8 The Influence of Language Policies

8.1 Introduction

When an establishment in the city of Donostia-San Sebastián puts up new signs in Basque, the local government is prepared to pay for 50% of the costs (up to a maximum of 500 euros). This measure is part of the local policy to encourage the use of the minority language Basque in the commercial sector. This is a clear example of authorities trying to influence which languages are used on signage. Regulating languages on public signs is part of language policies around the world, although few governments are ready to pay for commercial signs written in an endangered minority language. We included language policy as one of the five components of the multilingual inequality in public spaces (MIPS) model (see Chapter 3) because it can be a major factor influencing the presence or absence of languages in linguistic landscapes. As we argued when we explained the MIPS model, various social actors develop policies at different levels and are thus contributing to the design, construction, negotiation and even contestation of languages on signs.

One can argue that, in general, the authorities have a fairly large influence on what passersby can see and read on signs in the streets. Language policy measures can regulate and obviously do influence the linguistic landscape, but usually such measures do not determine all of it fully because many other factors co-determine the outcome of the totality of signs. The development and implementation of language policies and actual sign practices stand in a reciprocal relationship with each other and actors at different levels collectively shape linguistic landscapes. Changes in language policy may lead to changes in linguistic landscapes and, at the same time, the actual practices in the linguistic landscape can feed back into language policy development and so on, in a cyclical way; this is illustrated by the feedback loop in the MIPS model. Undoubtedly, the field of language policy and planning is of utmost importance for the study of linguistic landscapes.

In this chapter, we explain in Section 8.2 the important relation between approaches to language policy and planning and linguistic
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In Section 8.3, we examine the cases of Quebec in Canada and Brussels in Belgium because these two contexts are exemplary for studies that link language policy and linguistic landscapes. In Section 8.4, we focus on language policy in the Basque Country and our own work in that context. In Section 8.5, we delve into the developments of new language laws and policies in post-Soviet states and the changes for the linguistic landscapes this implied. In Section 8.6, we present some outcomes of further studies that have taken a language policy perspective as their point of departure. Finally, in Section 8.7, we make some general concluding remarks.

8.2 Language Policy and Planning Research

The field of language policy and planning (sometimes abbreviated as LPP) has seen an important development. Ricento (2000) distinguished three partly overlapping periods. The first phase started in the early 1960s and focused on decolonization and state formation, the need for a unifying language and the conviction that language problems can be solved through a kind of technocratic planning. The second phase lasted from the early 1970s to the late 1980s and was characterized by themes of neocolonialism, the hierarchization of languages and the realization that it is virtually impossible to plan and control society. The notion of language as a discrete, finite entity was called into question, along with concepts such as the native speaker and mother tongue. Existing models were seen as limited and ideological. The focus shifted to language communities, beliefs, attitudes and sociopolitical factors. The third period in language policy research is characterized by the forces of globalization, attention to language endangerment, the ecology of language and human rights approaches, and also by critical and postmodern theories. Debates on the limitations of language planning, and promoting social change are both important. Ricento (2000) points to the need to develop a conceptual framework that brings together the (micro) patterns of language use with the macro sociopolitical forces influencing language at the level of societies as a whole. For Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 3), the core of the field could be expressed as follows: ‘in the simplest sense, language planning is an attempt by someone to modify the linguistic behavior of some community for some reason’. More formally, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 3) define language planning as involving ‘deliberate, although not always overt, future-oriented change in systems of language code and/or speaking in a social context, [... mostly] undertaken by government’. They recognize that language planning also occurs in other societal contexts and at other levels than only the state government.

A common distinction is made in the literature between ‘status planning’, regarding the use of language in society, and ‘corpus planning’, concerning work on the language system itself. As we will see later, some
linguistic landscape studies have also applied this distinction between status and corpus planning. Cooper (1989) added the third dimension of ‘acquisition planning’, which refers to language teaching or a range of learning activities. Language policy and planning usually also imply a form of legitimization by an authority or the activities of a government body. The combination of micro and macro perspectives is another trend in the field of language policy studies and a linguistic landscape lens can most certainly provide a link between those perspectives.

After making a summary of various definitions and approaches, Johnson (2013: 9) asked rhetorically ‘What isn’t language policy?’. He answered this by providing an alternative definition of language policy as ‘a mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language’. His focus is thus on policy mechanisms, while including elements of earlier definitions about status, corpus and acquisition. Reflecting on the usefulness of the concept of language policy, Li and Kelly-Holmes (2022: 11) observed that studying language policy too often ‘forces complex problems into simple frameworks’. They suggest that during our lives all of us constantly make language policies, and we do so every day when we try to control the language use of ourselves and others. This viewpoint could imply that everything we do with language is language policy. However, such an idea may also make the concept empty because when all is language policy, it loses its explanatory power. Li and Kelly-Holmes propose a choice between a better understanding of language policy as a concept and developing it further, or discarding it altogether. Our point of view is that language policy as a concept is of great importance for linguistic landscape studies because policymakers, at different levels, develop rules and regulations that try to modify the public display of languages on signs. Of course, language policy can also be developed by actors other than policymakers, for example, by a language activist, in a family or in a school. We see different language policy approaches as relevant to analyze linguistic landscapes in different contexts and we mention some of those approaches in the following sections.

In the context of multilingualism in India, Dasgupta (2002) presented a theoretical perspective on linguistic landscaping, which he sees as an intentionally designed activity. For him, a linguistic landscape is not fully predetermined or static because other actors can introduce new unknown designs. Along these lines, Singh (2002) conceived of linguistic landscaping as part of language planning. For him, it is an organized intervention that adds to the functionality of a language, similar to developing a script or reforming a spelling. Both Dasgupta and Singh point to the importance of actors who are actively shaping the linguistic landscape, hence their preference for using linguistic landscaping as a verb. This is in agreement with our ideas on the importance of the actors who co-construct the linguistic landscapes (see Chapter 3 for our MIPS model; also Chapter 12).
Spolsky (2009a, 2009b, 2020), one of the pioneering researchers of linguistic landscapes (see Chapter 2), incorporated the study of ‘public verbal signs’ into his general theory of language management. The framework he developed consists of three components: (1) language practices, that is, the decisions speakers make about language use; (2) beliefs about language, that is, the ideology and the attitudes toward languages; and (3) efforts or interventions to modify existing practices or beliefs, or both. Language policy implies active intervention and the linguistic landscape is part of the language practices in a community. Spolsky’s framework of language management includes not only explicit regulations coming from a government, but also, for example, management by an individual, inside a family or an organization. Spolsky’s framework has gained some influence among linguistic landscape researchers as we will see later in the chapter.

Shohamy (2006), another pioneering scholar in the field of linguistic landscape studies, continued along the lines of Spolsky. She portrayed the linguistic landscape as a public arena where language battles take place and where the choice of languages can be a struggle over power, control, national identity and self-expression. Linguistic landscape items are mechanisms of language policy that can perpetuate ideologies and the status of certain languages and not others. Shohamy (2006: 129) argues ‘language in the public space… can also serve as a mechanism for resisting, protesting against and negotiating de facto language policies’. Shohamy (2015) further suggests that linguistic landscape studies can trigger activism against existing policies. She thus emphasizes the role of conflict among actors shaping language policies.

In a similar vein, Rubdy (2015a) discussed how language policy processes often give rise to conflict and protest in societies because they are related to various historical, legal, economic and political issues. Language policy can spread the dominant language ideology through linguistic landscapes, where signs can reflect the prioritization of one language and the exclusion of others. Linguistic landscapes can become arenas of contestation or sites of dissent and struggle between social groups, often based on clashes of identity or contrasting language ideologies, leading to social disputes linked to power differences and social justice. Various scholars have included the dimension of conflict and protest in their work, and Themistocleous (2019) sees a growing number of studies that explore areas of conflict. Some examples are provided in Section 8.6.

A useful proposal of direct relevance for the relationship between language policy and its effects on linguistic landscapes was included by Pavlenko (2009) who discussed the transformation of linguistic landscapes in post-Soviet republics. Pavlenko distinguishes between five processes of change and conflict that become visible in public signage. Those processes have a direct effect on what languages can be seen in public spaces.
The five processes can be summarized as follows (and in later sections we illustrate them with some examples).

(1) The erasure or the deliberate removal of signage in a particular language as part of the language policy of the authorities. There are three different ways that may be applied in parallel. First, replacing old with new signs, completely excluding the unwanted language. Second, the partial deletion of bilingual signs, for example, by painting over one part of a sign. Third, the modification of single letters, especially for related languages using the same script. Obviously, changing signs completely is the most expensive and most radical way, and leaves no traces. Further, it is clear that the erasure of one language can lead to the emergence of another language; in that sense it can be closely related to or partially overlap with the second process.

(2) Replacement, which happens when a new language takes over the functions of a language that has been removed. For example, bilingual signs maintain the official language, but a second language is replaced by another.

(3) Downgrading or upgrading the status of a language in public signage. Erasure and replacement are extreme cases of downgrading, but status change can be done in other ways as well. For example, it can take place through changes in prominence, order, font size, color or the amount of information in each language on bilingual signs.

(4) The regulation of language choice by speakers. This involves attempts to manipulate language use through placing signs that indirectly encourage or invite people to learn and/or speak particular languages. Or, it can also be a more direct type of signage urging people to speak a particular language ‘here and now’. Signs promoting the correct use of particular languages are also trying to regulate the way people speak.

(5) Transgressive signs that violate conventions on emplacement, or subvert official policies on the choice of language or script and can also be creative language use.

Among others, Du Plessis (2011) has applied this proposal in the context of South Africa. He described the processes as methods used by the authorities to produce intended language shifts in order to change the linguistic landscape. Du Plessis argued that the measures most likely to be selected depend on the type of language ideology adhered to by the authorities, either assimilationist and hegemonic or in contrast, moderate and pluralist (see Section 8.6).

The linguistic landscape can be one of the most obvious displays of language diversity and therefore the authorities may try to wield their power to give preference in enhancing the visibility of certain languages
and excluding or diminishing the presence of others. Obviously, linguistic diversity can be displayed through signage, but most of the time signs in the majority language tend to prevail. The dominant language group, often representing the official state language, may set up mechanisms of language policy that are aimed at barring other languages from being visible in public spaces. In many states, legal measures are enforced that privilege one language, which often implies the marginalization of other languages. Authorities, also at lower levels of government, can regulate language use on official signs (and sometimes on unofficial signs) as a mechanism for imposing some language as dominant and others as dominated. Often, such language policies can be legally enforced, but sometimes they will be visibly contested or actively resisted in public spaces. This can signal to passersby a struggle over language rights and status. The conflict may not only be over which language to use, but also about the position or the prominence of the languages on signs.

The power of the majority group may be contested when minority language groups fight to obtain or maintain the visibility of their languages (Marten et al., 2012a). It is even possible that languages are allowed, or encouraged, but that existing traditions, entrenched language ideologies, negative attitudes, habits or lack of literacy create a gap between formal policy and actual practice. Such a gap can, in turn, lead to tensions in society over the display of one or more languages. Strong disagreements may occur and litigation can happen. Signs are also a central aspect of the way protest movements and other forms of activism make themselves visible to wider audiences. Protest signs have been investigated by several researchers as a type of linguistic landscape data (again see Section 8.6).

An investigation of a linguistic landscape from the perspective of language policy can be accompanied by an analysis of legal arrangements, such as laws, regulations, sign ordinances and other policy documents. Formal regulations of signs may have important consequences for the language used for display, and can include other moral or legal aspects, or regulate physical dimensions (size, color, etc.). Many states, provinces and cities have developed precise and far-reaching legal measures regarding language use on signs. The aim of a study into the measures required could be to compare the existing formal arrangements with an inquiry into actual language practices in a given jurisdiction. Official laws and rules deal primarily with signage over which authorities have direct control, such as road signs, street names, place names and government building signs. In this context, the distinction between signs as ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ has gained some traction. The so-called ‘top-down’ policies are carried out by governmental agencies, which determine language policies and can thus regulate the use of languages on signs according to the law. This can be distinguished from ‘bottom-up’ policies by private initiatives, organizations and companies, as well as by grassroots movements and individuals (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). The distinction is not
always clear-cut and, for example, Demaj and Vandenbroucke (2016) have suggested adding a third, intermediate category of ‘semi-official’ signs. Those are signs placed by agencies and other institutions that were formerly government controlled, but due to privatization are no longer strictly bound by official language policy. In their study of the linguistic landscape of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, they found substantial differences in the three types of signs between the use of Albanian, Serbian and English.

France is probably the example par excellence of a country with a strong language law, the so-called Toubon law, introduced in 1994. The law obliges the use of the French language in government publications, advertisements and in other contexts and restricts the presence of other languages than French in the linguistic landscape (Blackwood & Tufi, 2015). Other languages are only allowed when there is a translation and as a consequence the French language dominates in public spaces. Since 2014, regional languages are recognized as part of the national heritage and the Toubon law no longer opposes the use of regional languages. Yet, the ideology of ‘one nation, one language’ continues to be reflected in the linguistic landscape and in debates around it. Language beliefs and language practices systematically delegitimize regional minority languages as anti-modern. As Blackwood and Tufi (2012: 113) argue, language policy in France is ‘focussed squarely on establishing and then maintaining France as a monolingual entity’. In their extensive study of the linguistic landscapes of a series of Mediterranean cities and regions, they found French on an average of 85% of all signs. However, to them it is striking that 15% of the signs did not have French. Most of those signs were in English and very few were in one of the regional languages (Blackwood & Tufi, 2015: 262–263; in Chapter 9 we discuss the role of English in their study). Blackwood (2011) concluded that the supremacy of French in France is not challenged at all by any of the regional minority languages because overt (and covert) language policies prevent their use. Other countries with strict language policies could be mentioned, for example, Malaysia (Manan et al., 2015) or Tanzania (Legère & Rosendal, 2019) (see Chapter 9). In countries without strong language policies, such as Germany and the Netherlands, the dominant mindset is probably that monolingualism has to be seen as normal or is taken for granted, which, in turn, can restrict the use of other languages on signage, except for prestigious varieties such as English.

Linguistic landscape items can thus be mechanisms of language policy that can perpetuate ideologies and raise the status of specific languages and lower the status of others. The aims of the authorities may be to stop the spread of English or to discourage the use of minority languages. In other cases, signage in public spaces is included in policies that are designed to protect and promote a minority language, as in Catalonia (Comajoan Colomé & Long, 2012) and in the Basque Country (see Section 8.4).
As indicated before, language policy and planning as a field is of great relevance for linguistic landscape studies. In the next section, we discuss the direct link between language policy and the public display of language by examining the cases of the province of Quebec in Canada and Brussels, the capital of Belgium, as examples of far-reaching language policies.

8.3 Two Illustrative Cases: Canada–Quebec and Belgium–Brussels

It was in the field of language policy and planning in the contexts of Canada and Belgium that issues related to the concept of linguistic landscape emerged (Landry & Bourhis, 1997: 24). In Chapter 2 on the history of the field, we briefly discussed the cases of Quebec and Brussels as kinds of birthplaces for the study of linguistic landscapes, partly due to the language conflict over the use of English and French in Quebec and the struggle between Dutch and French in Brussels. We also mentioned that both contexts have continued as a productive seedbed for further linguistic landscape studies. Here, we elaborate on this further by focusing on studies that are directly related to language policy and planning in Canada, in particular the province of Quebec, and in Belgium in the bilingual capital of Brussels. In both contexts, the linguistic landscape is used as a device to enforce specific language policies.

8.3.1 Canada: English as dominant language and French as minority language

The struggle of the Francophone minority in Canada for recognition of the French language is a notable example of the development of language policy in relation to linguistic landscapes. French speakers are a numerical minority in Canada as a whole, but a majority in the province of Quebec. Several years of conflict over language rights resulted in the Official Language Act, which made French the only official language of Quebec. Evidently, the law was an effort to counter the spread of English and give rights to the Francophones. The status of French was further elaborated in the Charter of the French Language and later amendments. The charter requires, among others, that all commercial signage and advertising be in French. Later, those measures were somewhat relaxed and English and other languages are now accepted on signs, as long as French is given predominance, that is, the French text should be twice as large as the other language (see Backhaus, 2009; Leimgruber, 2019). Perhaps it did not come down to the direct erasure or complete replacement of English, but at least the status of English was downgraded. It is evident that Shohamy’s approach in which the language choice on signage is a struggle over power, control and identity fully applies to the context of Quebec. The signs are also mechanisms for resistance and protest because some shop owners developed creative counter-strategies.
On their signs they play with the use of French and English in so-called ‘bilingual winks’ (*clins d’œil*) to circumvent the regulations, but without breaking the law. An example of such wordplay is a shoe store called *Chouchou* (pronounced shoe-shoe) which in French is a term that can refer to ‘favorite’ (Lamarre, 2014). Obviously, those are transgressive methods (Figure 8.1).

Backhaus (2009) analyzed the regulations on the use of French introduced by the government of Quebec, the most important of which have already been mentioned above, and he then contrasts and compares those regulations with the rules on the use of English and other foreign languages implemented by the authorities of Tokyo. He situates the two cases on opposite poles of a broad spectrum of policies to shape linguistic landscapes. In his conclusions, Backhaus states that although the linguistic landscapes in Quebec and Tokyo represent very different contexts, they are similar in form. He further assumes that rules and regulations about linguistic landscapes usually address both status and corpus planning issues.

![Figure 8.1 Point Zero advertisement in Montreal](image-url)
Leimgruber (2019) also discussed the language policy developments in Quebec and in particular in the city of Montreal. He argues that studying the linguistic landscape can provide evidence for the trend toward Frenchifying that already started in the 1970s, thus underlining the importance of a diachronic perspective. The linguistic landscape reflects not only the hierarchical relations between French and English, but also the struggles and insecurities surrounding the production of signs. Leimgruber (2020) studied the signage in St Catherine Street, an 11 kilometer thoroughfare in Montreal. He observed ongoing interactions between top-down language policies by the government and forces of globalization, including international brand names that display multilingualism. The various studies mentioned all show how the authorities in Quebec try to use language policy as a mechanism to define the use of languages in public space, in particular French.

8.3.2 Belgium: French as dominant language and Dutch as minority language

As we mentioned in Chapter 2, language conflict is often seen as a distinctive trait of Belgium and its language struggle is notorious (Janssens, 2015). Over a long period, legal arrangements were put in place that effectively divided Belgium into officially French and Dutch monolingual territories, with a small area in the east where German is an official minority language. The main exception is Brussels which was officially declared bilingual in the 1930s. In Brussels, one of the earliest studies focused on languages used on signage (Tulp, 1978; see Chapter 2).

The case of Brussels has remained an interesting example over the years because in this city the government enforces an elaborate set of rules for the equal use of both official languages Dutch and French on street name signs, in metro stations, etc. Unlike Quebec, language choice on private signage is left unregulated. Various linguistic landscape studies on Brussels point to the dynamics of the language conflict between Dutch, numerically the minority language, and French, the dominant language. Vandenbroucke (2015, 2016) observed an increase in language diversity generated by demographic shifts and the impact of globalization on Brussels. She argued that the diversity of the population, particularly in light of the arrival of different migrant minority groups, is ‘not fully or representatively reflected in the visually displayed landscapes of the city’ (Vandenbroucke, 2015: 178). Over a period of four decades, English has spread throughout the public space and even if English quantitatively remains in a minor position, it increasingly serves majority functions (Figure 8.2).

Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2012) showed an intelligible reality underlying the seeming chaotic and complex linguistic landscape in this
diverse city. In their monograph on globalization, Ben-Rafael and Ben-Rafael (2019) included a discussion of the linguistic landscapes of various neighborhoods of Brussels and they argued that Brussels today is not all that different from other global cities. In fact, in superdiverse cities English has gained a remarkable presence caused by different forces of globalization. Janssens (2012) studied the so-called ‘Flemish periphery’ of Brussels where a heated language battle has been fought because of the special services for the numerical minority of French speakers. In the linguistic landscape, conflicts are played out between French and Dutch speakers. Local authorities enforce the use of Dutch in the linguistic landscape through campaigns (the soft approach) and by blurring the legal limits of federal legislation (the hard approach). A form of partial language erasure is the common painting over of the French part of bilingual signs.

Mettewie et al. (2012) analyzed some ambiguous ‘bilingual winks’ in which Dutch and French are mixed on signs, in a kind of wordplay that cleverly breaks up the official language policy of Brussels. In some ways they can be considered transgressive signs; for example, in signs such as ‘bozar’ (a short name for the museum Palais des beaux arts in French) or ‘bootik’ (French: boutique, Dutch: boetiek) for booths selling public transport tickets. Both signs led to public protests when they were introduced because such hybrid forms were viewed negatively by the public. It seems that bilingual winks have drawn more attention in Brussels than in Montreal, probably because of differences in language policy. An important difference between the two cities is that there is a kind of silence about signage among the public at large in Montreal, but
there was a public storm of protest over this controversial use of hybrid forms on signs in Brussels.

What we can learn from the two cases of Quebec in Canada and Brussels in Belgium is confirmation that language policy and planning has an important role in shaping the linguistic landscape. However, at the same time, the two cases make clear that policy does not and cannot completely regulate what appears on signs and what languages will be visible. In terms of the different periods of language policy and planning distinguished by Ricento (2000), we can observe that in Quebec and Brussels there was at the beginning of policy development a technocratic idea of fully regulating signage. Later, the regulations were contested and became less rigid also due to an increasing awareness that linguistic landscapes cannot be fully engineered. The two cases show that language ideologies underlying policies play an important role. Today, also in these two cases, the forces of globalization and concurring diversity are felt and hybrid forms of, respectively, English and French and of Dutch and French are visible on signs. On top of that, various other languages are visible, including big commercial names, international slogans and icons. Language management is important, but so too are the beliefs and ideologies of the actors involved, as well as the actual language practices, using the terms of Spolsky’s three-part model. Shohamy’s addition of conflict and contestation to the thinking about language policy was somehow always obvious for actors in the two cases of Canada and Belgium. The five processes distinguished by Pavlenko seem to apply to some extent in these two contexts. For instance, the authorities in Quebec legally ordered the replacement of English with French in a bid to upgrade the status of the French language. Moreover, ‘bilingual winks’ are examples of transgressive signs in both contexts, where minor spelling differences can have major consequences and private initiatives such as painting over signs have occurred.

In our work in the Basque Country, we have included investigations of the influence of language policy on the linguistic landscape, as we illustrate in the next section.

8.4 Upgrading the Status of Basque in the Basque Country

Since the 1980s, the regional government of the Basque Country has developed a strong language policy of ‘normalization’ for the minority language. The policy aims at the recuperation and revitalization of the Basque language alongside Spanish. The various measures undertaken have been especially successful in establishing Basque as a medium of instruction in education (Gorter et al., 2014). There is a wide spectrum of policy support for the use of Basque in the media and in cultural sectors, as well as in the domains of work and commerce (Van der Worp et al., 2018). Substantial economic investments are made on behalf of
the language, in combination with human effort and social activism. A strong commitment to revitalize Basque can be observed at both regional and local levels of government and in parts of the private sector. Therefore, the language policy rests on strong political and public support. Language beliefs and ideologies, language practices and interventions to modify signage are all largely aligned in society. Outspoken opponents of Basque are few; some may voice their ideas against Basque on social media, but they do not seem to influence policy. Overall, the language policy to protect and promote Basque can be characterized as robust, although in spite of this Basque is listed in the category ‘unsafe’ by the UNESCO (Moseley, 2010).

The policy aims are to promote an equal place for Basque and Spanish on public signs. Official signage is, in theory, always bilingual in the two languages, based on the principle of equality of both official languages. Regarding the layers of government, the language policy is developed and implemented at the level of regional, provincial and municipal governments, but not at the level of the Spanish state. A decree by the regional government orders that Basque should have a presence in public institutions, as well as in services of general interest, such as transport, utilities and communications, including large private commercial establishments (Basque Government, 2008). It can be observed that not everyone agrees with this principle of bilingualism in the linguistic landscape because there are contestations in painted-over signs. Here, activists use transgressive methods to indicate their preference for Basque over Spanish. In that sense, a continuous battle is waged over the place of Basque in the public sphere (see example in Figure 11.4). Of course, the painting over signs contesting a so-called wrong language is an activity well known among minority language groups (Puzey, 2012a).

The language policy of the different layers of government thus focuses on Basque and Spanish as the official languages and other languages remain ‘unregulated’ even when they are spoken in society or can be seen in the linguistic landscape. English has obtained high prestige in society and the language continues to spread as a consequence of globalization processes (see Chapter 9). Various other languages, such as Arabic and Chinese, can be observed on a small number of signs. In the case of commercial establishments, those languages seem to be used mainly for symbolic or identification purposes, more than for economic value.

The transformation of the educational system, which provides a substantial place for Basque medium instruction, also has important consequences for the linguistic landscape. It is clear that schoolscape contain a considerable amount of Basque (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015b). More importantly, literacy in Basque among the population has gradually but substantially increased in recent decades. This implies that, today, texts in Basque can be read and understood by a large majority of the inhabitants and are no longer seen as an obstacle, as may have occurred in the past.
In the city of Donostia-San Sebastián, the proportion of the population that can speak Basque has increased considerably from 26% in 1986 to 46% in 2016, while the percentage of ‘passive bilinguals’, people who can read and understand Basque, has remained stable at around 19%. These are the figures presented in the General Language Plan 2020–2024 in which the local government has developed its own local policy to promote the use of Basque in different domains, including in the public space (Municipality of Donostia, 2020). The plan is aligned with the language policy of the regional government and its overall mission is formulated so as ‘to make advances in the recuperation and dissemination of Basque’ (Municipality of Donostia, 2020: 52). The local government aims to promote using Basque on signage, including in private companies and commercial establishments. For example, there are specific campaigns to encourage and subsidize the use of Basque in shops (as we mentioned in the opening sentences of this chapter). Language campaigns were also developed to encourage citizens to use Basque more often, thus serving as a method to regulate language choice, as mentioned by Pavlenko (2009) (Figure 8.3).

The outcomes of our classic study of the linguistic landscape of Donostia-San Sebastián seem to have had an effect on the local language policy (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; see Chapter 2). The policymakers were surprised to find out that after many years of promoting bilingualism, Spanish-only signs were more frequent than they had expected. Although the authorities did not consult us, they seem to have acted on the outcomes
of our study in the further development of their language policy plans. An example of a new policy is the replacement of all street name signs from a strict bilingual approach to a subtly more Basque approach, leading to interesting examples of alternation and blending. This replacement of all old street signs with new signs is an obvious example of a policy change in which the minority language is no longer placed on an equal footing with the majority language, but instead is given preference where possible (example in Figure 6.4 and see our study on name changes in Section 11.4). In the same vein, many cities and towns across the Basque Country have started campaigns to ‘Basquisize’ the linguistic landscape.

In another study based on street interviews, we found that a large part of the population appreciated and even preferred signs written in more than two languages. The attitude of the population was largely positive toward multilingualism as a characteristic of the linguistic landscape (Aiestaran et al., 2010). One could also say that there was an alignment between beliefs, practices and interventions in terms of Spolsky’s (2009b) model of language management.

In Gorter et al. (2012b), we argued that laws, decrees, promotional campaigns, other rules and regulations, and other measures help to shape the linguistic landscape. We wanted to investigate the local language policy efforts to revitalize Basque and the effects on the linguistic landscape in more detail. We thus examined several promotional measures to support Basque. One of the research questions looked into the relationship between the language policy and the languages used on signs and we examined how far what can be seen on signs is determined by policy decisions. Our results came from a large quantitative inventory of the signage in five neighborhoods of Donostia-San Sebastián. We collected a sample of 2,024 units of analysis: establishments such as a shop, bank, real estate agency and bar were counted as one sign as was a single street sign (see Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; see Chapter 4). The map in Figure 8.4 represents the main outcomes for the use of Basque on signage in the five neighborhoods.

The map shows that there were substantial differences between the five neighborhoods of the city. On average, less than half of all signs had at least some Basque. In the neighborhoods old part (59%) and Antiguo (53%), over half of the signs had at least some Basque, but in the city center (33%) and Amara (36%) Basque was included in just one-third of the signs. Our conclusion was that the effects of the policy to promote Basque were clearly visible in the linguistic landscape, but the results also demonstrated that the language policy did not have the same impact on all neighborhoods and we found substantial differences between commercial sectors. From the case of the Basque Country, we have learned that language policy can make a substantial contribution to shaping the linguistic landscape at local and regional levels. At the same time,
language policy is not a technocratic process and it is impossible to fully control signage, among other reasons due to forces of globalization that have an important effect on an endangered minority language such as Basque.

The official policy can be mainly characterized as upgrading the status of Basque, in terms of the five processes described by Pavlenko (2009). The authorities intend to add the minority language to the linguistic landscape without erasing or replacing Spanish, although it is not uncommon for language activists to paint over parts of signs in Spanish. Language campaigns are regularly organized to encourage the use of Basque, which are activities that would fit the process of the regulation of speakers’ language choice (see Figure 8.3).

After discussing language policy studies in Canada and Belgium and our own work in the Basque Country, in the next section we turn to changes in post-Soviet states, and in Section 8.6 we discuss a number of cases studied and some applications of Spolsky’s three-part framework.

8.5 Changes in Linguistic Landscapes in Post-Soviet States

As we mentioned in Section 8.2, Pavlenko (2009) examined the large-scale derussification shifts which appeared in the 14 newly independent states that were established as a consequence of the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Similar language policy processes have taken place in those former Soviet republics, and they all share an upgrading of the
status of the official state language and a downgrading of the status of Russian, which is reflected in public signage. In Section 8.2, we summarized the five processes of change and conflict distinguished by Pavlenko (2009), which Du Plessis (2011) conceived of as language policy methods: erasure, replacement, upgrading and downgrading, the regulation of language choice and the transgressive use of signs. Pavlenko (2009) emphasizes that the processes have not evolved in the same way in the various countries and even inside each country they can vary over contexts and between cities. Pavlenko (2009) further mentions how certain population groups, in particular older people, were annoyed by the replacement of Cyrillic with Roman letters and by the introduction of English. In some cases this caused tensions because the changes were imposed by government policy. At the time of writing, only a limited number of linguistic landscape studies had been carried out in the 14 countries and Pavlenko insisted on the need for further studies into the replacement of Russian and the emergence of English.

We already mentioned Pavlenko’s (2010) diachronic study of the linguistic landscape of Kyiv in Ukraine as a fine example of a historical approach (see Chapter 3). In independent Ukraine, the only official language is Ukrainian, unlike in Soviet times. Pavlenko (2010, 2012) describes how at the time when she conducted her studies, the signage in Kyiv appeared mainly in Ukrainian, especially in official signs. In commercial signs, a shift was taking place in which Russian was replaced by English in bilingual signs, although Ukrainian, Russian and English still appeared. In private signs such as graffiti and personal ads, all three languages were also used. She explained the perseverance of Russian ‘by the fact that Russian remains the dominant language of everyday interaction in Kyiv, even though the city’s institutions and educational establishments function in Ukrainian’ (Pavlenko, 2010: 148). Kyiv was bilingual, or trilingual with English. Back then, Pavlenko (2012) could label the prolific use of Russian in Kyiv as a tacitly accepted transgression of the official state language policy. It was a situation similar to Chișinău in Moldova as reported by Muth (2012). However, after the Russian invasion and the ensuing war in 2022, undoubtedly the amount of Russian visible in the streets of Kyiv, as in the rest of Ukraine, will have sharply decreased.

In a publication on multilingualism in general, Pavlenko (2013) mentioned how in the 1990s there was an intensive phase of derussification in the post-Soviet countries in various societal domains. The social, political and economic changes had a profound influence on the presence of various languages in the public sphere. The shift away from Russian and toward English was accompanied by an increase in the visibility of the official state language, often accompanied by the introduction of new language laws. The processes did not happen in the same way or to the
same extent in all the post-Soviet countries or in Eastern European countries that are former satellite states of the Soviet Union.

The general pattern in these states is that the official state language is displayed as the most prominent and the most frequent language on signage, usually supported by legal provisions. In all countries, the presence of English has increased and has significant visibility today. The position of Russian varies between countries; in some cases it has disappeared (almost) completely, in others it plays a minor role, and in some cases Russian is still visible to a substantial extent. The internal variation in a country can be well illustrated by Brown’s (2007) study in Belarus (also mentioned in Pavlenko [2009]). Brown showed that the amount of Belarusian and Russian varied from the dominance of Russian in 1984, Russian only in 1986, equal use of both languages in 1991 and the dominance of Belarusian in 1997. Further, he could show variation between signs in different metro stations and on official signs, as well as between the three cities in the study. Thus, Belarusian was dominant in the city of Grodno, Russian was dominant in Vitebsk, and in Minsk, the capital, bilingual signage was most prominent. On most bilingual signs, Belarusian appeared on top, but on some newer signs it was Russian. Brown (2007: 297) concluded that ‘Belarusian in public spaces certainly projects an image of national solidarity and reinforces status planning efforts aimed at buttressing Belarusian as a co-official language’.

In recent years, several linguistic landscape studies have appeared about post-Soviet countries and, among others, the three Baltic States have been documented extensively. Among others, studies appeared on Estonia (Brown, 2012, 2018; Zabrodskaja, 2014), Latvia (Marten, 2010, 2012; Pošeiko, 2015) and Lithuania (Kudžmaitė & Juffermans, 2020; Moore, 2019a, 2019b; Muth, 2008, 2012). In their general introduction on the Baltic States, Lazdina and Marten (2019) included developments on linguistic landscapes next to multilingualism, language contact and majority–minority relations. Pošeiko (2019: 372) summarized linguistic landscape studies in the Baltic States and she indicated that those studies ‘have included capital and regional cities focusing on minority and regional languages (mostly Russian and Latgalian) and language policy’.

Marten et al. (2012b) carried out a systematic comparison of the linguistic landscapes in the three Baltic States. They investigated six towns: Narva and Pärnu in Estonia, Rēzekne and Ventspils in Latvia and Druskininkai and Alytus in Lithuania. The authors explored the changing roles of English and Russian as a lingua franca and the languages of tourism based on a large sample of signs \(n = 4,833\) and 30 interviews with locals. Overall, they found that the state languages Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian dominated the linguistic landscape.

For Latvia, Pošeiko (2015) supplied a detailed diachronic description of the linguistic landscape of the city of Daugavpils. She follows the example of the historical approach applied by Pavlenko (2010) and
Pavlenko and Mullen (2015) to the case of Kyiv in Ukraine (see a summary in Chapter 3). Pošeiko starts from the middle of the 19th century, when during the Russian Empire, Russian was the only language in public texts. During World War I, German announcements existed next to monolingual Russian signs. Latvia became independent in 1920 and this led to important changes in the linguistic landscape, especially after the language law of 1935 that prescribed the use of Latvian on all public signage. World War II devastated the city and afterwards Latvia became incorporated as a republic in the Soviet Union. As a consequence of this change, more Russian started to appear, also in monolingual signs. Only just before regaining independence in 1991 did a new language law lead to the placement of bilingual and monolingual signs in Latvian. An updated version of the law in 1992 decreased the role of Russian and made Latvian the default language for public display. The historical account of this town in Latvia bears a resemblance to developments in the other Baltic States of Estonia and Lithuania. Pošeiko (2015) further presented the results of an investigation carried out in 2013 showing that 86% of signs in the same town were in Latvian ($n = 1,514$). Twelve other languages were found in the sample, most frequently English, followed by Russian and Italian and occasionally other languages. The results are similar to those of Marten et al. (2012b) for the six towns in the three Baltic States, which we mentioned before. The details reported by Marten (2012) for the town of Rēzekne in Latvia were also very similar. In this town, the state language Latvian dominated the linguistic landscape as it appeared on 86.4% of signs, English came second (28.9%) and Russian had a low frequency of 8%, alongside a few signs in 14 other languages ($n = 830$).

In Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, Zabrodskaja (2014) observed that the language policy required Estonian as the official language to have a presence in all signage. However, she noted that there was widespread multilingualism and she characterized the linguistic landscape as heterogeneous because English, Finnish, Russian and German also had a presence alongside Estonian. Similar to other places, there was a shift from Russian to English as the lingua franca, but there were cultural spaces where Russian was dominant.

In Lithuania, Moore (2019a) observed that language erasure and language downgrading were the most prominent among the five processes highlighted by Pavlenko (2009). In another publication, Moore (2019b) mentioned the example of individuals who carried out spontaneous bottom-up erasure by scraping Russian in Cyrillic script from bilingual Lithuanian–Russian street signs. Apparently, they did not want to wait for the official language policy of the government that would replace the signs with monolingual signs in Lithuanian. Muth (2008, 2012) studied the city of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. According to his observations, ‘the linguistic landscapes of Vilnius show remarkable diversity’
(Muth, 2008: 131). Less than 1% of signs contained Russian, which implies that within 20 years Russian had almost ceased to exist in public spaces, even though Vilnius had a substantial Russian-speaking minority. Muth (2012) compared the results of Vilnius to Chișinău, the capital of Moldova, another former Soviet republic. In Chișinău, the linguistic landscape was dominated by Romanian, Russian and English. In a sample of 1,309 signs, the state language Romanian (Moldovan) appeared on 68% of signs (of which 24% on its own), but Russian had a presence of 49% (18% Russian only) and English could be seen in total on 30% of signs (English-only 5%). Muth (2014) focused on an additional analysis on private or informal signs where the presence of Russian at the time was much larger, reaching over 50% in one street of all informal signs, including bilingual signs. Muth (2012) points to political, economic and cultural differences between Vilnius and Chișinău to explain the different patterns of languages displayed on signs.

Other post-Soviet countries have undergone similar language policy processes of derussification. We give examples of studies in the cities of some of those countries.

In Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, Sadikhova and Abadi (2000) gave an impression of the important changes after independence. Status planning was an important issue and in the new constitution Azeri (also called Azerbaijani) was declared the only official state language. The law prescribed that the language had to be written in Latin script instead of Cyrillic. However, the authors concluded that provisions of the language laws were ignored, both in official top-down signs and private bottom-up signs. In public, Azeri could be seen next to English and various other languages such as Turkish, Russian, Italian and French, especially in names of shops and other establishments. In a more recent study in Azerbaijan, Shibliyev (2014) found that Azeri (Azerbaijani) written in Latin script was most prominent because it was prescribed by law. The role of Russian as the second most frequently displayed language had been taken over by English. He found substantial differences between top-down and bottom-up signs.

In Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, Moore (2014) investigated the languages on display and she also observed a substantial difference between the official language policy and actual practices. The constitution of 1993 names Kazakh as the only state language and Russian as the language for inter-ethnic communication. This was followed in 2007 by a new policy, called the Trinity of Languages, which encourages trilingualism in Kazakh, Russian and English. Based on a sample of signs (n = 440) in three districts of the capital city, she found that 51% was monolingual, 35% bilingual and 14% multilingual. Russian was visible on 86% of the signs, Kazakh could be seen on 55% and 15% had English. Other languages, such as Turkish, Arabic, French, Spanish and Italian, had a very limited presence. Most of the bilingual and multilingual signs (75%)
followed the order of the languages prescribed by law, as well as equal font sizes. In another study in Kazakhstan, Tussupbekova and Enders (2016) found an agreement with the state’s language policy of the Trinity of Languages which is in contrast to the findings of Moore (2014). In Astana, the three languages Kazakh, Russian and English appeared with almost equal frequency in names in public. However, they focused only on those names and among a sample of 517 names they saw no significant difference between the frequency of Kazakh (35%), Russian (34%) and English (31%). However, they did observe a difference between the official support for Kazakh and the preference for English and Russian in the commercial and tourist sectors.

McDermott (2019) analyzed the linguistic landscape of Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Recent language laws declared the equality of Kyrgyz and Russian as official languages. Signs were randomly collected via Google Maps ($n = 104$) and the results showed an overall dominance of Russian in the linguistic landscape, even 25 years after independence. Interviews with young people confirmed the importance of Russian in society. Kyrgyz and English were seen almost equally often on signs, although Kyrgyz was visible mostly with Russian on bilingual signs, sometimes with English. English was used mainly for names of establishments and brands, where it had a growing presence. Another interesting result was that big commercial names formed only a very small part of all signs.

Uzbekistan is another former Soviet republic. Here, Uzbek became the only official language, although Russian continued as a lingua franca and English has spread rapidly in the last 30 years. Hasanova (2022) examined how during the Soviet regime (1924–1991) Russian was the main language of street signs and public announcements and the Latin alphabet was changed to Cyrillic. Several years after independence, the official language Uzbek is less prominent than either Russian or English (see Chapter 9 for some details).

The developments in the various post-Soviet countries demonstrate how political and social changes have an important effect on shaping language policies and those policies aim to make changes in the linguistic landscape. Specific language laws and policies have had a direct influence on the linguistic landscape, but there are also general forces such as globalization and language ideologies, beliefs and attitudes that can push in a different direction. In most cases, the growing presence of English is not the result of a specific language policy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union there was a strong reaction at first in favor of the national state languages, but over time the different countries did not follow the same course. As we have seen, different policy solutions have been implemented with different consequences for the visibility of languages in public spaces. The Baltic countries chose official monolingualism with one official state language and the policy hardly allowed for other
languages to have a presence. In contrast, the policy in Uzbekistan was also monolingual, but it seems that it had hardly any consequences for the display of Russian. In other states, a policy of official bilingualism was implemented, as in Kyrgyzstan, and official trilingualism is the policy in Kazakhstan.

8.6 Language Policies and Display Practices in Various Other Contexts

Several studies of linguistic landscapes in various other countries, regions and cities have taken language policy as their point of departure. In this section, we begin with studies that focus on the role of language ideologies, in some cases as part of an application of the three-part model of Spolsky. Thereafter, we discuss some studies that observe a discrepancy between the regulations of the language policy and the linguistic landscape practices encountered. This can lead to tensions and conflicts which for some researchers are the main focus of attention. Finally, some studies take a comparative approach to studying language policies in the linguistic landscape.

In Section 8.2, we briefly explained Spolsky’s three-part framework of language policy, which includes language ideologies or beliefs, language practices and language management, i.e. the explicit efforts to modify ideologies or practices. The framework has inspired various studies of the linguistic landscape and language policy, in particular the component of language ideologies. For example, Yanguas (2009) applied the framework in his study of two Latino neighborhoods in Washington, DC. Interestingly, not just an English-only ideology was reflected in the signage, but also a bilingual ideology. Through a top-down language policy by the city authorities, they have managed to impose English-only signs, but the ideological convictions and the policy of local administrative authorities and businesses have translated into a practice of bilingual English–Spanish or Spanish-only signs.

In Section 8.2, we also mentioned the work of Blackwood and Tufi (2012) on language policy in France. This is part of their large study on the linguistic landscapes in Mediterranean cities in France and Italy. They started out from the three-part division of language policy from Spolsky’s model in order to assess the extent to which policies and non-policies have an impact. In France, they found a language policy based on the belief of ‘establishing and then maintaining France as a monolingual entity’ (Blackwood & Tufi, 2012: 113). In practice, they encountered very few signs with regional languages, with the exception of Corsican. The French language fully dominated the linguistic landscape of the French cities investigated, which could be expected given the implications of the Toubon law (mentioned above). In Italy, a similar law does not exist, yet in Italian cities, Italian was dominant in a similar way. The reason seems
to be an ideology that only Italian should be used as the written language in public spaces. According to Blackwood and Tufi, the (non-)presence of regional languages on signage was not so much the effect of policies (or non-policies), but due to language ideologies and beliefs, as well as language practices that systematically delegitimize minority languages as anti-modern. In China, the state has a similar centralized language policy and ideology to that of France. Shang (2020) looked into how the language ideology of the central government mandates the use of Pinyin (Romanized Chinese) for street names. This language policy is challenged by the actual practice of English by local governments in various cities. He applies Spolsky’s tripartite framework to include actual practices of English and Pinyin, the beliefs and attitudes of experts and the language management of the central government through laws and regulations (for use of names see Chapter 11). His conclusion is that the strict centralized language policy cannot be implemented via the usual political authority and the dominant state ideology. In another study in China, Han and Wu (2020) connected language policy and linguistic landscapes by asking to what extent the language policy reflects the residents’ perception of the linguistic landscape. In the city of Guangzhou, they found various disagreements in the linguistic landscape shown by an obvious ‘conflict between “monoglot linguistic regime” from the top and the need for multicultural/multilingual society from the bottom’ (Han & Wu, 2020: 20). This outcome is similar to the study of Shang (2020) on street names in China.

Another example of the importance of state ideology comes from Sloboda (2009). He pointed to the relationship between linguistic landscape and language ideology in his analysis of the three countries of Belarus, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. He investigated the ways in which the state ideology influences linguistic landscapes and he was able to show how the state takes the role of mediator between the local and the global. An inward-looking state ideology in Belarus in contrast to an ideology of openness in the Czech Republic had important consequences for the linguistic landscape of each country. With reference to the methods of changing signage (Pavlenko, 2009), there was evident erasure of Russian and replacement with English in the Czech Republic, whereas in Belarus the bilingualism of Belorussian and Russian continued to exist. In Lanza and WoldeMariam (2009), the relationship between language ideology and linguistic landscapes stood central in a comparable way. In the trilingual regional capital of Mekele in Ethiopia, Tigrinya, the official regional language, Amharic, the national working language, and English were competing in the public space. The researchers applied a lens of language ideology which made it possible to understand the interplay between language choices as the result of habitual world views and rational calculations. Displaying some languages and not others leaves an ideological message about the value, relevance and priority given to the languages.
In a different context, Shulist (2018) used a similar language ideology perspective. She studied the linguistic landscape of the city of São Gabriel in the state of Amazonas in Brazil to investigate ideologies related to the official policy for the revitalization of the indigenous languages Baniwa, Tukano and Nheengatu. She examined how actors responded to the top-down policy, which created only a limited visibility for indigenous languages. For this reason, the indigenous leaders considered the law unsuccessful. A telling example is how the multilingual text of the word ‘Welcome’ was written in six different languages. In English, Portuguese and Spanish the word was written in a large font, but in the three indigenous languages the word welcome had a label below with their names to make them recognizable. Shulist argues that this example shows the complexity, contradictions and contestations emerging from the official language policy.

Besides language ideologies, other studies emphasize the discrepancy between formal language policy and language practices. Those studies find that the legal arrangements (de jure) and what actually happens (de facto) is diverging. This discrepancy comes to the fore among others in the following studies.

In Section 8.2, we briefly mentioned Du Plessis (2011, 2012) who presented a clear example of this discrepancy by investigating language visibility regulations in South Africa. In the province of Free State, he identified a divergence between the de jure official language policies and the de facto policy of language visibility. The difference can be dated back to the pre-1994 situation of a policy of English–Afrikaans bilingualism. In the post-1994 era, as part of the new language policy, Afrikaans was removed, but in practice Bantu or other African languages were not introduced. The new policy created a monolingual English linguistic landscape, further reinforced by globalization. Du Plessis found no evidence of the intentional erasure of Afrikaans by various government agents, but rather it was an effect of the regulations and reinforced by globalization. Two other studies reported similar findings about the use of English (Dowling, 2012; Kotze & Du Plessis, 2010) (see Chapter 9 for these and other studies on South Africa). A comparable divergence between policy and practice was found by Anuarudin et al. (2013) in Malaysia. They studied the languages actually used on billboards in relation to the official language policy. Bahasa Malaysia (Malay), the national language, is prioritized, although the language policy allows for it to be combined with foreign languages (i.e. English). Still, their results show that language practices on billboards are not in agreement with official language policy (see Chapter 9 for other studies on English in Malaysia).

Likewise, the official language policy in Vietnam obliges the use of Vietnamese. Phan and Starks (2020) reported on a study on language policy in Hanoi. Vietnamese is required in advertisements, with some exceptions, e.g. trademarks and slogans, but when another language is added,
Vietnamese should be on top and larger. However, the results show that the reality is rather complex and Phan and Starks (2020) found substantial numbers of monolingual signs, both in Vietnamese and in English. The latter is in contradiction with the official language policy. However, the authors observe that using English on signs is in agreement with an education policy that supports English and with political discourses about the importance of English for internationalization (Figure 8.5).

More or less the same happened in Tunisia. The reality of the linguistic landscape again showed a different picture from the official policy as Ben Said (2021) documented in the linguistic landscape in Tunis, the capital, and in the suburb of La Marsa. The state policy aims at Arabization by making Modern Standard Arabic obligatory on all signs, although adding a foreign language is allowed. However, in contrast to the policy, today substantial numbers of monolingual signs are present in French, the former colonial language and in English, perceived as the global language. A similar gap between official policy and language practices was observed on Timor-Leste by Macalister (2012: 38) who concluded that ‘language policy and planning appear to have been ineffectual in promoting Tetun as an official language’. In the same context, Taylor-Leech (2012) analyzed the presence of Tetun next to Portuguese, both official languages, in the linguistic landscape of the city of Dili. The language policy caused some changes and she found examples on official signs that upgraded the status of Tetun, even though the language was mainly used as an icon of national identity. Bilingual signs in most cases put Portuguese as the most prominent language using subtle ways, for example, through font and positioning. In non-official signs, English predominated and there Indonesian, the former colonial language, also had a substantial presence. Similarly, in Dubai, Karolak (2022) studied the Souk Naif, a neighborhood populated by various migrant groups. The official regulations prescribe Arabic for displays of private shops, to be placed on top and to the right and it should occupy at least 50% of

![Figure 8.5 Shop front in Hanoi following the language policy](image)
The outcomes showed that about 57% of signs follow the rules, but 43% of signs give priority to English. This was another case where the diversity of the population is not reflected in the linguistic landscape (Figure 8.6).

On the Marshall Islands, Buchstaller and Alvanides (2019) found something identical because the language policy states one thing, but the practice of the linguistic landscape is rather different and pays only lip service to a recently created policy. In Catalonia, a legal obligation dictates that the Catalan language has a presence on all public and private signs, similar to the regulations for French in Quebec. In a recent study of a neighborhood in Barcelona, Jódar-Sánchez (2021) observed a clear gap between this official policy and the daily language practices on signage.

One after another, these cases demonstrate that the linguistic landscape can reflect the far-reaching impact of language policy measures in the linguistic landscape. Language ideologies play an important part, and at the same time the discrepancy between de jure policies and de facto practices makes clear that there are serious limitations to what policy can achieve.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, we have seen the strong relationship between the fields of language policy research and linguistic landscape studies. Through various examples, we could demonstrate that it is useful and relevant to examine in detail the use of languages on the signage of a region, a city or a specific context, such as a tourist site, in order to uncover details of the implementation of explicit language policies, and also to find out more about covert language policies, ideologies and hierarchies that can be ‘hidden in plain sight’ (Amos, 2017: 94). Numerous studies have analyzed
explicit and implicit strategies to determine or to change the language of signs. According to Shohamy (2019), contestation in public spaces related to policy is one of the major themes of linguistic landscape research in a decade (2006–2016). It is a theme that leads to critical questions such as ‘Who owns the public space?’ and ‘Who has the right to write in the public space?’ (Shohamy, 2019: 31). Not only are signs important but also the people as actors, who produce, react to and interact with the linguistic landscapes they inhabit.

For researchers such as Spolsky and Shohamy, it is obvious that not only is language policy research relevant for linguistic landscape studies, but also the reverse, that the findings from linguistic landscape research can contribute to the field of language policy, and probably policy research in general. Shohamy (2015) explicitly argues that linguistic landscape research can contribute to the theory of language policy with new data and relevant findings. We agree and we can indeed observe that some publications focusing on language policy have paid attention to the issue of the display of language. For example, in their edited book, Abdelhay et al. (2020) considered semiotic spaces as a core issue and they included a chapter that discusses the linguistic landscapes of so-called tuck shops in South Africa as translingual spaces (Mokwena, 2020). Zhang’s (2021) book on the language policy of the Olympic Games in Beijing also has a full chapter that analyzes the linguistic landscapes of the games. Examples of works that pay substantial attention to linguistic landscapes can be found in books on language policy in business (Barakos, 2020) and on policy in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) and multilingualism (Raza et al., 2021). However, researchers of policy in general have thus far not given much consideration to language or to signage, let alone the combination of both. Thus, recent handbooks of general policy studies do not consider those dimensions at all (e.g. Colby, 2018; Howlett & Tosun, 2021). We agree with Shohamy (2006) and with Pavlenko (2009) that linguistic landscapes have to be considered as a significant mechanism of language policy and thus should be on the research agenda of the field of policy studies. Often, laws and regulations dictate the language on signage and thus give shape to the public space, as we have seen in many cases above. People interact with and do react to the ‘words on the street’, so indirectly they are also reacting to forms of legislation. Sometimes they do so by obeying, sometimes by protesting or other forms of behavior and those reactions in turn can influence policy formation processes. An important issue for studies is the tensions that are created between the formal policies and the actual practices on signs, as we mentioned above. According to Hult (2018: 347), linguistic landscape studies ‘offer potentially useful insight into the central concern of LPP as a field of enquiry - the dynamic interplay between language policy and practice’. Hult (2018: 347) wants future studies to ‘look behind the signs’ and in that way find out more
about the lived experiences of people by means of ethnographic methods and by emphasizing the historical dimensions. He looks for answers to questions about how policies emerge, what the impact of policies is and how ideologies are transformed. We can conclude that the two fields of linguistic landscapes and language policy have developed in tandem and will continue to complement each other.