observed how

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kwikshop.com/topic/the-company-4>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.engen.co.za/press/engen-achieves-600th-quickshop-milestone>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.engen.co.za/press/autexpress%E2%80%99-collaboration-with-engen-heralds-a-new-era-in-quality-vehicle-services>

periodically “language skills are given greater importance than ethnic ties” and the constant contest between the “valuing of language skills versus the valuing of authenticity”. This contestation is also observable with the tuckshop owners – although the tuckshop owner might be a monolingual immigrant or monolingual South African, multiple linguistic practices are used in the tuckshops. Table 1 illustrates this phenomenon. The third column is the interview responses from certain tuckshop owners who commented about the languages they use with their customers.

<b>Tuckshop name</b>	<b>Language on Sign</b>	<b>Language(s) used with customers</b>
Shameen	Arabic	“Uses Afrikaans, English and Setswana”
Al-ag dan	Arabic	“Sometimes Afrikaans, Sometimes English. Sometimes Tswana.”
Madeena	Arabic	“I speak to them English. A few guys it is Afrikaans, like that. Some Tswana also.”
Nellie	Afrikaans	“Jong, ek praat Tswana, ek praat Afrikaans en die ander talle. Solank ek net kan hoor wat sê hulle, ek antwoord.” (Look, I speak Setswana, I speak Afrikaans and the other languages. As long as I can understand them, I answer.)
Special	English	“English. Sometimes it is Tswana. Not too much. A little bit.”
Khaled Sylhet	Arabic	“More than English and then a little bit Tswana and a little bit Afrikaans.”

*Table 1: Monolingual tuckshop signage with multilingual linguistic practices*

As can be observed in the columns above, when it comes to economic transactions, multilingual skills are more valuable than the tuckshop owners’ mono-ethnic affiliations.

Deumert and Mabandla (2009) explore how language diversity (particularly the lack thereof) can limit and constrain economic activity. According to Deumert and Mabandla (2009:427),



“the informal economy, with its various entrepreneurial activities, operates largely through the city’s local languages - socially and economically dominant languages”. Understanding that in recent times, the face of the tuckshop industry has changed dramatically with an increase in non-South African owners, the research project explored whether change in ownership influenced the linguistic practices of tuckshop owners. The extracts below show that multilingual linguistic dispensation (Aronin & Singleton 2008) is the discourse practice in interactions.

Extract 1:

*I: Which languages do you speak to your customers?*

*P: I speak Amharic. No no, I speak Afrikaans.*

*I: But you originally speak Amharic?*

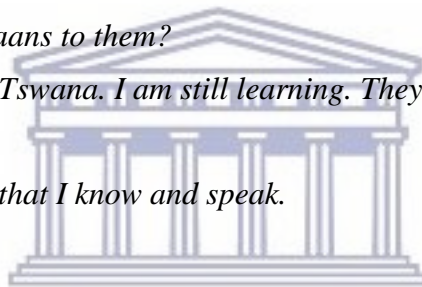
*P: No, I speak Afrikaans.*

*I: Do you only speak Afrikaans to them?*

*P: Yes, I don’t understand Tswana. I am still learning. They are still teaching me.*

*I: So what is Amharic?*

*P: It is the other language that I know and speak.*



Extract 2:

*I: Which language does Musa use when he speaks to the customers?*

*P: He speaks Setswana.*

*I: Upon arrival, which language did Musa speak to the customers?*

*P: Musa speaks Ethiopian language but he spoke English to the customers when he first arrived.*

Extract 3:

*I: Which languages do you speak normally with your customers?*

*P: Sometimes English, Setswana and Afrikaans. Now I speak three language.*

*I: Which language did you speak to them initially when you got here?*

*P: English was better.*

Extract 4:

*I: Which language do you speak to your customers?*

*P: My country is in East-Africa. But I try the English language. I know my language.*

*I: So if I come speak Afrikaans to you, will you assist me?*

*P: Afrikaans – I don't talk but I know the name – what they want. I don't talk together. I know my problem.*

Based on the interview extracts quoted above, it becomes apparent how non-South African tuckshop owners had to learn local languages in order for them to conduct their business transactions.

Deumert and Mabandla (2013:45) mention the use of “basic, mixed jargon that is structurally reduced but communicatively adequate” as another strategy used by Chinese traders to communicate with their customers. Below we see examples of how non-South African tuckshop owners also draw on a basic, mixed jargon in order to facilitate smooth economic transactions with their customers.

Extract 5

*P: I don't know. I don't talk Setswana or Afrikaans. I hear. But if you want **Tswana** “**mae**”, **I can give you eggs**. But I don't know. I can't talk Afrikaans and Tswana.*

Extract 6

*I: So if a customer comes here and speaks Tswana?*

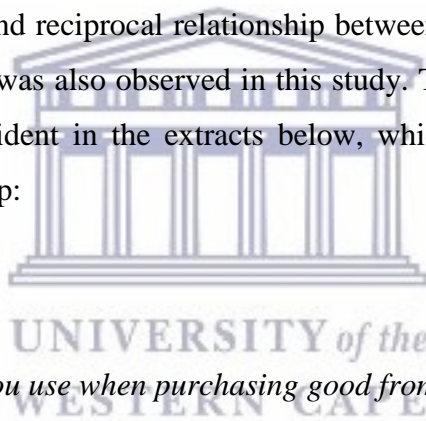
*P: **Bietjie nyana (just a little bit)** [laughs]*

Deumert and Mabandla (2013:427) state that “sales in the informal economy can be successfully completed even in cases of low linguistic proficiency – rarely involving more than a basic knowledge of numbers and the names for the products on sale...” The two examples quoted above illustrate how non-South African tuckshop owners learned what certain product(s) are called in local languages, particularly in the first example. “Bietjie nyana” is a hybridised Afrikaans-Setswana term commonly used in the Northern Cape and it means “just a little bit”. “Bietjie nyana” is an essential term to know as a tuckshop owner as tuckshops are particularly famous for selling certain products in small quantities, such as small plastic pouches of sugar (Gastrow & Amit, 2013:26). Therefore, if a customer requests for “bietjie nyana atchaar” or “bietjie nyana butter”, the tuckshop owner will understand the quantity needed. From the interview extracts, it is noticeable how understanding and

communication is more important than language proficiency – owners are willing to learn the languages their customers speak in order to see to their needs.

Driven by their disapproval with the common perspective that violence against Somali tuckshop owners is purely fuelled by xenophobic attitudes in South Africa, Charman and Piper (2012) conducted research in Delft, South Africa, to tease out further plausible reasons for this violence. Delft is an area with a tuckshop market that has experienced a rise of immigrant-run shops and the demise of South African shops. In relation to xenophobic attitudes, Charman and Piper (2012:93) concluded that the majority of the participants interviewed appeared indifferent towards foreign tuckshop owners with some participants speaking favourably about foreigner-owned tuckshops.

This indifferent yet positive and reciprocal relationship between immigrant tuckshop owners and South African customers was also observed in this study. The linguistic accommodation practices by customers as evident in the extracts below, which serve as examples of this positive, reciprocal relationship:



Extract 7

*I: So which language do you use when purchasing good from the tuck shop?*

*P: Setswana and English.*

*I: And when the owner responds? Which language do they use?*

*P: Setswana and English. They don't know it well (Setswana) so we use English a lot.*

Extract 8

*I: So which language do you use when you come purchase goods?*

*P: I speak English mostly.*

*I: So what happens when you speak Afrikaans?*

*P: He understands Afrikaans here and there but most of the time he doesn't.*

*I: When you speak Afrikaans to him, in which language does he respond? When you go buy something?*

*P: In English.*

Extract 9

*I: Which languages do you speak to the owners at the tuck shop?*

*P: Afrikaans and English.*

*I: So you don't speak Setswana?*

*P: No, we don't know Setswana but they speak a bit of Setswana to us.*

Extract 10

*I: Which language do you use when purchasing goods?*

*P: I use Setswana and English now and then.*

*I: So if I walk in there now and speak Setswana, would they help me?*

*P: No, this one doesn't know Setswana that well. The one that speaks Setswana a lot is not here.*

From the extracts above, it is evident that tuckshop customers are generally accommodative. Both owners and customers draw on languaging (Jorgensen, 2009) as a strategy to facilitate economic transactions.

### 6.3 Tuckshop commercial signage

According to a longitudinal study conducted by Sustainable Livelihoods (2010-2013), signage and branding form an important aspect of most tuckshops. This longitudinal study also concluded that many have their business names advertised on sponsored signboards from suppliers such as Vodacom, MTN, Coca-Cola, Jive, Unilever and Standard Bank (Sustainable Livelihoods, 2010-2013). However, as the discussion below illustrates, there exists various types of tuckshop commercial signage. The existence of the various types of signage (including the non-existence of signage) and most pertinently, the motivation(s) behind signage type selection, presents commercial signage as another site of struggle.

The commercial signage is categorised as follows: 1) Sponsored Commercial Signage, 2) Layered Signage, 3) Handwritten/ Painted Signage, 4) No Signage, and 5) Clone Advertisement Signage. Below follows a discussion of the respective categories.

### 6.3.1 Sponsored commercial signage

The signage under this category is typically sponsored by a company and the company would provide the tuckshop with a signboard with the tuckshop name written on it. Based on the data collected, it can be concluded that most sponsored signage is provided by the international beverage company, Coca-Cola. Perks (2010) explains that Coca-Cola sponsored signage is most sought after by spaza shop owners, as it attracts customers and stimulates sales of other products. Figures 6.7 and 6.8 are examples of tuckshops with Coca-Cola sponsored signage:



Figure 6. 7: Jolly Tuckshop



Figure 6. 8: Kitso Tuck Shop

As can be observed above, the Coca-Cola signboard typically has the tuckshop's name printed on the left hand side of the renowned Coke bottle with the Coca-Cola typeface on it. Scollon and Scollon (2003: 145) characterise the Coca-Cola typeface as decontextualised semiotics which is described as “all the forms of signs, pictures and texts which may appear in multiple contexts but always in the same form”. Going on the premise that signs are motivated and not arbitrary (Kress, 2010), following the noticeable prevalence of Coca-Cola sponsored signage in the tuckshop semiotic landscape, through interviews with tuckshop owners, the study explored the motivations behind the selection of Coca-Cola sponsored signage. From extract 11, it becomes apparent that the acquiring of the sponsored Coca-Cola sign is based on a contractual agreement – tuckshop owners must register their business with

Coca-Cola and purchase Coca-Cola products directly from the company in order to receive a Coca-Cola signboard.

Extract 11

*I: Other shops have Coca-Cola signs just like yours. What are the benefits of the Coca-Cola sign?*

*P: I buy Coca-Cola product so the product must go fast that is why Coca-Cola company give the signboard. I told them, you give signboard you can write the name also of the shop. I registered with Coca-Cola - I have mos account with Coca-Cola that is why I got the signboard.*

Extract 11 therefore suggests that the sponsored Coca-Cola sign is a mere result/benefit of a business agreement between tuckshop owners and Coca-Cola. However, it also clear that the owner is not merely promoting Coca-Cola products; he uses the brand Coca-Cola to advertise his shop by insisting that the name of his shop should appear on the signage.

Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665) argue that, in the semiotic landscape of rural Zambia, “salience and visibility of signage are not necessarily determined a priori”. Oral linguascaping enables people to easily repurpose ideas, socio-cultural knowledge and materialities, and other semiotic materials in place for meanings and utility functions they are not known or designed for (Banda & Jimaima, 2015: 665). Extract 12 serves as an example of how, in this case specifically, the location of a tuckshop and the assumption of the products it sells does not require visible, written signage. “Everybody wants to drink Coca-Cola” and due to its popularity, customers will assume most shop outlets sell it. Essentially, customers will rely on their socio-cultural knowledge to guide the consumer practices irrespective of the existence of commercial signage.

Extract 12

*I: Why do you have that (a Coca-Cola) sign there?*

*P: Its Coca-Cola. I advertise for Coca-Cola.*

*MR: Do you sell Coca-Cola?*

*P: Ja*

*I: In your own opinion, do you think it is important for a tuckshop to have a sign outside?*

*P: I don't know.*

*I: Okay, so you don't think it is important? So if I remove that sign outside, wouldn't it matter to you?*

*P: It doesn't matter this signboard. Everybody knows you want to drink Coca-Cola.*

*MR: So how do they know that you are here?*

*P: Coca Cola advertises itself.*

*MR: Okay, but how do you advertise you?*

*P: It doesn't matter for me [laughs]*

Scollon and Scollon (2003: 145) argue that international recognition is the primary objective of decontextualized semiotics, as “the goal of branding is to produce universal and decontextulised recognition of their names and products, so that their symbols become as instantly recognised”. Extract 13 below is an example of the contestation between soft drink companies in the tuckshop landscape, particularly based on the decontextualised recognition of names of brand names. Coca-Cola “writes signs all over the world” while Phuza and Twiza do not. Additionally, Phuza and Twiza are not internationally recognisable soft drink brand names and therefore their signage is not as beneficial as the Coca-Cola sign.

Extract 13

*I: I see you have a Coca-Cola sign written James tuck shop. Why do you have that sign?*

*P: You see, it is only Coca-Cola company that gives the signs. For example, Phuza, another cooldrink delivery is not given the signs. All over Kimberley, Coke also writes. Not just in South Africa, but all over the world.*

*I: What are the benefits of having a Coca-Cola sign outside?*

*P: It benefits me and the Coca-Cola company. For Coke company, most people are going to drink Coke stuff. More than Twiza. Twiza also have but Coke. Generally, I don't know but people like Coke drink.*

In conclusion, extracts 11–13 suggest that the main motivations for Coca-Cola sponsored signage are: 1) the signage forms part of the business/contractual agreement between tuckshop owners and Coca-Cola; 2) Coke is a popular beverage among customers; and 3) Coca-Cola is internationally renowned.



Figure 6. 9: Sponsored Wall

However, not all decontextualised signage in the tuckshop semiotic landscape comes in the form of a physical, removable sign. Certain companies prefer to sponsor the tuckshops by painting the tuckshop's exterior walls. As is visible in figure 6.9, the colour of the paint on the exterior walls of the tuckshops is in sync with the colour associated with the sponsoring brand, i.e. red for Vodacom. Additionally, the walls are covered with the Vodacom logo (the encircled speech mark) and this still serves as examples of decontextualized semiotics as the

Vodacom logo is instantly recognisable in whichever context it is placed.

### 6.3.2 Layered signage

The second category of tuckshop commercial signage is layered signage. This type of signage can be equated to a history book where the past and present can be literally 'read' of the sign. According to Scollon and Scollon (2003:137) layering takes place when "a sign is attached to another sign in such way that one is clearly more recent and more temporary".

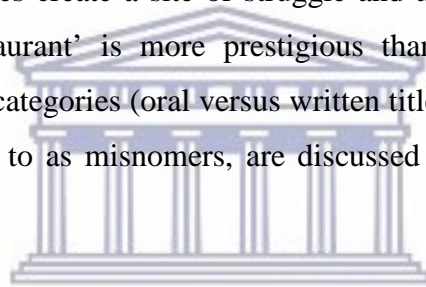


Figure 6. 10: Ratanang Restuarant and Ratanang Tuckshop



Scollon and Scollon (2003:137) argue that the ‘newness’ of the layered sign isn’t about how long ago it was emplaced but rather it is new because “it is attached as an add-on and not semiotically integrated into the ‘permanent’ sign”. Although Scollon and Scollon (2003) primarily write about layered signage related to ‘newness’, this study seeks to extend the meaning attached to layered signage. Drawing on figures 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12 as examples, this study posits that layered signage is a consequence of: 1) a change in the category of the business, 2) spelling variation on the new sign (as in the case of Ramadan Tuckshop), and 3) the tuckshop owner’s identity.

The business in figure 6.10 has two different commercial signs and business descriptions for one business, namely “Ratanang Tuckshop” on the Coca-Cola sponsored signage, and “Ratanang Restaurant” painted on the exterior walls of the tuckshop, sponsored by Eveready Power Plus. The differing titles create a site of struggle and a ‘status battle’ between these two signs, as the title ‘restaurant’ is more prestigious than the title ‘tuckshop’. Other examples of conflicting shop categories (oral versus written titles given to businesses), which Peck and Banda (2009) refer to as misnomers, are discussed in greater details later in the chapter.



Blommaert (2012:55) argues that “signs that overlap, criss-cross and contradict each other are indicative of different interacting (and sometimes conflicting) social orders, as when different groups compete over rights of ownership of a place and contest or overwrite each other’s signs”. The two contradicting signs in figure 6.10 serve as an example of signs that are suggestive of conflicting social order. The owner of the tuckshop narrates that the business was originally Ratanang Restaurant and it was changed to ‘Ratanang Tuckshop’ as a consequence of legalisation from the government which required all businesses in the food service industry to be licenced following their adherence to certain standards.<sup>17</sup> A dual inscription of this nature suggests the existence of a dual memory associated with Ratanang – it is currently considered as a tuckshop, but it can also be associated with it being a former ‘restaurant’. The memory of the restaurant thus lives on through the existence of the old sign, and also in the minds of local people.

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<sup>17</sup> According to the Regulations Governing General Hygiene Requirements for Food Premises and the Transport of Food, any person who handles food or allows the handling of food on their premise such as a restaurant must be required to possess a certificate of acceptability.

Lanza and Woldemariam (2014:504) argue that in ‘peripheral’ communities where the informational content of English was limited, English is drawn on to index “prestige, luxury and modernity”. In figure 6.10, it is observable that the word ‘restaurant’ is spelled inaccurately as ‘restuarant’ on the wall by Eveready Power Plus, yet the word ‘Ratanang’, which means ‘Love each other’, is consistently spelled correct on both signs. The lack of attempted correction of the word ‘restaurant’, either through repainting and/or using the Coca-Cola sign to cover up the spelling error, speaks to the importance/dominance of certain languages in the area (Kagung). Kagung is a predominantly Setswana-speaking area, therefore incorrect English grammar wouldn’t cause a stir. Therefore, English is appreciated more for its symbolic value (modernity, prestige, luxury) than as a medium to communicate an ideational, comprehensible message (Vandenbroucke, 2016: 96).

Although the tuckshop owner is familiar enough with the English language to categorise a place that used to prepare fast foods as a restaurant, English is not an ‘important’ enough language in the area to be fussy about an English spelling error.

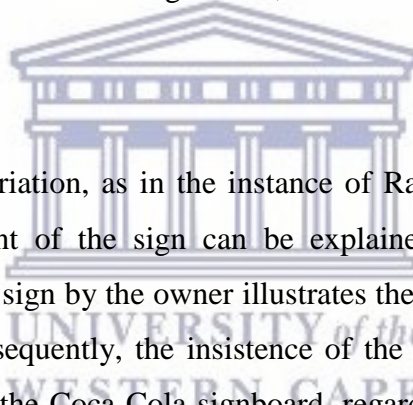


*Figure 6. 11: Ramadan and Ramadaan Shop*

Figure 6.11 is another example of a business with two different business signs on its wall, but in this case, the contestation is based on the spelling (Ramadan versus Ramadaan), not conflicting types of categories (restaurant versus tuckshop). Going on the deteriorating state of the handwritten sign (Ramadan Shop), it can be assumed that it was created before the

Coca-Cola sign, as it appears to be common practice among tuckshop owners to create their own temporary signs before seeking/negotiating for sponsored signs.

Blommaert (2012:92) argues that the dynamics of access, and the constraints on access to language varieties, played a role in the Dutch orthographic errors committed by Turkish business owners when producing Dutch text. Due to this lack of access to normative varieties of Dutch, Turkish business owners drew from an informal well of ‘how it sounds’ in producing written Dutch text. A similar observation can be made about the orthographic error on the Coca-Cola sign on which Ramadaan instead of Ramadan is scripted. This spelling variation can be attributed to the fact that the tuckshop is located in a predominantly Afrikaans, Christian area, namely Delportshoop. ‘Ramadan’ is an Arabic word and Arabic is not a commonly used language in Delportshoop. Additionally, Ramadan is associated with the Islamic faith, as it is the Muslim fasting month; however Islam is a minority religion in Delportshoop.



Regardless of this spelling variation, as in the instance of Ratanang, the sign has not been replaced. The non-replacement of the sign can be explained in three ways. Firstly, the preservation of the old/correct sign by the owner illustrates the honour and respect associated with the Islam faith and, consequently, the insistence of the correct representation thereof. Secondly, the preservation of the Coca-Cola signboard, regardless of the spelling error, can be considered a business strategy. In keeping the sign, the owner acknowledges the economic power that Coca-Cola holds as an international brand and how that will generate revenue for his tuckshop. This is similar to Ratanang Restaurant/Tuckshop where an incorrect feature of a sign is repurposed and capitalised on by the tuckshop owner – the incorrect English word for economic prestige and the incorrect Coca-Cola sign for attracting customers. Lanza and Woldemariam (2014: 492) explain that “the allusion to, or use of, international trademarks and brand names can be compared to the use of English as an index to an identity associated with modernity among local language users”. Consequently, both tuckshop owners benefit positively from the contradictory signage. Lastly, in relation to the Dutch signage that contains orthographic errors, Blommaert (2012:97) argues that, regardless of the signage that contains Dutch or errors, “the signs effectively communicate and audiences display a quite remarkable elasticity and tolerance when it comes to understanding misspelled forms”. This

argument is applicable to figures 6.10 and 6.11 – irrespective of the spellings variations, the signs continue to be comprehensible and the respective audiences will be agentic and participate in the co-construction of meaning and place.

As mentioned before, this study seeks to expand the scope of layered signage beyond an indication of ‘new’ and ‘old’ signage. Figure 6.12 serves as an example that layered signage can also index a fluid/negotiated identity.



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Figure 6. 12: Islam/Lucky Shop

The tuckshop in figure 6.12 has two different types of signage and two different names on the wall of the tuckshop – “Islam Tuckshop” in paint and “Lucky Shop” on the Coca-Cola sponsored signage. Below follows the owner’s explanation of this occurrence:

#### Extract 13

*I: So you wrote Islam in paint but Lucky on the Coca Cola sign. Why?*

*P: Islam that is my opening - I have paint here to someone. I say hey, give me borrow me paint let me write. - let me write the name Islam. I also needed to be an artist.*

*I: Why did you chose the specific name? Lucky Shop?*

*P: Lucky Shop at least when I come in here, the time I'm suffer and then I get my job my colleague told me that I am Lucky. You are a lucky guy, you got a job. That time he just give me the name. I am Lucky. Then after that one whose give it to me this shop then I told Coca Cola I need to open the account. I said please come in with my month's [stock]. My name is Lucky. Put it the name of the shop will be Lucky shop.*

*I: My name is Islam. My name is Lucky.*

Evidently, layered signage can be indicative of a fluid identity – the owner’s birth name, “Islam” has an Arabic etymology. However, upon his decision to register the tuckshop with Coca-Cola, he selected “Lucky” as the name the shop ought to be registered with. “Lucky” as a name has English origins and it is a name he adopted after a co-worker described him as such. In the last line of extract 13, the owner proudly identifies with both of his names. This proud association with both names and, consequently, identities, might explain why he never removed “Islam Tuckshop” from the wall – it continues to be a part of his identity and history. Symbolically, in terms of layered signage, “Islam” represents the ‘suffering’ he endured and “Lucky” represents a prosperous time in his life. Lucky’s tuckshop is a site of identity contestation based on religious yet socio-economic aspects.

### 6.3.3 Painted and handwritten signage

The third category of signs are hand-written/painted signs. According to Charman, Petersen and Piper (2011) the painting of signage onto the exterior walls is a common practice in the spaza shop industry. According to Sustainable Livelihoods (2010-2013), smaller spazas often also tend to paint or draw the image of popular products on exterior walls. Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:367) argue that signage of this nature is found at sites of necessity as “the signage is built from available technologies and materials found in the township”. Drawing on figures 6.13–6.16 as examples, this research illustrates that not all signage from “spaces lower in the economic hierarchy” neatly subscribe to attributes ascribed to signage at sites of necessity.



Figure 6. 13: Tasefhune Tuckshop

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:375) argue that signage found at sites of necessity as “the signage is manually produced on a unique basis with a relatively modest economic investment, and fashioned out of materials that do not weather well”. In figure 6.13, paint was used in the handwriting of the tuckshop’s name and for the drawing of the products. Paint, as a material, is weather-resistant and, depending on the buyer’s financial status, it can be a costly economic expenditure. In fact, judging from the various colours on Tasefhune Tuckshop’s wall, purchasing the paints must have been more than a ‘modest economic investment’.

Another characteristic related to signage in sites of necessity is what Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:374) term as ludic spaces – “spaces where originality, creativity, and playfulness are displayed”. As an example, Stroud and Mpedukana (2009) cite the drawing of chairs next to the store name on the ‘Isipho Upholsterers’ business sign. Going on Stroud and Mpedukana’s (2009) argument, the white space on which the products in figure 6.13 are painted can be considered ludic space. However, in the case of figure 6.13, equating the painting of products on the exterior wall to ‘playfulness’ and ‘creativity’ diminishes the significant contribution of the image as a semiotic resource. Blommaert (2012: 49) states that, when different modalities appear in one sign, for instance image and text, “the different modalities appear to have a different semiotic scope: they both reach (and select) different audiences”. The customers who are unable to read the written inscriptions (names of the tuckshops) can infer based on the pictures that this is a shop. Evidently, the design of the signage was influenced by the tuckshop owners’ awareness of their local context, particularly the needs and the literacy levels of some of their clients. The painting of the products therefore enhances meaning-making potential (Kress, 2010) instead of entertaining ‘playfulness’.

Kasanga (2010) notes the practice of local business owners’ desire to identify themselves with well-known international/national brands and refers to this practice as clone advertisement. In figure 6.13, the tuckshop owner appropriates national popular brands such as SASKO to advertise the cake flour, and brands such as White Star and Iwisa to advertise maize meal. OMO is drawn to advertise washing powder and Cell C, Vodacom and MTN to promote the sale of airtime. This ‘clone advertisement’ is effective for two reasons: firstly,

the customers will be able to visually recognise products from trusted brands on the walls and therefore purchase them from the tuckshop. Secondly, it is common practice in South Africa for consumers to refer to products by established brand names instead of product names, for instance, *Colgate* instead of toothpaste, and *Sta-Soft* instead of fabric softener. Therefore, by painting these trusted brands and their famous products, the tuckshop owners remediate this linguistic practice of South African customers and rework this verbal linguistic practice into a visual representation.



Figure 6. 14: Bucs Tuck Shop

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009) contrast signage in sites of necessity against signage in sites of luxury. According to Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:367), signage in sites of luxury are associated with “industrial production” as they are linked to “professional service providers”. On the other hand, signage in sites of necessity are in most cases done “manually” in consultation with “a painter/student known for her/his artistic abilities”. From Stroud and Mpedukana’s (2009) binary differentiation between the two types of signage, it becomes evident that signage from sites of necessity are not perceived to be professional. However, figure 6.14 problematises this strict distinction between ‘professional’ and ‘non-professional’ signage. Figure 6.14 is a picture of the name of Bucs Tuck Shop – a tuckshop located in a site of necessity. However, aesthetically, figure 6.14 appears professional – consistent font, same-size lettering and consistent vertical and horizontal length. In comparison to figure 6.13, it is

clear that a professional painter/sign maker was appointed for the inscription of the tuckshop's name. Banda and Jimaima (2015) found similar signage in rural Zambia to the sign in figure 6.14 – signage manually produced from repurposed discarded material such as cardboard and car metal, yet the inscriptions appear professional. Banda and Jimaima (2015:660) argue that these signs, similar to the sign in figure 6.14,

look professional, not in the sense of Western/European materialities of neon lights and 'factory' measured signboards but in a selling sense as seen in the use of different colour contrast and font sizes and types, which also suggests levels of visual design 'literacy'.

Consequently, figure 6.14 problematises Stroud and Mpedukana's (2009:376) assertion that "the socio-economics of a site influences the type of signage". The socio-economics of a given site, per say, do not influence the type of signage rather than perceptions related to the taxonomy of 'professional' versus 'non-professional' signage. Stroud and Mpedukana (2014) conceptualise the notion "sites of implosion" to account for signage that contain both characteristics associated with signage at sites of necessity and signage at sites of luxury. According to Stroud and Mpedukana (2014:341), signage at sites of implosion contain "a hybrid mix of representational forms, linguistic fragments and turns of phrase which figure the township as a site of economic and social transformation..." Figure 6.14 can be considered as a signage that deconstructs the divide between signage in sites of necessity and signage in sites of luxury and, consequently, the tuckshop becomes a site of economic and social transformation.

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:375) remark that signage found in sites of necessity typically are "written in unmonitored and unedited English and therefore serves as an example of the peripheral normativity of English that is non-standard and locally produced language forms, unmonitored for correctness". The referral to certain English varieties as 'unmonitored for correctness' and 'unedited' paints varieties such as the ones visible in figure 6.15 and 6.16 as deviant, whereas English should be considered an oecumenical medium of communication (Blommaert, 2012).





Figure 6. 15: Product List



Figure 6. 16: Special Shop

In his ethnographic linguistic landscape study of the Antwerp area in Belgium, Blommaert (2012) observed how Turkish business owners produce text in Dutch that contained numerous Dutch orthographic errors. Blommaert (2012: 88) contextualises the use of Dutch by Turkish business owners in their shop signage (erroneous or ‘correct’) “as a gesture of aspiration and ambition, characterizing the upwardly mobile by means of ‘language display’ and expressing the desire to draw customers from all groups in the area”. The same sentiments are applicable to figures 6.15 and figure 6.16. The use of English on the product list of Special Tuckshop, pictured in figure 6.15, is symbolical and serves as an indication that customers from all walks of life are welcome. This inclusivity is further illustrated through the inclusion of local terms such as ‘Lejapi-Chicken’ and ‘Hamper’ on the product list. Similar to the Kagung area in Kuruman, Windsorton is predominantly a non-English speaking community. The tuckshop owner is targeting what Blommaert (2012:86) refers to as an ‘oecumenical’ audience. Therefore, the misspelling of English words is ‘expected’ and the lack of attempts to correct this is contextually acceptable as English is merely used for its commercial power.

The spelling ‘Available’ as Availble and the misspelling of ‘Air-Time’ is a result of the tuckshop owners drawing on the sound of the words and converting this sound into spelling

(Blommaert, 2012). Lanza and Woldemariam (2014) provide an explanation for this ungrammatical use of English by small shop owners. According to Lanza and Woldemariam (2014: 503–504), “in many cases involving smaller shops that employ English on their signs, the owners themselves do not necessarily speak English – the English is necessary for their business, including the English on the sign”.

Having reached the conclusion that the use of English in figure 6.15 is symbolical and was used to draw an oecumenical audience, Blommaert’s (2012) categorisation of the type of English use in figure 6.15 as “errors” is therefore counterproductive and demonises certain language practices. The linguistic practices in figure 6.15 is better conceptualised as an example of a site of struggle between the varying English spelling variations instead of errors. The English variation used in figure 6.15 is not “bad language but language that does not conform to the imagined and invented rules that are maintained in the historical or economic centres of the language” (Juffermans, 2015:67). Pennycook (2010:1-2) warns against the tendency to juxtapose between global and local uses of languages that mock the notion of locality. According to Pennycook (2010:7), “all language practices are local”, therefore the English use in figure 6.15 is local not erroneous.

#### **6.3.4 Clone advertisement & semiotic appropriation**

Kasanga (2010) refers to the practice of local business owners’ desire to identify themselves with well-known international brands as “clone advertisement”. Figures 6.17–6.19 are all examples of tuckshops that drew on clone advertisement and appropriated and incorporated the Coca-Cola type into their handwritten signs. As discovered earlier from an interview with a tuckshop owner, tuckshop owners get Coca-Cola signage through a business/contractual agreement with Coca-Cola. Going on figures 6.17, 6.18 and 6.19, not all tuckshop owners can meet the financial requirements of registering with Coca-Cola as a distributor and as a result, receive a signboard and Coca-Cola fridges. Some tuckshop owners resolve to the appropriation of the Coca-Cola sign.



Figure 6. 17: Mandela Tuck Shop



Figure 6. 18: Remediation of Coca Cola typeface1



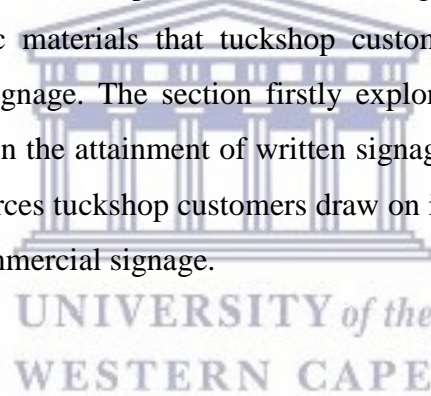
Figure 6. 19: Remediation

In figure 6.17, on the “Mandela Tuck Shop” sign, the word “Coca-” is scripted below Mandela. In figures 6.18 and 6.19 (Ahmed and Johannes Tuck Shop), both owners appropriated the iconic red Coca-Cola typeface and scripted it beneath the tuckshop’s name. Interesting to note is that Johannes Tuck Shop (figure 6.19) actually has two signs –the handwritten sign that is foregrounded and the Coca-Cola sign in the background. This type of remediation can be motivated by various reasons: firstly, the owners sell Coca-Cola and want

to advertise that. Secondly, by including ‘Coca-Cola’ on their signs, the owners appropriate the popularity of Coca-Cola to draw customers to their shop. Thirdly, the inclusion of ‘Coca-Cola’ on their hand-written signs could be a desire for assimilation – by writing ‘Coca-Cola’, it somehow minimises the difference between a hand-written sign and a Coca-Cola sign. The only difference would be the colours and the image of the Coke bottle. In the appropriation of the brand name on their hand-written signs, these owners informally and creatively draw on the popularity of the brand to attract customers.

#### 6.4 Non-linguistic signage

Stroud and Mpedukana (2009:382) suggest that future studies on signage conduct a “material ethnography of multilingualism to explore how people take up, use, manage and discard, interact with...signs and artifacts...” Not all tuckshops have visible, written signage. Consequently, following Stroud and Mpedukana’s (2009) suggestion, this section explores the alternative, non-linguistic materials that tuckshop customers take up and use in the absence of visible, written signage. The section firstly explores the aspects that influence tuckshop owners’ disinterest in the attainment of written signage. Following that, the section discusses the additional resources tuckshop customers draw on in the location of tuckshops in the absence of tuckshops’ commercial signage.



##### 6.4.1 Socio-economic challenges

The first aspect that deters and/or delays tuckshop owners from securing visible, written signage is socio-economic challenges – challenges that inevitably result in the acquiring of written signage evoking certain emotive responses. Aronin (2012: 183) explored the link between material culture and affectivity in the Circassin community of Israel. She concluded that “materialities carry out innumerable social functions; among them arousing, maintaining and sustaining emotions, attitudes and affectivity of various kinds”. Extracts 14–16 illustrate how signage as a material object arouses certain emotions (fear, anxiety, and uncertainty) among tuckshop owners.

Extract 14

*I: I don't see any sign outside that indicates that this is a tuck shop? Why? Don't you think it is important for a shop to have a sign outside?*

*P: Yes, it is important but I don't make.*

*I: Oh, you don't make...*

*P: You see...I want to make signboard and you see this light – the same like one box, White House Shanty inside it has got a light. The whole night it is on. But this light, it is robbing someone. That is why I don't want to put...this side there is someone robbing...*

In extract 14, the owner explains how he would like to make a specific sign – a box with the name of the tuckshop inside (White Shanty) with a light (fluorescent lighting). However, the fear of theft prohibits him from creating the sign as there is a thief stealing the lights in the respective area.

Extract 15

*I: But the name is not outside. Why is the name not outside?*

*P: The reason is that I am not done yet*

*I: When did you open it?*

*P: It is a long time now – from 2007. I have moved places 4 times now.*

*I: Why did you move places?*

*P: I am not the owner of this South Africa – I don't have an ID in South Africa. So I have to rent the place. When the contract is finished, I have to move out of the place. Until now I have my own place so I am busy to fix my place so I will put it. I am only six to seven months here.*

*I: Did you have a sign at the other three places?*

*P: No*

*I: Do you think it is important for a tuck shop to have a signboard?*

*P: Yes, of course.*

*I: Why do you think so?*

*P: Important because people must know the place – I mean this is shop. I mean any company or any person can see...anybody can see that this one is a place. This one is a business place.*

Gastrow and Amit (2013) conducted research on Somali shops, including spaza shops, and noted several Somali trade practices. One of the Somalian trade practices include renting their shop premises from South African landlords. Based on extract 15, it is noticeable how this trading practice (i.e. renting of the tuckshop building) creates feelings of uncertainty and fear of the unknown among non-South African tuckshop owners. Consequently, uncertainty regarding permanent business premises impacts whether or not signage can be erected.

#### Extract 16

*I: I see there is no sign outside that says that this is a tuck shop. Like other shops have that Coca-Cola sign but yours doesn't have anything outside.*

*P: Ja, no that one did not come – the company.*

*I: So do you think it is important for a tuck shop to have a sign outside that shows that this is a tuck shop?*

*P: Ja but they didn't come. Any company didn't come this side.*

The tuckshop referred to in extract 16 is in Holpan – a small place with a sparse population located between Barkley West and Windsorton. Holpan has three tuckshops – two of which have no visible, written signage, and one tuckshop which ‘inherited’ the signage of the previous owner. Extract 16 serves as an example of how tuckshop signage as a material object can evoke feelings of neglect and marginalisation. Due to their remote geographical location and the size of their community, Holpan tuckshop owners are potentially easily overlooked by companies that could provide them with sponsored commercial signage.

#### 6.4.2 Familiarity of owner and existence of building

As mentioned afore, Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665) argue that “salience and visibility of signage are not necessarily determined *a priori*”. Extracts 17–19 attest to the dispensability of written signage. Although tuckshop owners acknowledge the relevance of written signage, they simultaneously recognise that certain materials ‘outperform’ written signage.

#### Extract 17

*I: In your opinion, is it important for a tuck shop to have a business sign and why do you think so?*

*P: The Coca-Cola sign – you see if customers from far side can see that that is Lucky Shop. Let me go buy. I know mos Lucky. Let me go buy something. To see the customer there – they know there will be a tuck shop here.*

*I: Which other things do you use to promote your business besides the sign?*

*P: Besides my name, the customers they know here – 13 years this building has been here. The customers know that Lucky's shop is at the dessert. So even if I take out the sign, I won't worry. I am going to get my customers.*

Extract 18

*I: I see that you get your drinks from Coca-Cola but I don't see a Coca-Cola sign like the other tuckshops.*

*P: We have told company. Company say they can bring it anytime so we wait. I have applied already.*

*I: So why don't you use other methods – other material to write on the wall that this is Khal Khal shop or something?*

*P: No, you know. Actually this shop is too old (15 years). That is why we don't need the sign. Everybody knows the place.*

*I: So in your opinion do you think it is important for a business to have a sign outside to say this is what what shop?*

*P: Yes, it must be there. I think so.*

*I: Why do you think so?*

*P: Because sometimes you see we have people come out of place like you you see. You don't know this place. But people know this one because it is old. But it is important.*

Extract 19

*I: In your own opinion, is it important for a business to have a sign outside? A sign that indicates that this is a tuck shop?*

*P: People know me. If you any person tell you Shameen, they bring you to the shop.*

*I: For instance, I am not from here and someone told me that I should go to Shameen's tuck shop, I wouldn't know where it is.*

*P: Because you are not from Delport. Delport people all of them they know when they go to Gebied and my name – they tell you go to there.*

*I: But are you looking for a sign?*

*P: No*

As evident in the extracts above, semiotic resources/materialities such as the memory associated with the tuckshop building, the number of years a tuckshop has been in existence, and familiarity with the tuckshop owner are deemed more important than the visibility of written signage by tuckshop owners.

The remainder of this section focuses on the materialities that tuckshop customers cited as alternative signs in the absence of visible, written commercial signage. Blommaert (2012: 20) states that “signs turn spaces into specific loci filled with expectations as to codes of conduct, meaning-making practices and forms of interpretation. And the use of such

semiotised spaces – by means of processes of informal learning called ‘enskilment’”. The categories and extracts below elaborate on the alternative semiotics that tuckshop customers have come to associate with tuckshops in the absence of a linguistic sign. The selection of alternative semiotics drawn on by tuckshop customers are categorised as: 1) building features, 2) the physical presence of people, and 3) situated semiotics.

### 6.4.3 Building features

Blommaert (2012:50) states that “there are expectations – normative expectations – about relationships between signs and particular spaces”. As is evident in extracts 20–24, tuckshops’ building features, particularly their big doors and colourful walls, have become an expected and normal characteristic of tuckshops.

Extract 20: *“Elke my friend se besigheid het altyd ‘n helse groot deur of a rooi tuckshop sign.”* (“Every ‘my friend’s’ business always has a big door or a red tuckshop sign.”)

Extract 21: *“Because of the way it is built. It has the door of a garage. But I think it is due to protest actions because when people in the township protest, they like to break into their shops and loot stuff from their shops.”*

Extract 22: *“Ons noem dit die wit tuck shop.”* (“We call it the white shop.”)

Extract 23: *“The colour of the tuck shop and the public phone.”*

Extract 24: *“You would see from its colour.”*



Figure 6. 20: An example of a tuck shop located in a garage (extract 15)



#### 6.4.4 The presence of people

Scollon and Scollon (2003:3) posit that “we (human beings) ourselves are the embodiment of signs in our physical presence, movements, and gestures”. The presence of people at the tuckshop is cited in extracts 25 and 26 as another non-linguistic sign that assists locals to allocate a tuckshop.

##### Extract 25

*“Mens gaan altyd sien daar is ander mense wat uithang by die tuck shop...soos ouens wat daar uithang en so. En meestal die bordjies – party male.”* (One will always see people hanging around at the tuckshop.)

##### Extract 26

*“Jy sou gesien het want hy het mos customers laat die stof staan.”* (One would notice by the large number of customers.)

#### 6.4.5 Visibility of products

Aronin (2015:5) states that intangible phenomena forms part of the ‘list’ of material culture. In extracts 27–29, participants draw on sight as a sense to locate tuckshops to compensate for the absence of a linguistic sign.

Extract 27: *“When you pass, you can see them selling things from the outside.”*

Extract 28: *I know it is a tuck shop because they sell things...*

Extract 29: *“Well, their names are written outside but there are also these Coke stickers. So obviously when you see these Coke stickers you have to ask yourself what goes on there...because it wouldn’t make sense to put Coke stickers on a normal house. That is the difference.”*



Figure 6. 21: Visibility of products as mentioned in extracts 21 and 22



Figure 6. 22: Kagiso/Kgotso Tuckshop?

Participants’ responses in extracts 20–29 support Banda and Jimaima’s (2015) conclusion that “the lack of written language does not impair signmaking: if anything, it makes the act of place-making a very creative endeavour in which the written words, if available, are ignored or become additional semiotic material...”

Banda and Jimaima (2015: 666) postulate that the study of linguistic/semiotic landscapes expands to “the dialogicality and interaction of the various semiotic materials, visible or invisible, outside or in the immediate contexts”. Figure 6.22 serves as an example of the interaction of various semiotic material – visible and immediate (existing tuck shop building),

and invisible and outside (memory about a fire that occurred in the past). Figure 6.22 is a picture of Kgotso/Kagiso tuckshop. Participants were asked to mention the names of tuckshops in the area and as is evident in extracts 30 and 31, although the tuckshop (Kgotso/Kagiso) burned down, memories associated with the tuckshop still come to mind.

Extract 30

*I: Don't you know the names of any other tuckshops?*

*P: It was only that one but it burned down - that was Kgotso tuckshop.*

Extract 31

*I: What are the name of the tuckshops around here?*

*P: There was the one that burned down – Kagiso. Then there is Mama T, Hakuna Matata, Sheila.*

The inclusion of the burnt-down tuckshop's story into existing tuckshop narrative is an example of what Bille, Hastrup, and Sorensen (2010) refer to as "the presence of absence". Bille, Hastrup, and Sorensen (2010:4) argue that, instead of viewing presence and absence as two different existences, it is important to understand how "what may be materially absent still influences people's experience of the material world – therefore the materially present and materially absent are mutually interdependent". In this case, the influence of the materially absent is observable in the fact that none of the participants referred to the tuckshop with its current name which is "Modirapula Supermarket" (figure 6.22). Although participants provide different names for the materially absent tuckshop, participants clearly remember the tuckshop being engulfed in flames and its existence. Consequently, we observe how a memory associated with a specific place plays a role in the location and narration of place.

## **6.5 Tuckshops' naming practices**

One of the conclusions reached by the longitudinal study conducted by Sustainable Livelihoods (2010-2013) on tuckshops is that most tuckshops are named and have their business names advertised on sponsored signage. Of interest to this research was, firstly,

whether the visibility of written tuckshop names play a significant role in way-finding and place-making, and secondly, whether the naming practices have a symbolic function.

### 6.5.1 Oral linguascaping

Banda and Jimaima (2015) note how in certain instances residents in rural Zambia ignored written language and opted for their “own oral linguascaping of the environment based on socio-cultural and historical knowledge and particular landscapes in the environment”. Extracts 32–36 serve as examples of how tuckshop customers willingly ignore written signage and continue to rely on their own oral linguascaping to name/refer to certain tuckshops.

Extract 32

*I: What is the name of this tuck shop?*

*P: I don't know.*

*I: So what do you call this tuck shop if you don't know its name?*

*P: I never look. I call it the “Rooi Shop”.*

*I: Why do you call it “Rooi Shop?”*

*P: It is red and there are a lot of Mama Shops in this area.*

In extract 32, it is observable how the participant admits to ignoring the written language (“I never look”). This participant’s naming of the tuckshop is motivated by the landscape features in the environment. The participant rationalises that it is futile to refer to the tuckshop by its name as written on the signage, i.e. Mama Shop, as many other Mama shops exist in the immediate environment. Consequently, she ignores the sign and draws on the colour of the building (red) to orally create a novel name for the tuckshop.

Extract 33

*I: Wat is die naam van die shop? (What is the name of this shop?)*

*P: Mandela tuck shop.*

*I: Wat noem jy die tuck shop? (What do you call this tuck shop?)*

*P: Nipples.*

*I: Hoekom roep jy hom so? (Why do you call it that way?)*

*P: Nee, van voorheen toe was dit so. Almal...kyk jy... Ons almal het daai van ons ken hom so. (It was like that before. Everyone...you see, we all know it is called that way.)*

The participant in extract 33 is familiar with the ‘current’ name of the tuck-shop, however personally, the participant does not refer to the business as “Mandela tuck shop”. The participant draws on historical knowledge in naming the tuckshop. “Nipples” is the nickname of the former owner of the tuckshop. Consequently, although the tuckshop’s ownership has changed and has acquired a new name that is written outside the tuckshop, the memory and identity of the former owner still lives on through oral linguascaping.

Extract 34

*I: What is the name of this tuck shop?*

*P: Musa Tuck Shop.*

*I: That is not what is written outside though.*

*P: Yes outside it is written Ayele or something but this shop’s name is Musa Tuck Shop.*

*I: But who is Musa?*

*P: He is the owner of the shop.*



Figure 6. 23: “Musa Tuck Shop”

Extract 34 is a snippet from an interview with a tuckshop assistant who orally names the tuckshop based on its current ownership. Consequently, regardless of what is written on the

wall, i.e. *Kimberley Cash & Carry Ayele's Tuck Shop* (as pictured in figure 6.23, the tuckshop's name is *Musa Tuck Shop*. Musa is the latest owner of the tuckshop and when asked why Musa hasn't changed the sign yet, she states that "*he keeps saying he is going to change it but he hasn't done so*".

Extract 35

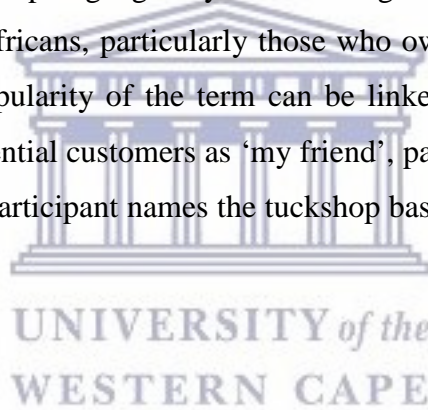
*I: What is the name of this tuck shop?*

*P: I don't know the name of this tuck shop. \*Reads signboard\* It is Lapologang.*

*I: But before you read it is called Lapologang, what did you call it?*

*P: I called it my friend.*

In extract 35, the participant draws on socio-cultural knowledge to name the tuckshop and ignores the written name, i.e. Lapologang. 'My friend' is a generic term used in the Northern Cape to refer to non-South Africans, particularly those who own a business (tuckshop, shoe tailor, street vendor). The popularity of the term can be linked back to non-South African entrepreneurs referring to potential customers as 'my friend', particularly in order to establish a rapport. Consequently, the participant names the tuckshop based on the assumed nationality of the tuckshop owner.



Extract 36

*I: What is the name of this tuck shop?*

*P: **Brother's Shop** – It is written there.*

*I: So what do you call it?*

*P: No, we call it by the name of the guy – Mari.*

*I: So you call it **Mari shop**?*

*R: No, we don't call it a shop. We call it Mari.*

Extract 36 is particularly interesting, as the participant disassociates from the written language in two manners: 1) he refuses to acknowledge the official name of the shop, i.e. Brothers Shop, and 2) he resists acknowledging that the tuckshop is a shop. That particular building to him is referred to as Mari who is the owner of the tuckshop and the building is portrayed as being part of Mari. Even with the existence of a definitive inscription, i.e.

Brothers' Shop, the participant ignores this inscription and considers the space (tuckshop) as “a blank space open for the possibility of multiple meanings” (Banda & Jimaima, 2015: 657).

### 6.5.2 Beyond brand anonymity

In Peck and Banda (2014), the authors describe the case of “VIV Supermarket” –a shop that underwent a change in ownership, but the shop’s commercial signage did not change. The current owner, a Somalian trader, refrained from personalised signage and retained the Coca-Cola sponsored signage on which “VIV Supermarket” is scripted in order to conceal his Somalian identity. Peck and Banda (2014:19) link the non-removal of Coca-Cola sponsored signage to brand anonymity which is described as “the association with brand so as to conceal a supererogatory facet of one’s personal make-up”.

This study argues that the non-removal of existing signage extends beyond brand anonymity. The non-removal of existing signage can be linked to two other realities: 1) the renting of business premises, and 2) financial goals of survivalist businesses.

According to Hakim (2011), 89 per cent of those (South African) landlords who had occupied their premises before renting them to Somalis, had used the premises for business purposes. As is evident in the interview extracts below, the non-removal of existing signage can be the consequence of external factors such as renting of a tuckshop premise that already had a sign and/or current owners’ nonchalance with regard to the signage and the tuckshop name.

Extract 37

*I: What is the name of the shop?*

*P: It is Kitso tuck shop.*

*I: Why do you call it Kitso tuck shop?*

*P: This is before time the owner give name. This owner’s daughter name.*

Extract 38

*I: What is the name of your tuck shop?*

*P: There is two names – Good Hope and Toek Toekie.*

*I: Why do you call it that?*

*P: I don't know. First time also like this.*

Extract 39

*I: What is the name of your shop?*

*P: Save.*

*I: But outside there is a board that says Save's Mini Market.*

*R: Yes, Save's Mini Market.*

*I: Why do you call it Save's?*

*P: I take this thing from the other shop neh now it is Save Mini Market.*

*P: It is just name.*

Additionally, the non-removal of signage speaks to the different financial goals between a small, survivalist business such as the tuckshop and bigger retail stores. Evidently, there is a constant change of tuckshop ownership and tuckshops randomly pop up frequently. Therefore, the constant change of names and signs could become redundant – the bottom line is financial gains, not aesthetics and corporate identity. As concluded earlier, tuckshop customers draw on alternative semiotic resources to locate tuckshops in the absence of written signage and customers tend to ignore written signage. Consequently, as signage and names appear increasingly insignificant in the semiotic landscape of tuckshops, the non-removal of signage cannot solely be categorised as 'brand anonymity'.

### **6.5.3 Misnomers**

In their research on the LL of Observatory, Peck and Banda (2014) noticed how an Asian take-away shop included the term "supermarket" in their business sign and described this occurrence as a misnomer. According to Peck and Banda (2014: 9), "the word 'supermarket' is a misnomer as the Chinese store does not supply a large variety of stock as found in conventional supermarkets". The inclusion of misnomers on signage was also observed in this study as there appeared to be no clear criteria business must meet to qualify as 'tuckshop' or another type of business. This research also argues that misnomers are not 'mistakes' but are deliberate advertising ploys. The extracts below exemplify these contradictions:



Extract 40

*I: What is the name of your tuck shop?*

*P: Holpan Supermarket.*

*I: Why do you call it Holpan Supermarket?*

*P: The location name is Holpan.*

*I: Why do you call it a Supermarket? Normally such places are called tuckshops.*

*P: Ha ah, it is not tuck shop.*

Extract 41

*I: Why do you call your place a supermarket? Why don't you call it a tuck shop? What is so specific about it?*

*P: It is better.*

*I: Calling it a supermarket is better?*

*P: Yes, it is better.*

*I: But there is no sign outside to show it is a supermarket but you call it a supermarket?*

*P: Calling it a supermarket makes it better than a tuck shop.*

*I: So there is no other reason you call it a supermarket except that it is better?*

*R: The only reason is that it is better you see.*

Extract 42

*I: What is the name of your shop?*

*P: Save.*

*I: Sorry, is this a tuck shop?*

*P: Yes.*

*I: But outside there is a board that says Save's mini market.*

*P: Yes, Save's Mini Market.*

*I: But you said it is a tuck shop.*

*P: Yes, it is a tuck shop.*

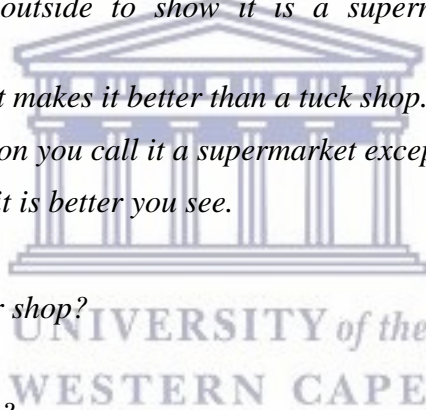


Figure 6. 24: Mini Market or Tuck Shop?

This semantic 'exaggeration' of one's business activities/offerings is referred to by Stroud and Mpedukana (2009) as "up-scaling". Based on these interview extracts, it is evident that the category of a shop is business-related, i.e. whichever category that makes the business profitable will be chosen. Only the owner in the extract 41 provided an explanation for

categorising his business as a ‘supermarket’. Going on his explanation, it can be concluded that the selection of the business category appears to be a semantic game – the title that makes the shop appear as grand is selected. The need to outwit fellow tuckshop owners through choosing the ‘better’ category can be attributed to how competitive the tuckshop industry is – new tuckshops are opened unexpectedly and in order to retain customers and stay afloat, this semantic game might be used as a strategy.

According to Bughesiu (2011:40), trade names may be monolingual, multilingual and universal. Of these universal names are the most frequently used, as they usually consist of linguistic sequences that are semantically decodable (therefore understandable) in most languages: bar, casino, taxi, etc. In this case, ‘tuckshop’ might be too universal – might be too commonly known as a small shop, therefore the up-scaling - the up-scaling to a more respected linguistic sequence like ‘supermarket’.



*Figure 6. 25: Mini Supermarket?*

Figure 6.25 serves as an example of misnomers in tuckshop signage and further seeks to illustrate the ambiguity of business categorisation in the tuckshop landscape. It is semantically awkward for a business to carry contradictory titles simultaneously because super is the upgrade of mini. In addition, the services and products available at a minimarket are minute in comparison to that available at a supermarket.

A group of tuckshop customers were asked why they think some shops are called supermarkets while others are called tuckshops. Their responses indicate the arbitrariness of the selection of business categories:

Extract 43

*“We don’t know my broer. They are just written like that. You mos know how the Makula’s<sup>18</sup> are. They write anything they want to write”.*

Based on this response, it is evident that even customers perceive the distinction between business types to be random, as the categorisation appears to be based on personal preference.

## 6.6 Summary

This chapter aimed to illustrate how tuckshops sites are struggles – a situational context where constant negotiation and/or contestation occurs. The chapter discussed how the tuckshop as a struggle is operationalised through four semiotic resources: 1) Linguistic practices, 2) Commercial signage, 3) non-linguistic signage, and 4) naming practices.

The hybrid linguistic practices used by tuckshop owners and tuckshop customers during economic transactions serve as an illustration of the constant negotiation of ethnolinguistic identities in the tuckshop environment. The increased use of local languages on the commercial signage of tuckshops illustrates a contestation between local languages and English as ‘the lingua franca of commodified languages’.

Although tuckshop commercial signage is typically associated with manufactured, sponsored signage from corporations such as Coca-Cola, this chapter demonstrated that the catalogue of tuckshop commercial signage includes painted and/or handwritten signage, layered signage and clone advertisement signage. As discussed, the various types of painted and/or handwritten signage found in the Northern Cape problematises Stroud and Mpedukana’s (2009) distinction between signage in ‘sites of necessity’ and signage in ‘sites of luxury’. The

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<sup>18</sup> Lekula is a word commonly used in South Africa to refer to people of Indian descent. Makula is the plural form of the term.

examples of layered signage discussed in the chapter propels an enhanced perspective, thinking beyond layered signage as a mere indication of ‘old’ and ‘new’, as suggested by Scollon and Scollon (2003).

The semiotic landscape of the tuckshop is not only saturated with commercial signage – within the landscape also exists non-linguistic signage that aids in the location of tuckshops. The three non-linguistic signs discussed in this chapter contests the assumption of the omnipresence of written signage. Based on interviews with tuckshop customers, these non-linguistic signs are: 1) the features of the buildings in which tuckshops operate, 2) the physical presence of people, and 3) the visibility of products and other semiotics that are not typically associated with an average house. Interviews with tuckshop owners regarding the importance of signage contests the link between business signs and profitability. The following conclusions were reached: a) Not all tuckshop owners want (written) commercial signage, b) the acquirement of signage is influenced by factors such as lease agreements between landlords and tuckshop owners, and c) certain tuckshop owners depend on their familiarity among locals and the memory associated with the building as commercial signage.

Lastly, in terms of the naming practices, based on interviews with tuckshop customers and tuckshop owners, overall, it can be concluded that written names are not central to the business of tuckshops. Names and the categories assigned to tuckshops are used as a business strategy and in the contestation for customers. In the interviews, numerous customers admitted to either not knowing or ignoring the name of the tuckshop and consequently creating their own names for some tuckshops. Additionally, this chapter illustrated that in certain cases, the non-removal of commercial signage is not related to brand anonymity, as suggested by Peck and Banda (2014). The name on the commercial signage doesn’t matter to some new tuckshop owners as changing names can be a disruptive and relatively expensive process. Lastly, what Peck and Banda (2014) consider as ‘misnomers’ is not applicable to the tuckshop environment. Describing a tuckshop as a ‘supermarket’ or ‘mini super market’ is a strategy of marketization, i.e. it is a strategy used by tuckshop owners to attract customers to their businesses.



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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SIGN-MAKING AND SIGNAGE AS LOCAL PRACTICE

#### 7.1 Introduction

In line with Pennycook's (2010) conceptualisation of language as local practice, this chapter argues that similar to language, signage ought to be considered as local practice. At the heart of Pennycook's (2010) notion of language as local practice are two interrelated key concepts: local and practice. For Pennycook (2010:2-3), "locality has to do with space and place and locality needs to be understood independently from global – local is not the opposite of global". Pennycook (2010: 7) argues that there should be no pre-given notion of what is local, rather locality boldly states that "all language practices are local". As stated by Pennycook (2010:2), "what we do with language in a particular place is a result of our interpretation of that place; and the language practices we engage in reinforce that reading of place". To Pennycook (2010:2), "practice are not just things we do, but rather bundles of activities that are the central organisation of social life". Therefore, in considering language as a practice, language is understood as a "product of the deeply social and cultural activities in which people engage" (Pennycook, 2010:1).

Therefore, in suggesting signage as a local practice, it is argued that the use of signage, that is sign-making and consumption, are not pre-determined or fixed systems, but rather are fluid, evolving and multidimensional. As a local practice, signage (the creation and relevant uses thereof) has to be interpreted as a result of the relationship between physical space and human agency.

In this chapter, the localisation of signage practices is illustrated through: 1) discussing the commodification of local languages on business advertisements; 2) analysing the strategic inclusion of local slang and 'eye dialect' into signage to showcase locality; and 3) exploring how signage is informed by evolving societal practices by illustrating how locals repurpose existing materials and reuse them for different purposes and/or to reinvent local physical spaces (Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Prior & Hengst, 2010; Banda & Jimaima, 2015).

## 7.2 Commodification of local language and authenticity

According to Heller (2003:474), the commodification of language refers to the process of “language being rendered amenable to redefinition as a measurable skill”, and consequently, “the understanding of language being a marketable commodity on its own”. Heller (2003) analysed the commodification of language and authenticity in two areas in francophone Canada – the tourism sector and a call centre. Jaworski (2016:76) refers to the commodification of language as the ‘thingification of words’. Leeman and Modan (2010) explore how language interacts with other design elements in the built environment to sell places. Figure 7.1 serves as an example of how language is commodified and used as a thing to sell services.



*Figure 7. 1: Business sign of a Sotho doctor*

According to Heller (2003: 474), “language often does play a role in the management of the shifting relations between commodity and authenticity, generally by being deployed as a means to control access to newly valuable resources being developed”. The sign pictured in figure 7.1 advertises the services of a traditional Sotho doctor. The sign is written in Sesotho and its English translation reads: “A Sotho doctor that heals all diseases. No work get done on Tuesday”. The doctor simultaneously uses Sesotho as a language to advertise her/his services and draws on the language to validate her/himself as an authentic Sotho doctor. According to Juffermans (2015: 74), “authors in the linguistic landscape style their messages

in a particular way so that they can be read and understood by a particular audience”. By creating a monolingual Sesotho sign, the doctor overtly controls who has access to these healing services and limits the scope of potential customers to individuals who can read and understand Sesotho. Based on their study in Washington DC’s Chinatown, Leeman and Modan (2010:183) observed how “minority languages are used as strategic tools in contemporary urban redevelopment initiatives and the construction of destination locations for tourists and residents alike”. In using Sesotho – an ‘economically, minority language’ to advertise her/his services, the doctor strategically constructs her/his doctor’s practice as an ideal location for the ‘cure’ of all diseases.



Figure 7. 2: *Dr – Mama Kim: The traditional doctor*

Heller (2003:474) argues that, despite widespread complaints about the McDonaldisation of the linguistic landscape (oversaturation of English), many sectors of the globalised new economy are centred on multilingual communication. Figure 7.2 is an example of signage that draws on multilingual and multidiscursive practices. The sign in Figure 7.2 advertises the services of a traditional doctor, Dr Mama Kim, and is written in Setswana (*Ngaka ya Setso* which translates to ‘traditional doctor’ in English) and English (Doctor abbreviated as Dr). In drawing on multilingual practices, Dr Mama Kim increases her potential client reach – those who are unable to read Setswana can rely on the abbreviation ‘Dr’, as it is the English translation of ‘ngaka’ and vice versa.

Higgins (2009: 1) reports on a shop owner in Tanzania who named his rice and beans store “2PAC STORE” – “a name which combines the international popularity of deceased US rapper Tupac Shakur with the practical matters of selling rice and beans”. Higgins (2009:2) argues that the name “2PAC STORE” illustrates “how English can serve a local sphere of



material consumption through intersecting with a sphere of global cultural production”. Similar to the owner of “2PAC STORE”, Mama Kim also draws on cross/hybrid genre to advertise her services. Typically, traditional African medicine, which forms part of the local sphere of material consumption, and Western medicine are perceived as two distinct genres. However, Mama Kim, by drawing on both the English abbreviation and Sesotho naming practice, she merges these two genres as a traditional doctor.

Lastly, by using the word “Mama” she commodifies attributes that are typically associated with mothers, i.e. nurturing, caring and warmth, to advertise herself. The commodification of motherly nature is also used by a healthcare company, Johnson & Johnson, who recently launched a brand called “Doktor Mom”. According to the Johnson & Johnson website, “generations of mothers from around the world have believed in the healing power of herbs. DOKTOR MOM® understands mothers’ wisdom and has specially developed an herbal cough range...”<sup>19</sup> Dr Mama Kim appropriates this healing knowledge and power associated with mothers to promote her services.

### 7.3 Language as a local practice in LL

Pennycook (2010) posits that language is a local practice. Among his central theses about the centrality of locality/place is that the use of linguistic practices are a result of our reading of a particular place. The language practices in figure 7.3 exemplify Pennycook’s argument on the centrality of place in the interpretation of language produced in that place.



Figure 7. 3: Signage and price list of Themba Lethu Hair Salon

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.jnjconsumer.co.za/our-brands/doktor-mom>

Higgins (2009:131) notes how a local shop owner in Tanzania used a spelling that acknowledges localised pronunciation on a business sign. Figure 7.3 also has examples that illustrate the acknowledgement of local pronunciation in written advertisements. Examples include the spelling of “pris” instead of *price* and “shoft” as a replacement for *soft*. A similar observation can be made about the spelling of “shoft” in figure 7.3, i.e. the word is written the way locals would pronounce it. Juffermans (2015: 67) refers to this creative spelling as an “eye dialect – a type of non-standard spelling that is visible to the eye, rather than audible when read out loud”. The spelling variation of price as ‘pris’ is pragmatic – when pronounced, the letter “e” in price is silent, consequently, the omission of the letter “e” is understandable. The second example that illustrates the locality of language is the use of localised slang. Higgins (2009: 132) notes how numerous advertisements in Tanzania “make use of trends, including trendy language/slang”. The use of the localised slang word “vasbraid”, which is globally referred to as “cornrows”, is an example of how localised Northern Cape slang is incorporated into business advertisements. Pennycook (2009:2-3) argues that “language operates as an integrated social and spatial activity – a multifaceted interplay between humans and their physical environment”. The third and last example that suggests the importance of understanding language as a spatial activity – a product of actual physical space – is seen illustrated in figure 7.3. Close to the bottom of the price list, there is an amalgamation of the names of different haircut styles – 1) “Brushchiscoop” instead of *Brush cut* and *Chiskop*, and 2) “ShavingTrim” instead of *Shaving* and *Trim*. This linguistic activity, i.e. the merging of these names, is a result of spatial limitations – there was not enough vertical space left on the price list to write the names of the four haircuts out in full. Additionally, the merged haircuts cost the same – fifteen rand for a Brushchiscoop and five rand for ShavingTrim. Therefore it is justifiable to advertise them as one product as a means to maximise space.

Higgins (2009) suggests the Bakhtinian concept *multivocality* as “a comprehensive framework for interpreting the hybrid and transcultural language used in post-colonial societies”.



Figure 7. 4: Ful Kit R80 each

According to Higgins (2009:6), multivocality refers to “the characteristic of utterances to have multiple meanings and indefinite number of interpretations”. Higgins (2009:7) states that bivalent multivocality particularly “allows for a range of double-voiced usages, including parody, word play and double entendres”. The sign pictured in figure 7.4 is an example of bivalent multivocality.

Figure 7.4 is an advertisement for Full Kits at R80 each at a slaughterhouse and butchery of a farm that sells cattle. However, the ‘ful kit’ referred to in the advertisement is divorced from the typical meaning of a ‘kit’. According to Oxford Dictionaries online, the word “kit” typically refers to 1) a set of articles or equipment needed for a specific purpose like ‘a first-aid kit’, and 2) the clothing used for an activity such as a sport like ‘a football kit’.<sup>20</sup> The kit referred to in figure 7.4 is a ‘meat package.’ However, the adjective “full” is critical as it determines what the package contains. In the Northern Cape local discourse, a full kit refers to a package of sheep meat that contains: one sheep head, four sheep feet, lungs and sheep intestines. Thus, the phrase “full kit” is an example of bivalent multivocality as it is open to two/and or multiple interpretations. Locals’ creativity in extending the meaning of the term to suit their local context is also an example of their wordplay ability. Thus, the interpretation of “full kit” is therefore “firmly located in time and place” (Pennycook, 2009:7).

<sup>20</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/kit>

Higgins (2009:7) cites Woolard (1998) who describes bivalent forms as “belonging equally to two languages at once”. According to Higgins (2009:7), “bivalent forms allow speakers to remain in the interstices of multivocality, rather than having to choose one code or another”. In writing, the English term “ful kit” is used as an umbrella term to describe the meat package, the oral explanation of the meat package is bivalent, i.e. the elaborating about the content of a ‘full kit’ typically occurs in either Setswana and/or Afrikaans. Ordinarily, a full kit is described as *afval* (sheep head), *pote* (sheep feet) and *binnegoed* (intestines). Therefore, locals exploit and showcase their levels of bivalent multivocality by using the English term for written advertisements and local languages for oral elaboration/advertisement.

Jørgensen (2008:169) defines languaging as “language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal with the intention of achieving their communicative aims”. Based on his ethnographic work in Gambia, a country in East Africa, Juffermans (2015:13) suggests the concept of “local languaging” as a means to “capture the dynamic, performative and agentive use of language in situated local contexts”. Juffermans (2015:13) argues that “local languaging emphasises the local specificity of language and literacy in practice”. The language practices in figure 7.5 serve as an illustration of languaging, particularly to the location in which the sign is placed.



Figure 7. 5: Advertisement of Exzors and Tyres

Figure 7.5 is an example of local languaging. The linguistic practice on the sign is a mixture of language features from three languages: Setswana, Sesotho and English. A direct English

translation of the sign reads: “I (Ke) fix/repair (lokisa) exhausts (de exzors) and (le) tyres (de tyres)”. The spelling of ‘exzors’ provides an opportune example to heed Juffermans’ (2015) suggestion about focusing on how languaging is localised. The word is spelled the way locals would pronounce it as it is common to use the term ‘exhaust’ [ekzo: s] – a shortcut for the entire term which is ‘exhaust pipe’. Therefore, the spelling of ‘exhaust’ as ‘exzors’ serves as another example “eye dialect” (Juffermans, 2015), and of the use of spelling that acknowledges local pronunciation (Higgins, 2009). Higgins (2009:1) argues that “English serves distinctively local needs and is used, in various forms, as a local language among locals”. In figure 7.5, English, particularly the local appropriation of the word, “exzors” is commodified and used to advertise repair services.

#### **7.4 Remediation as repurposing**

Bolter and Grusin (2000) write about remediation which essentially can be described as the borrowing of content between old and new media. Bolter and Grusin (2000:45) focus on a particular kind of borrowing termed “repurposing”, which is described as the “taking of a ‘property’ from one medium and reuse it in another. With reuse comes a necessary redefinition, but there may be no conscious interplay between media”. In a bid to add repurposing to the analytical tools of the study of linguistic/semiotic landscape, through their study of the semiotic landscape of Zambia, Banda and Jimaima (2015) extend the notion of repurposing. According to Banda and Jimaima (2015:646), repurposing as an analytic tool can also be employed to account for “the recycling and reusing of objects, memory and cultural materialities for sign- and place-making” for new meanings and purposes.

For repurposing to take place, the mode/medium does not have to change. Irvine (2010: 236), therefore, warns against the emphasis on the change of medium/modes as central to the conceptualisation of repurposing. She argues that “many other kinds of communicative acts can be thought of as repurposing – thus semiotic remediation – even if their semiotic modality itself does not change”, as long as the modality is being used for novel purposes. Following Irvine (2010:236), I define repurposing as “taking up some previously existing form but deploying it in a new move, with a new purpose”. The section that follows explores various types of signage that was deployed in a new way, for a new purpose.

#### 7.4.1 Branding/Advertising signage

In her study of formal and informal signage in the city of Cape Town, Dowling (2010:193) notes that “in South Africa, many advertising boards and information signs lose their indexical significance as they are transformed into building materials for informal housing.” However, the repurposing of these signs as building material is not arbitrary nor an indication of poverty (Banda and Jimaima, 2015) and/or desperation. The individuals who engage in this type of repurposing have a great sense of creativity and agency. As argued by Banda and Jimaima (2015:660), “...through repurposing of the semiotic materials at hand, people transcend the constraints imposed by material conditions to stretch the purposes and the meanings of the semiotic material in place beyond what they are known or were originally designed for”.



*Figure 7. 6: A Vodacom sign to reinforce a structure*

Banda and Jimaima (2015:662) state that commercially done signboards such as the Vodacom in figure 7.6 are expensive and associated with luxury. By infusing these expensive and luxurious signs into the structure of shacks – a building structure typically assumed to be inexpensive – the owners bring into contestation the value typically associated with a shack. Additionally, as commercially done signboards are expensive and therefore presumably of high quality, not reusing and/or repurposing such a high quality material would be wasteful.



*Figure 7. 7: Coca-Cola repurposed to ‘hide’ the till from bypassers*

Scollon and Scollon (2003) would categorise the Coca-Cola sign that is placed on its head next to the till in the tuckshop, as a denied sign. According to Scollon and Scollon (2003:5), a negated sign is typically a sign “that is not to be read because of its physical location”. As per the authors’ theorising, the Coca-Cola sign is not to be read/interpreted as it is not in its ideal physical position, i.e. outside, mounted on the wall of the tuckshop’s exterior wall similar to the smaller Coca-Cola sign, evident in figure 7.7. However, it can be argued that, instead of being denied, the sign is repurposed to serve an alternative function, i.e. to grant the tiller a sense of privacy as the sign covers the till/money from bypassers. This is the same reason the small signs above the Coca-Cola sign are repurposed to add ‘discretion’. Additionally, the placement of the big Coca-Cola signboard outside would be considered redundant as there is already a small Coca-Cola signboard.



*Figure 7. 8: An old dam/water tank repurposed as commercial signage*

Figure 7.8 is distinguished from figures 7.6 and 7.7. In figure 7.8, the wall of the deserted water tank is used simultaneously as a welcome sign (Welcome to Vergenoeg) and a space to advertise Thusanang Bottle Store which is located opposite the water tank. Banda and Jimaima (2015) remark on how residents in rural Zambia draw on faded signage in the process of placemaking. The water tank is analogous to the faded signage – it is deteriorating and rusty. Yet in its rusty and deteriorating state, the walls of the old water tank were repurposed to serve as a semiotic resource. Similar to the faded signage mentioned by Banda and Jimaima (2015:657), the exterior wall of the old water tank provided “a blank space for multiple repurposing...”



Figure 7. 9: Full Kits Commercial Signage  
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By drawing on repurposing as an analytic tool, Banda and Jimaima (2015) celebrate the resourcefulness and creativity of residents in rural Zambia. This calibre of creativity was also observed in this study. Figure 7.9 joins the numerous examples that highlight this creativity. Figure 7.9 is a picture of an A4 paper advertisement pasted on a wall. However, instead of using an adhesive or tape, meat stickers are used to mount the advertisement to the wall. These meat stickers normally contain details, i.e. type of meat, the price per kilogram, the price of the respective item, and a scan-able barcode. This meat sticker is normally used to close a meat plastic to prevent it from opening. In figure 7.9, the ability of the meat stickers to ‘stick’ to a surface is appropriated and used on to stick the full kits advertisement on the wall.





*Figure 7. 10: Fitting Room Gate*

The picture in figure 7.10 is a sign written “Fitting Room” and it is placed on the gate of a home. “Fitting Room” signs are typically found in clothing stores that have fitting room facilities. A seamstress/clothes designer who resides at that home could have repurposed that sign to advertise her/his business.

#### 7.4.2 Road/ Traffic signage



*Figure 7. 11: A motor vehicle number plate on the front of a residential home*

Typically, number plates are attached to the front and rear end of motor vehicles. Number plates uniquely identify the owner of the respective motor vehicle. Consequently, by placing the number plate on the gate, the home owner repurposes this identification strategy and uses it for her/his home. Essentially, the number plate is now used to identify her/his home instead of a motor vehicle. Additionally, attaching the number plate to a yard could be done for

commemoration purposes, e.g. the owner was extremely fond of the car and kept the number plate as a sentimental reminder.

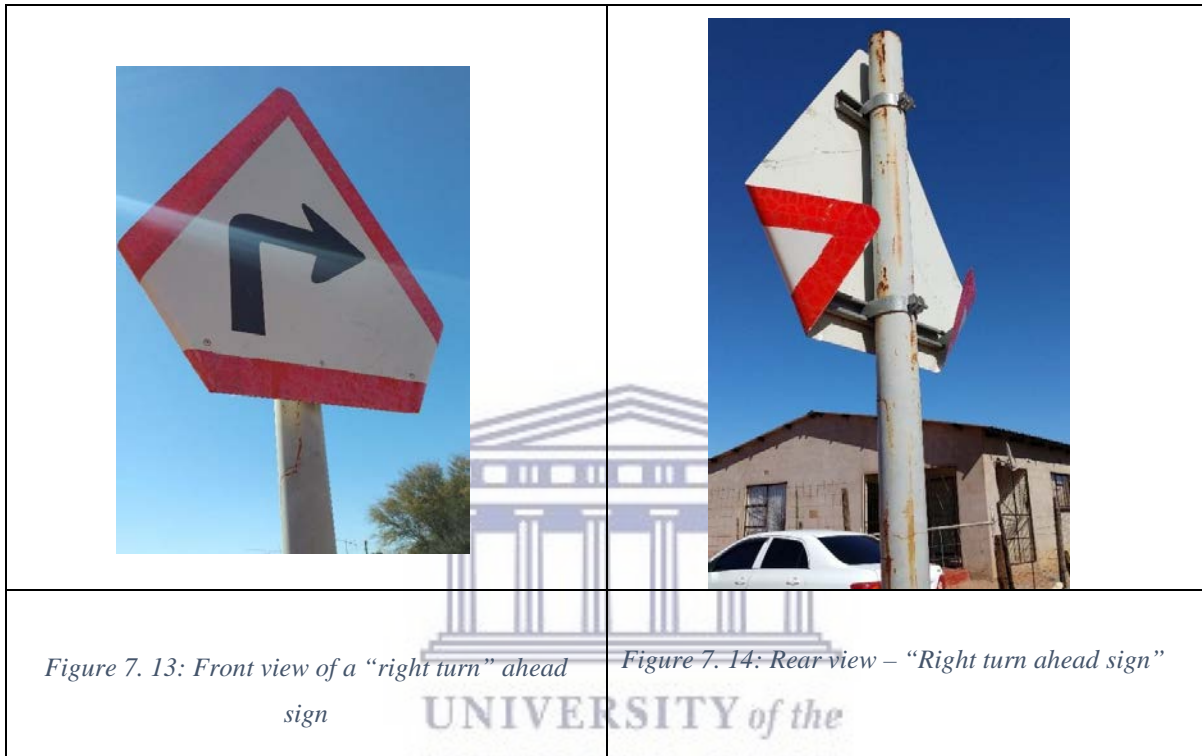
Banda and Jimaima (2015:655) note that in certain instances, there is a disjuncture between the inscription on the sign and its physical placement. Banda and Jimaima (2015:655) term such signs “out of place semiotics”.



Figure 7. 12: A road sign attached to the bottom of a gate at a residence

Figure 7.12 is an example of a semiotic that is out of place. One would expect to find the road sign “No Lines” next to a road that has no clear lines indicated on the road surface. The sign’s recent placement, i.e. at the bottom of the gate, does not refer to a road, hence the mismatch between inscription and placement. As “out of place” as this sign appears, Banda and Jimaima (2015: 655) argue that realignment of inscription and placement is possible after “listening to oral-language remediation”. Even where no oral-language remediation is available, the realignment of inscription and placement in this case is also achieved through observation – a “careful analysis of the historical, socio-cultural and economic contexts surrounding the production and consumption of the signage” (Banda and Jimaima, 2015: 653). Following Banda and Jimaima’s (2015) suggestion, a closer observation at the economic context of the community provided insight as to why the sign in figure 7.12 is consumed in this particular way. Zinc material is economically affordable. Additionally, as it

is known for its flexibility and durability, the house owner considered it worthy to be repurposed as a “scraper” that elevates the gate and consequently, avoid loose sand (created by the constant opening and closing of the gate) from building up underneath the gate. The repurposing of the sign is cheaper than buying another gate and/or growing and maintaining a lawn.



Pennycook (2010:310) argues that the landscape ought to be perceived as constantly under construction and open to continuous reinterpretations and inventions. The signs pictured in figures 7.13 and 7.14 illustrate how semiotic landscapes are contested spaces and how various actors are involved in the construction of space. Pictured in figures 7.13 and 7.14 is a sign that indicates to motorists an approaching right turn in the road. As is visible, the sign has been modified – the corners have been bent inwards. This sign is place next to a narrow street road – a road frequently used by busses and trucks. It is possible that the right side corner of the sign extended into the road and posed a threat to bigger vehicles. Consequently, instead of removing an official road sign, it was modified by bending both corners for uniformity.

### 7.4.3 Rocks as signage

Pennycook (2010) argues that “our linguistic landscapes are the products of human activity not merely in terms of the signs we put up but also in terms of the meanings, morals and myths we invest in them.” The following section explores specifically how rocks, as natural objects, are repurposed and invested with different morals, meanings and functions.



Figure 7. 15: Side view of “Mhlongo Rocks”

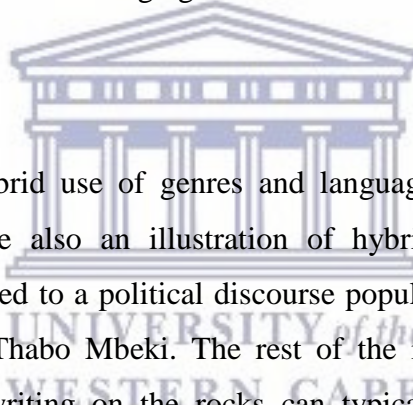


Figure 7. 16: Front view of “Mhlongo Rocks”

Mhlongo Rocks are situated on the corner of a busy street and outside a popular butchery in Galeshewe, Kimberley. Big rocks, such as the ones in the pictures above, are not an uncommon find in the Northern Cape. In fact, the area close to big, flat rocks are typically repurposed as a ‘hang-out’ spot as people can sit on top of the rocks and socialise. Some of these social practices might include smoking, drinking (as is suggested by the debris of empty beer bottles close to the rocks), gossiping and eating on the go. The group of young men standing in the background busy smoking (figure 7.15) illustrates this point. Essentially, the

natural location of the rocks (on the corner of a long, busy street and close to a popular butchery) makes it the perfect spot to be repurposed for aforementioned social practices.

Pennycook (2010:310) posits that landscapes are constantly reimagined and reinvented. The decoration of these rocks results in the repurposing of the rocks and the reinvention of space – from hang-out spot to holy ground. Following the naming of these rocks to “Mhlongo Rocks”, inscription of popular Bible psalms, inscription of sayings such as “Deo Gloria” (Glory to God alone), “Bokang Modimo” (Praise God), and “African Renaissance”, it can be argued that the addition of this religious/spiritual aspect made the physical place and the rocks holy – the space is now reimagined to be “holy ground”. The rocks are repurposed as a conduit to express the author’s Christian faith and perhaps her/his favourite Bible scriptures. The newly reinvented ‘sacredness’ and ‘holiness’ associated with the place, would explain why the group of young men are standing against the wall smoking instead of sitting on the rocks.



Higgins (2009) noted the hybrid use of genres and languages in business advertising in Tanzania. Mhlongo rocks are also an illustration of hybridised genres and languages. “African Renaissance” is related to a political discourse popularised in post-apartheid South Africa by former president, Thabo Mbeki. The rest of the inscriptions are related to the Christianity discourse. The writing on the rocks can typically be categorised into three languages: Latin (Deo Gloria), Setswana (Bokang Modimo) and English (African Renaissance, Psalm 27, Psalm 23). The manner in which these languages are written on the rocks is an example of languaging.

Figures 7.15 and 7.16 serve as examples of how natural material can be repurposed and how this type of repurposing not only extend the affordances of a particular semiotic resource, but also impacts people’s bodies and how people move through space. By virtue of the holiness now associated with the rocks, people will avoid partaking in any activities on the rocks that might taint their holiness. Additionally, by matter of the location and now the decoration of those rocks, these rocks have become recognisable landmarks, i.e. the maroon rocks on the corner – a landmark that can easily be drawn on in the navigation of space and in giving directions.



*Figure 7. 17: The rocky advertisement billboard*

The rock(s) pictured in figure 7.17 are at the entrance and, consequently, exit of a cul-de-sac with numerous businesses. Being the alpha and omega of the cul-de-sac, the rocks are ideally placed to advertise some of the businesses. It is therefore observable how a stone is repurposed from being a feature of nature to a business sign that advertises two services simultaneously, i.e. an electrician and a shoe mender. The owner creatively draws on the size of the rock and familiarity with social practices in this repurposing.



According to Banda and Jimaima (2015: 665), “repurposing becomes critical in understanding not just how people remediate the available semiotic resources, but also how they reuse them for different and multiple sign- and place-making purposes”. In figure 7.18, a rock is reused to serve as a street pole. The inscription on the road stipulates the name of the street and indicates the house number in front of which the rock is placed. As mentioned earlier, big rocks are common in the Northern Cape’s natural landscape.

*Figure 7. 18: Street name pole*

Judging from the versatile use of rocks, as illustrated in figures 7.15 -7.18, rocks form part of the Northern Cape’s semiotic ecology and is used by residents to “bring to life diverse meanings relating to the spaces they navigate” (Banda & Jimaima, 2015: 649).

#### 7.4.4 Marking territory signage

Banda and Jimaima’s (2015:667) study of the semiotic landscape of rural Zambia suggests an “extended taxonomy of ‘signs’” – an extension that would cater for the calibre of signs used in rural-scapes. Banda and Jimaima (2015) suggest boundary markers as one of the categories to be boarded. This study supports this suggestion as numerous examples were found that speak to the distinctiveness of boundary markers used in the Northern Cape. A discussion of these examples follows below.



*Figure 7. 19: Flags used to demarcate church property*

In figure 7.19, it is observable how flags are repurposed to demarcate physical space – the flags are used to ‘create’ borders between church and non-church ground. The linguistic sign in figure 7.19 serves as an additional reinforcement in the demarcation of the church’s property, which reads *Kerk grod* /“Kerk grond”, meaning ‘Church soil/land’. The spelling

variation of the word “grod” instead of “grond” is an example of “eye dialect” – spelling that reveals pronunciation particularities of a given community (Juffermans, 2015: 67). As this is a church, and typically individuals of different socio-educational statuses congregate at a church, the spelling cannot be linked to the socio-educational status of the congregation. Similar to the creative spelling of English noted by Juffermans (2015:67) on business signboards in Gambia, the spelling on the linguistic sign in figure 7.19 illustrates how the rules of Afrikaans “hold limited practical value or prescriptive authority” in the church.

Aronin (2015:6) posits that “materialities and spaces are those other kinds of language which are essential and indispensable parts of the semiotic resources of multilingualism”. Figure 7.20 is an example of how the placement of materialities can ‘speak’ or relay various messages in the ‘absence’ of written inscriptions or oral-narration.



*Figure 7. 20: The two-litre “scarecrow”*

The two-litre bottles placed on the grass in figure 7.20 function as ‘scarecrows’. As is evident in figure 7.20, the grass was recently planted. In a bid to ensure that animals such as chickens refrain from eating the growing grass or scratching the soil looking for bugs and insects, two-litre bottles are repurposed as ‘scarecrows’ to keep animals away. The two-litre ‘scarecrows’ are also meant to deter dogs from defecating on the grass. The visibility of these two-litre ‘scarecrows’ and their interpretation of their presence therefore ‘speaks’ not only to the animals, but also suggests to human beings too not to step on the growing grass.



## 7.5 Signage as cultural protestation

In his book, *Discourse as Cultural Struggle*, Shi-xu (2007: 3) puts forth that “human discourses in the contemporary world are sites of cultural contest – sites saturated with power and history and therefore diversified, dynamic and competing”. Figure 7.22 and figure 7.23 are examples of how ‘contradictory’ signage on the exterior walls of taverns position taverns as a site of contest. This ‘contradictory’ signage ultimately brings into dispute the primary purpose of the tavern as an alcohol-selling place.



Figure 7.21: Mokibi's Tavern

Figure 7.21 is a picture of Mokibi's Tavern. Cambridge Dictionary defines a tavern as “a place where alcohol is sold and drunk”<sup>21</sup>. In terms of signage, it is typical for alcohol brands such as Johnnie Walker to ‘provide’ taverns with a signboard and with advertising material such as the black writing boards evident in figure 7.21. The sign that appears to be in sheer contrast with the surrounding signs on the exterior wall of the tavern is the Coca-Cola sign. As a company, Coca-Cola is a producer of soft drinks and although the tavern sells soft drinks, a tavern is definitely not the first place that comes to mind when one wants to buy a soft drink.

<sup>21</sup> <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tavern>

Interesting to note is the positioning of the Coca-Cola sign – it is placed on the periphery of the building while the other signs are placed centrally, closer to the entrance of the tavern. Additionally, the Coca-Cola sign is slightly placed over the top of a board that advertises the beer “Castle Lager” – a beverage typically associated with a tavern. Based on the positioning of the Coca-Cola sign and its mere physical presence on the tavern’s wall, can be categorised as transgressive. In this case, transgression is not perceived as deviant. In line with Hook’s concept of transgression, transgression suggests “moving past boundaries, the right to choice, to truth telling and critical consciousness, the right to recognise limitations, the shift of paradigms, and the desire to ‘know’ beyond what is readily perceptible” (cited in Pennycook, 2007:40). The inclusion of the Coca-Cola sign on the tavern’s wall seeks to shift the standard of what is perceived as a tavern and challenge the perception that taverns only serve alcohol.



Figure 7. 22: Bra Vick's Tavern



Figure 7. 23: Site of struggle: Bra Vick's Tavern Wall

Shi-xu (2007: 7) claims that in “the same topic, there can be different, incompatible, and even opposing discourses”. Taverns are typically perceived negatively, particularly due to the influx of unlicensed and unmonitored alcohol outlets in communities. Taverns have been associated with social challenges such as teenage pregnancy, drunken, violent behaviour, unsolicited sexual encounters, and so forth.<sup>22</sup> However, the Department of Health’s ‘Zithande’ (Love yourself) campaign adds some positivity to the tuckshop landscape. The ‘Zithande’ campaign was an initiative by the government to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS by calling for a change in people’s perspective regarding HIV and AIDS – love yourself enough not to willingly expose yourself to the virus and love others enough not to willingly spread the virus. By using the tavern’s wall to advertise the Zithande campaign, the sign also contests the HIV/AIDS discourse as the sign reimagines HIV/AIDS to be associated with love and a positive attitude.

The tavern walls are literally site of struggle – a struggle between various alcohol brands, a show-off between sponsored name signboards (Coca-Cola versus Johnnie Walker, and Coca-Cola versus Hansa Pilsner), and a struggle of ‘identities’ (a place of enjoyment versus a highly vulnerable, potentially unhealthy, dangerous place).

## 7.6 Summary

In line with Pennycook’s assertion that language is a local practice, this chapter argued that signage too can be considered a local practice. The locality of signage was illustrated through the: 1) commodification of local languages, 2) understanding of language practices as a product of local socio-cultural practices, and 3) exploration of how various types of existing signage is repurposed to serve the needs of local residents.

The use of local languages to sell and/or advertise local services is a business strategy to implicitly carve out the audience it is intended for. The practice of spelling on advertisements that acknowledges local pronunciations such as ‘Exzors’ and local expressions such as ‘Full Kit’, exemplifies Pennycook’s argument that language is a product of socially mediated activities. The repurposing of signage to perform purposes they were not initially designed

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/business/2015/08/22/taverns-and-shebeens-are-drowning-the-lives-of-our-children>

for is not to be regarded as a sign of poverty or lack of resources. Rather, the numerous manners in which residents repurpose existing signage is considered creative and resourceful. Lastly, this chapter explored how the existence of ‘contradicting’ signage on the walls of taverns constructs the tavern walls as a site of contest. The placement of contrasting socio-cultural signage on the tavern walls seeks to bring into question status quo narratives about taverns, alcohol consumption and HIV/AIDS.

The concluding chapter follows in which the research objectives are revisited.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter revisits the research project's objectives and discusses the conclusions based on these respective objectives. Additionally, this chapter summarises the implications that the conclusions of this research project holds for existing theory and LL research.

#### 8.2 Objectives revisited

In order to illustrate the linguistic landscape of the Northern Cape, the study's initial objectives are revisited below. To avoid repetitiveness, objectives 1 and 4 as outlined in Chapter 1 (page 9) are merged as these two objectives are interrelated as both set out to explore materialities.

##### 8.2.1. To examine the cultural materialities (visible and invisible) used by locals to navigate the rural environs of FBDM and JTGDM.

It can be concluded that locals mostly draw on the cultural materialities that are at hand in the navigation of space, particularly in providing route directions. Essentially, locals would not create completely new signage, but would rather repurpose existing signage for additional purposes (discussed in greater detail under sub-heading 8.2.4). Consequently, any cultural material in the rural area carries meaning-making and sign-making potential.

The materialities drawn on in the 'personal' navigation of the ruralspace include intangible materialities such as memory, place familiarity and historical knowledge. The materialities drawn on in the provision of route directions for others to use as reference points include man-made objects such as buildings, railways and natural objects, including trees and hills.

### **8.2.2. To investigate alternative ways that signage is produced and consumed in FBDM and JTGD.**

In the absence of written signage, it can be concluded that residents draw on three main strategies to compensate for, and essentially, substitute written signage. These three strategies are re-invention, re-imagining of space, and oral linguascaping through repurposing of existing materialities. In the absence of written features such as street names, residents used landmarks in the immediate environment to produce ‘street’ names. Residents also produce spatial navigation routes based on firsthand experiences and familiarity with place. A unique feature of residents’ oral spatial navigation is the repurposing of the word, “straight”. Northern Cape residents use “straight” as an indication of direction and, depending on its pronunciation, an indication of distance. Insufficient written signage has necessitated participants to be increasingly familiar with their environment and consequently, identify markers (natural and man-made/visible and invisible) in order to navigate their immediate spaces.

### **8.2.3. To investigate the differential effect that the consumption/production of meaning have on the narration of place in these rural settings considering the dearth in scripted/written signage.**

Due to inadequate signage, participants typically produce ‘home-brewed signage’ – signage that is essentially contextually-laden in a bid to navigate local spaces. Such signage draws on navigation markers such local tuckshops, stadiums, big trees and the house of a local teacher.

In cases where written signage is available, participants use written signage in the navigation of place; but written signage can be ignored and/or contested as participants read and/provide their own oral narration of place. Examples of such instances include “One Mile”, “die Blou Shop”, and “My friend”. Additionally, participants tend to disregard the existence of written signage, particularly when the visibility of written signage is inconsistent, as is the case in Delportshoop. Certain sections in Delportshoop have no visible street names written on a pole, yet street names ‘exist’ while other sections have visible street name poles. Such inconsistency results in participants ignoring the very existence of street names in Delportshoop and depend on the use of local landmarks (as noted above) for place-making purposes.

#### 8.2.4. To explore how prior signs (faded or those no longer in place) and existing semiotic material are reused ('repurposed') in the narration of place in FBDM and JTGDM.

Repurposing of existing semiotic material for alternative uses is common in the Northern Cape. Residents repurpose prior commercial and branding signage for building material for new meanings and purposes. Natural objects, particularly the big rocks in the Northern Cape, are repurposed as a writing space to profess socio-religious beliefs, to advertise businesses and to indicate a street name. Numerous road signage is repurposed for use at private homes or as sentimental memorabilia, as exemplified by the placement of 'discarded' car number plates on the gates of homes. As most road signage is made from zinc material, it is also repurposed for pragmatic household reasons such as attaching the "No Lines" road sign to the bottom of the gate as a scrapper to prevent sand build-up.

The repurposing of existing signage should not entirely be perceived as a result of poverty and/or economic constraints. The distance between towns in the Northern Cape is enormous. Consequently, residents do not always have ready access to shops, especially the few stores that sell building material. The use of commercial and branding signage as building material is therefore a temporary solution necessitated by a lack of immediate access.

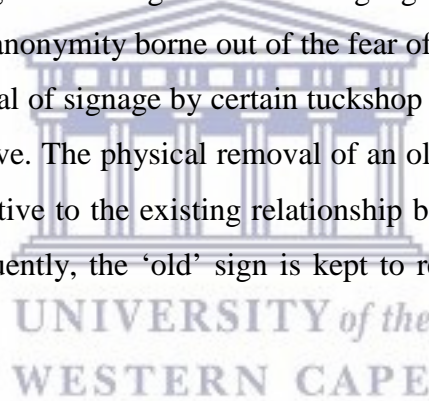
The repurposing of rocks as writing material illustrates the residents' ecological approach towards their physical environment. Local people are aware that the Northern Cape is prominent for its rocks. Local people, thus, resemiotise and repurpose the rocks to form part of everyday signmaking and information communication platforms.

The repurposing of a tennis court into a soccer field serves as another example of intentional repurposing by Northern Cape residents. The location of a tennis court in a black township where tennis is not a popular sport is a waste of resources that was rectified by the participants.

### 8.2.5. To investigate to which extent the production and consumption of signage in these ruralscapes is similar or different from that found in urban areas.

Urban areas are typically oversaturated with factory-manufactured signage and neon-light signage. Therefore, written signage is a typical sight in urban areas. Written signage also forms part of the semiotic landscape of rural areas, but not always the manufactured type produced on expensive material. In rural areas, manually-produced signage made out of discarded items (old cardboard, box, zinc plate) is an ordinary occurrence.

The lifespan of the signage of businesses in urban areas is typically linked to the existence of these businesses, i.e. once the business closes or moves to other premises, the sign is removed. This is not always the case in rural areas, as seen by the signage and naming practices of tuckshops. Some new tuckshop owners move into existing tuckshop premises without changing or removing the existing commercial signage. The non-removal of signage is not always linked to brand anonymity borne out of the fear of xenophobic attacks. It can be concluded that the non-removal of signage by certain tuckshop owners is linked to continuity – it is a strategic business move. The physical removal of an old sign and the placement of a new sign is potentially disruptive to the existing relationship between the customers and the tuckshop as a space. Consequently, the ‘old’ sign is kept to retain the loyalty and trust of ‘old’ customers.



### 8.3 Implications for theory and LL research

The findings of the research project holds various implications for various theories and concepts. Firstly, as the research project focused on rural landscapes – an area significantly neglected in LL studies – the findings of the study contributes to the theorising of the LL of rural environments/ ruralscapes. Secondly, the nature of the findings of this research project has implications for what is considered ‘signage’ as the findings suggest an extension of the repertoire of ‘signage’, particularly in the field of LL. Taking social semiotic approach to the linguistic landscape enabled the research project to consider all objects in the landscape as having “meaning potential” – written and oral, visible and invisible, tangible and intangible. Consequently, and to the third point, the findings of this research project support a social semiotic approach to multimodality – an approach that does not discredit the meaning-making potential of any semiotic resource in the environment. Fourthly, the findings of this



research project have shown how material culture of multilingualism is a useful conceptual and analytic tool in LL studies as the theory allow for not only the exploration of multilingual artefacts, but also the environment in which linguistic artefacts are placed. Fifthly, the adoption of remediation as repurposing as an analytic tool to illustrate the creativity and resourcefulness of locals, positions this conceptual framework as useful in exploring LL issues such as agency and authorship, even in so-called ‘non-literate’ societies.

#### **8.4 Study limitations and future research**

As discussed in Chapter three, the study encountered one research challenge which was the reluctance of tuckshop owners in the Kagung area to be interviewed because a) during the period the interview data was being collected (December 2017), there were ongoing searches of tuckshops not owned by non-South African national – searches during which non-South African tuckshop owners were asked for their immigration documents. b) Due to the panic and fear instilled by these searches, tuckshop owners refused to be interviewed as the researcher’s demeanour was likened to that of a government authority. Consequently, this related in minimal interview data with tuckshop owners in the Kagung area.

Including this present study, there are currently few studies that interrogate issues of remediation as repurposing and the consumption and production of signage in spaces without visible, written signage. Future research in these areas can contribute to the enhancement of LL as a field of inquiry.

Geographically, the Northern Cape is South Africa’s biggest province. Due to the province’s size and limited resources, the study was limited to only two out of the five Northern Cape district municipalities. Irrespective of this limitation, the decision to focus on FBDM and JTGDm was intentional. Although it is the smallest district municipality, Frances Baard is the most populated and it is home to the provincial government and the capital city, Kimberley. As mentioned before, JTGDm consists mostly of villages. Consequently, the

demographics of both district municipalities and the mixture of rural and urban municipalities provide for a sufficient understanding of the semiotic landscape of the province. Therefore, future research can be conducted on the remaining district municipalities in the Northern Cape.



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